The Nomadic Peace

A Constructivist Analysis of the Somaliland Peace Process

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*Thanks is not a sufficient word to describe the gratitude I feel for
all the patience, understanding and help I received from my wonderful husband
and the shenanigans of my sons to inspire me to finish this work
and keep me awake during long nights of writing.*

*Special thanks must also be given to the invaluable information
and full pot of knowledge I have been given by the gracious interviewees*

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study utilizes constructivist theory to better understand the success of the Somaliland peace process, which took place in the early 1990's. The thesis argues that underlying forces, such as social change, social norms, values, beliefs and traditions have been vital in strengthening and legitimizing the peace process. Somaliland has been chosen as the case due to its impressive success at using local resources to lead a bottom-up process of reconciliation and settlement to solve major disputes without international aid or interference. The study examines the use of established traditions and norms, such as the agency of elders as peace makers and an ingrained system of customary law, known as *xeer*. Norms that are seen as particularly encouraging to the peace in Somaliland include *madasha nabada*, which stipulates that peace be made directly in the place of the conflict, and *gobannimo*, which is a highly valued trait of selflessness contributing to an atmosphere of sacrifice towards the peace. Additionally, strongly held religious beliefs set a tone favorable to peaceful and reconciliatory meetings between individuals and communities. Finally, a common shift in attitudes and desires in the years leading up to the peace process encouraged a process of social change, which resulted in reconciliation, forgiveness, and eventually peace.

Keywords: Somaliland, Constructivism, Peace Process, SNM, Ideational forces, Social change, Elders, Clans, *Guurti*, *Xeer*, Somalia

Word Count: 20,965

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APD	Academy of Peace and Development
AU	African Union
PBUH	Peace be upon him
NFD	Northeast Frontier District
SNL	Somali National League
SNM	Somaliland National Movement

GLOSSARY

Adl	Justice
Allah	God
Aqil	The head of a diya-paying group, man of good judgement
Bakooraad	Walking stick, cane
Basmalah	Islamic phrase, 'Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim', meaning In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful
Biri-ma-geydo	'To be spared by the spear' clause of *xeer*
Deeqsinimo	Generosity
Diya	Compensation
Duudsi	Willing denial of compensation rights
Gaarhaye	Distinguished escort
Gobannimo	Selflessness, nobility
Guurti	Council of elders
Haal	Compensation
Hadith	A narration of the practices or sayings of the prophets of Islam
Hagoog	Shawl
Henna	Reddish-brown dye produced from *lawsonia inermis* plant

Hikmah	Wisdom
Ihsan	Benevolence
Ithaar	Selflessness
Ka'aba	Most sacred mosque of Islam, located in Makkah, Saudi Arabia
Koofiyad	Islamic hat worn by men
Macaawis	Unbifurcated men's garment, also known as sarong
Mashada nabada	Peace at the known place
Musalahah	Reconciliation
Qur'an	Islamic Holy book
Rahman	Compassion
Shari'a	Islamic Law
Shir	Meeting, gathering
Sooryo	Hospitality
Suhl	Settlement
Sunnah	Authenticated practices and teachings of the prophets of Islam
Xalaydhalay	innocence, clean slate
Xamar	Mogadishu
Xeer	Customary law
Xeer beegti	Council of elders, jury

For the purpose of this simple glossary, the following notes on pronunciation can be helpful to the reader:

- *x* is pronounced similar to *h*
- ' and *c* represents glottal stops

MAPS
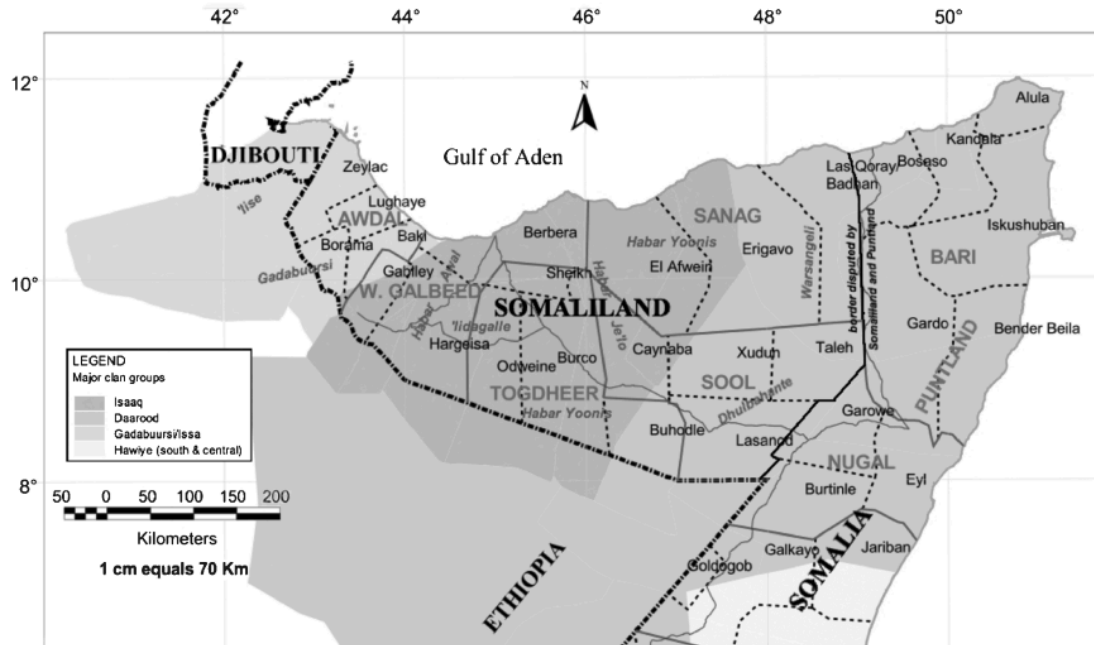
Map 1 Major clan areas in Somaliland and neighboring territories. Adapted by Michael Walls (2009) from FSAU, "Clans: Northern Regions" (Food Security Analysis Unit (Somalia), Nairobi, 2005).

1. Italian Somaliland; 2. British Somaliland Protectorate; 3. French Somaliland (later French Territory of the 'Afars and 'Ises); 4. Ogaadeen Somalis conquered by Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia at the end of the 19th c.; and 5. The British Northern Frontier District (NFD); later the Somali areas within the NFD became Kenya's Northern Province.

ETHIOPIA

FRENCH SOMALILAND (FRENCH TERRITORY OF THE AFARS AND 'IISES)

BRITISH SOMALILAND PROTECTORATE

OGAADEEN SOMALIS

ADDIS ABABA ☆

Shabeelle R.

Jubba R.

NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT (NFD) SOMALIS

ITALIAN SOMALILAND

MOGADISHU

KENYA

NAIROBI ☆

SCALE OF MILES

0 100 200 300 400 500 600

Map 2 The five Somali regions (Laitin & Samatar, 1987).

1 INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to win a war; it is more important to organize the peace

– Aristotle

Since the end of the Cold War, intrastate wars have increased while interstate conflicts have decreased, due to the formation of new states and ethnic division within states – "armed conflicts within countries emerged as a pre-eminent feature of the post-Cold War world disorder. According to estimates, of the nearly 100 armed conflicts in the world since 1990, all but five belonged to the intrastate category, causing death to millions," (Murthy, 2001: 210). Recent data shows that out of 32 active armed conflicts in 2012, only one of the conflicts was interstate – between South Sudan vs. Sudan which, until the independence of South Sudan was considered an intrastate conflict (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2013: 510). However, due to this problem, the international community has taken an active role in the past two decades in promoting peace processes and conflict resolution around the world through mainly Western channels. This is connected to colonialism and the impositions of Western state models in non-western societies. In Africa, this led to "the gradual erosion of values that existed within traditional African societies and the replacement of these values by foreign ones [which] introduced systematic problems for Africans because they were unable to adapt to the new system of political power," (Bob-Manuel in Brock-Utne, 2001: 6).

Due to mainly ethnic conflicts in the world, peace-building activities have grown rapidly over the years, to take into account the complexity of the conflicts. Unfortunately, even with the knowledge of the need to account for the different forms of conflicts and the complexities of each case, the international response to conflicts seem to cling to failing liberal approaches which suffer from a "lack of agreed upon ways of documenting the effects and successes of these efforts," (Zelizer & Rubinstein, 2009: 1). Peace strategies in many cases rely heavily upon external actors, financing, locales, and agendas, with very little local

involvement and decision-making. Problems arise when the local needs and international strategies and interests cannot be reconciled. Despite being a universal affliction, "the nature of conflicts and the methods of resolving conflict differ from one socio-cultural context to another," (Irani & Funk, 2000: 5). Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that any efforts to make peace in conflict situations be conducted with local knowledge, participation, decision-making, and basing strategies on values and norms central to the specific context of the conflict.

The peace that was brokered in the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland[1] during the early 1990's was a locally led bottom-up process, which hinged on the utilization of traditional conflict solving mechanisms and a lack of outside interference. Thus it provides an interesting case for understanding the importance of such approaches. Intellectuals and international organizations have praised the success of the process, and have emphasized the importance of locally led peace-building and conflict resolution. I. M. Lewis sums up the success of the "low-cost, local clan-based peace initiatives" as "particularly striking […] in contrast to the high-profile, internationally sponsored and highly unsuccessful conferences which came to dominate what was optimistically called the 'peace process' in southern Somalia," (Lewis, 2002: 266). The peace-building framework used in Somaliland was heavily based on the Somali culture and traditions, based on a nomadic way of life intrinsic to the society. In this way, the norms, traditions and specific history of the Somaliland society has led to a hybridized state system incorporating elements of the state with traditional structures in a bicameral legislature with a "non-elected upper house of traditional elders and an elected lower house of representatives," (ibid.: 283). Somaliland has, since the brokering of its peace, rebuilt its crumbling cities and hosted several successful political elections, leading some observers to consider it as "undoubtedly […] the most democratic political system in the entire Horn of Africa," (Kaplan, 2008: 143).

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[1] The Somaliland Republic will henceforth be referred to as Somaliland.

[2] Relevant academic literature about Somaliland predominantly takes the form of peer-reviewed journal articles.

1.1 Research question

How can a constructivist analysis be used to better understand the success of the Somaliland Peace Process?

- Which underlying forces created a strong foundation for the peace to be built, and how have they been conducive towards the peace?

1.2 Purpose

The aim of this study is to use a constructivist approach to investigate how social change and underlying ideational forces, such as norms, values, traditions and beliefs have been essential in leading the Somaliland society towards a peaceful resolution to the war and conflict which developed during the rule of Siad Barre and culminating in the late 1980's. This aim has stemmed from a belief that peace research typically overlooks the internal perspectives to peace in favor of liberal agendas, and that commonly suggested factors leading to the success of the Somaliland process overlook the fundamental reasons why these factors have been instrumental in the peace making. It is hoped that this study will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the Somaliland society as well as traditional, context sensitive ways to solving conflicts.

1.3 Disposition

This study is divided into seven chapters, starting with this introduction. The next chapter will detail the methodological choices made for the efficient carrying out of this research. Following this, chapter three will give the reader an overview of previous academic material pertinent to the theoretical and case-specific aspects of this study. Due to the importance of providing a sufficient context to understand the Somaliland case, an overview of significant historical and social aspects will be elaborated in the background chapter. Thereafter, a constructivist theoretical framework will provide a structure that will later be use to analyze the question of the study. In chapter six, the analysis will synthesize theory and empirical material in an effort to understand the underlying forces and social change strengthening the peace in Somaliland. Finally, the conclusion in chapter seven will briefly summarize the results and give suggestions for further studies.

2 METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative case study format to support the constructivist analysis of the Somaliland peace process. The following chapter aims to clarify the methodological underpinnings of the study, as well as argue for the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approach in order to increase the intersubjectivity of the study. The presentation of the scientific and philosophical foundations of constructivism aims at introducing and rationalizing the chosen format, and thus, discussions about using a case study, triangulation, interviews, and audio-visual methods will follow.

2.1 Rationale for choice of theory

This study utilizes constructivist theory in understanding the constructions of society by ideational forces. The theory was chosen because it makes it easy to study social phenomenon in their contexts, as well as corresponding to the aspects that this study wanted to investigate. To begin, it is essential to first understand the ontological and epistemological foundations of constructivism. It may be helpful to see constructivism as a contrast to the perhaps dominating ontology in science – the realist one. In contrast to a realist ontology which suggests that the world, and its truths exist independently of us and therefore that knowledge can be gathered about the world in an objective way through observation, constructivism sees that the world which exists around us can be understood but only in an inter-subjective way. In other words, "knowledge about the social world is always knowledge-in-context; it is socially situated and has social consequences," (Moses & Knutsen, 2007: 194). The context of any given phenomenon is critical in understanding it, and therefore this study will situate the Somaliland peace process in its context, and analyze it by trying to understand the role of the context in influencing its outcome. Knowledge, according to constructivists, must be seen critically because it is, and is used, as a form of power. Knowledge, and the ones who produce it, are both part of the society, which gives meaning to the world around us through social construction, and therefore can never be

objective (ibid.: 195). Thus, a researcher is as much a part of society as the object of study, and cannot detach him/herself from the constructs of society, and thereby, this study cannot be seen as objective or eliciting absolute truths, but rather filtered through the eyes of the researcher.

2.2 Qualitative case study format

For this study, a qualitative case study approach was seen to be particularly well suited for the need to explore the specific context of Somaliland, which is seen as an anomaly of peace within a collapsed state. Qualitative research is especially useful in the study of complex social phenomenon (Creswell, 2007: 40), and draw "particular attention to contextual issues […] therefore [capturing] meaning, process and context," (Devine, 1995: 138). Thus this method of research is beneficial for the understanding of a society's norms, values, belief and perceptions, which are key to the analysis of this study. Furthermore, the single case study format is appropriate for the structure of this study due chiefly to the uniqueness of Somaliland's peace achievement in the midst of state collapse and instability, which warrants a deep-probing study sensitive to context. However, single case studies are criticized for not being able to expand the width of the study to further cases through generalization (Moses & Knutsen, 2007: 140). In addition, by choosing not to use a comparative format, the possibility to augment the study with further perspectives is lost. However, this can be seen as a positive trade off since what the single case format looses in width, it makes up in depth, which is arguably more important when using a constructivist approach that calls for a deep understanding of context.

2.3 Materials and triangulation

The qualitative case study format "facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources," which makes it possible to probe the case through various angles (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 544). The study utilizes three main data sources: interviews, archival footage, and academic literatures. The different materials will be combined through a strategy of triangulation in an effort to increase the reliability, validity, and penetration of the study (Jick, 1979: 602). For instance, the interviews will be validated by using archive

footage and academic literature[2] to 'cross check' information. This selection of materials will provide sufficient data and context for the study's constructivist analysis, and allow for a deep understanding of the underlying forces behind Somaliland's successful peace process.

2.4 Interviews

Interviews are a virtuous source of primary and subjective material, and are suitable for this constructivist study because they make it easier to explore "subjective experiences and the meanings [attached] to those experiences," (Devine, 2002: 199). Interviews can provide information not otherwise available, due to limited previous studies, and the fact that some information is not openly shared[3] or observable, but requires a personal probing to attain. Since interviewees in this study were spread geographically,[4] not all interviews could be conducted face-to-face, thus the interviews were collected in three ways – face-to-face (direct), through video calls, and telephone calls. The advantages of conducting the interviews face-to-face include an increased flexibility and the ability for the interviewer to observe the interviewee in his/her context (Singleton & Bruce, 2012: 78). Furthermore, being physically present allows a more natural social interaction between the interviewee and interviewer. Video call interviews have similar advantages although not being physically together may make video calls awkward. Interviewing over the phone does not have these same advantages, and also suffers from factors like fatigue due to holding the phone over a long timespan, and not being able to make eye contact with interviewees. Both video calls and phone calls may suffer from poor connection, disrupting the flow of the interviews. Despite these disadvantages, phone and video calls were in this case easy to administer and a cheap and effective method of collecting data. These methods are a modern technological advancement, which make it possible to conduct long-distance interviews without travel (ibid.: 77).

The collection of primary data in the form of interviews has been conducted by the author during the course of the study in 2013-2014. Due to the infeasibility of a field study to

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[2] Relevant academic literature about Somaliland predominantly takes the form of peer-reviewed journal articles.
[3] Somalis tend to be suspicious in giving out information, see (Lewis, 2008: 24-5).
[4] The interviewees were situated in Nairobi, Kenya; Malmö, Sweden; Göteborg, Sweden; St. Cloud, MN, USA; Washington D.C., USA; and in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Somaliland, [5] interviews were conducted with informants knowledgeable about the Somaliland peace process and Somaliland politics in general. The interviewees were chosen through a snowballing method, which implies that interviewees were chosen during the course of the interviewing processes based on recommendations or information from previous interviews (Noy, 2008: 330).[6] This method is advantageous "particularly [because it is an] effective tool when trying to obtain information on and access to 'hidden populations[7],'" (ibid.). However, priority was given to participants who had taken part in the peace process in Somaliland from (1991-1993), in addition, priority was given to older participants, because the peace and war in Somaliland had more relevance to them than to younger people. This mode of choosing interviewees was useful because it was difficult to pinpoint suitable interviewee candidates before gaining some depth to the study. Due to the snowballing technique, no gender considerations were taken into account when selecting interviewees. However, after the completion of the interviews, with a level of data saturation[8] achieved, the balance of males to females was roughly even. A profile about the interviewees is presented in the Appendix, which shows the vital variables of each informant. These variables (gender, age, role, origin, participation in peace process), give a brief identifying context to each informant and is relevant to the study in understanding their knowledge of the case.

The interviewing technique employed was based on an open-ended questions guide, which made it easy to probe, or to collect as much material as possible, giving room for gathering new thoughts, questions and knowledge (Gulletta, 2013: 48-9). This style of interviewing also lets the interviewees elaborate and submit information willingly, allowing the interviewee "to talk at length on a topic," (Devine, 1995, 138). These methods were facilitated by the use of Somali as the language for the interviews, which was advantageous in several ways: 1) the

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[5] Due to its lack of international recognition, traveling to Somaliland is considered tantamount to traveling to Somalia, which is not supported by the author's institution due to the Civil War taking place there.

[6] Somalis form a tight-knit community and can easily direct one to a person considered knowledgeable in a certain field. Thus if a person is knowledgeable about politics, people will recommend that person for an interview concerning politics.

[7] Hidden population implies here a group of people who are difficult to access due to their low visibility in society.

[8] Data saturation implies that new interviews do not bring significant new information, and therefore the usefulness of further interviews diminishes.

participants were more at ease with any question;[9] 2) the author, being Somali, understood the social norms and etiquette of the Somali people, which made it easier to formulate questions; 3) there was no language barrier, thus the process became familiar and friendly. The interview questions were formulated in relation to the research question and study. Due to the nature of the interview style, the participants were guided during the interview in "conveying an account of an experience as it relates to the topic of the study," which meant that participants would be stopped from diverting too far off-topic (Galletta, 2013: 47). The questions were divided into three parts based on Galletta's suggestions – the first part aimed at introducing the interviewee to the topic of the study with the objective of warming up with more general questions. The second part aimed at pursuing the topic of study in depth, and the last section of the questions aimed at gaining more information on the previously asked questions in a different way, opening up for the interviewee's own opinions, and going back to previous questions (ibid.: 49-50). The idea was to gather as much information as possible, but at the same time conclude the session on a lighter tone (ibid.: 52).

2.5 Audiovisual material

Modern technological developments have meant that audiovisual sources of information can be widely accessible through the internet, giving researchers a vast pool of audiovisual sources. This study will make use the documentary entitled "Peace Mapping Somaliland" (2008) uploaded on YouTube by APD. The documentary presents the Somaliland peace building efforts and was mainly chosen for its selection of archive footage of the peace process, photos which have been exceedingly difficult to find otherwise. Documentaries provides "a historical record of events, discourse, stakeholders, and images, [drawing attention to] the everyday activities and the significant historical moments of a community or institution or some social unit," (ibid.: 25). They are useful because, "in presenting the sights and sounds of reality, [they enable] reality to 'speak' at the same time as it 'speaks about' reality," (Cowie, 2011: 12). Using audiovisual sources is valuable in understanding the

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[9] Somalis are a suspicious people, something Lewis attributes to their nomadic mode of life (Lewis, 2008, 24-5), which can lead to defensive or uncooperative results when questioning or probing. However, the researcher's Somali background facilitated interviews, making interviewees more at ease to talk freely and in some cases adopt a lecturing tone towards the researcher regarding culture, since 'younger generations have lost it [the culture]' (Interview 20).

construction of contemporary social life, since visual images carry a lot of meaning (Rose, 2001: 6). Thus, the documentary and its images will make it easier to gain an understanding the Somaliland peace process and its context, both for the researcher and the reader. Video recordings have the unique quality of capturing a specific moment in time with both pictures and sound, which can never be revisited, and thus provides a superior historical record (Kearney, 2006). Videos furthermore closes the time-gap between researcher and subject, and with recorded footage, a researcher can find him/herself immersed into a bygone time, thus providing a valuable possibility to take part of first-hand information at a date after an event (Collier, 2009: 263-72). They let the researcher soak in the atmosphere of a certain time and place, and makes it possible to observe, repeat and analyze the picture and the sound elements of the film (Kearney, 2006). As the saying goes, a picture says a thousand words, but videos give even more – more information can be drawn from it than what could have been initially seen with the human eye (Collier, 2009: 268). The virtues of audio-visual sources are many, but of key importance is its ability to preserve primary sources through time. However, just as a written text is filtered through its author's mind, videos are also filtered through its producer's or cameraman's eyes (Kearney, 2006). There may be things that the camera does not show, either because they are outside of the frame or because the cameraman/woman chose not to film it (which demonstrates the constructivist notion of how knowledge is power). Furthermore, videos provide only short clips of reality, and may distort reality through the bias of the filmmaker, consciously or not. These possible sources of bias are taken into account by validating images to other sources.

The application of audiovisual sources in the analysis has a distinctively hermeneutic character in that it invites the researcher to interpret. The mode of analysis will center on scrutinizing the audiovisual material in order to gain understanding through another dimension. In the background, screenshots from the video will be presented to the reader and will be later used in the analysis to provide an important source of verification through their triangulation with interviews and other sources to study details such as venue, dress, atmosphere, etc. These details will form clues that will help to validate the arguments presented for the success of the Somaliland peace process. Therefore, the study will not focus on studying the documentary itself – e.g. such aspects as the aims of the producer/filmmaker, or looking at the way it was filmed, the quality of the video etc. Rather,

the analysis will utilize the content rather than the context of the documentary, the moving images, and the images of the environment and setting of the peace process in order to gain a fuller understanding of the socio-political milieu of the process.

2.6 Trustworthiness and ethical considerations

As previously mentioned, the researcher's background facilitated a more open and willing giving of information by the interviewees. This is likely due to the interviewees feeling kinship with me, and did not hold back their opinions. Pride and loyalty may have lead to a 'halo-effect,' where participants view their culture and traditions as superior, leading to self-glorification (Standing, 2004: 451). As a researcher it became necessary to be constantly aware of this, and try to make sure that these opinions did not cloud the study's objective and the researcher's judgment, especially considering the researcher's dual identity as both researcher and Somali.

During interviews, the objective and aim of the study was revealed to the interviewees, and participation was offered to be anonymous. In addition, the interviewees were informed that participation was completely optional and anything they said could be retracted at any time during the course of writing. Consent was also asked from interviewees for recording the interviews, which some consented to but most did not. This was done in mind of the ethical considerations required of a researcher (Bryman, 2012: 153).

2.7 Scope

Due to the limited time and resources available for this study it has been limited in several ways. Firstly, focus has been put on the early years of the peace processes (between 1991-3), when the main conferences took place that solved significant issues and led to the foundation of the Republic of Somaliland. Furthermore, the study is narrowed in its use of theory, by selecting several relevant aspects of constructivist theory – the concepts of social change, ideational forces, and agency.

2.8 Delimitations

The choices made in the process of this study have all contributed to a certain bias based on the specific context of the study, and history, experience and interests of the researcher. Moreover, the relatively small amount of research that covers Somaliland may result in an undiversified perspective, especially since several authors, such as I.M. Lewis, have been cited and re-cited copiously within the field of study. Beyond this, Somalis are known for carefully guarding information about their culture and lives (Lewis, 2008: 24-5), which may lead to incomplete understandings being presented in academic literature, especially those conducted by Western researchers. However, by trying to remain critical and also using the aforementioned method of triangulation, it is hoped that a nuanced perspective will be arrived at in this study.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study can be placed into a larger corpus of political science focusing on peace, conflict, and conflict resolution. As a background to this study, this literature review will review important aspects of theoretical approached and scholarly material related to the Somaliland peace process. Although the Somaliland case is both unique and very interesting, the amount of scholarly literature about it has been relatively limited, perhaps due to the difficulty of field study in the midst of war and lack of international recognition of Somaliland, making travel difficult. Furthermore, the politics of northern Somalia may have been largely obscured in favor of studies focusing on issues making international headlines such as piracy, terrorist groups (like *Al-shaabaab)*, warlordism and clanism in other regions of Somalia. This may be due to the lack of Somaliland's international recognition, the small international presence in the region, and the low profile of Somaliland politics. The UN avoids having a large presence in Somaliland as this can be seen as tantamount to recognizing Somaliland, thus jeopardizing the peace process in the south (Lewis, 2008: 96-7). However, the existent scholarly material on Somaliland covers a range of topics, and the peace building process has been the object of several scholars' attention. The following sections will begin with an overview of current views on peace building, followed by scholarly literature pertinent to the Somaliland peace process.

3.1 Review of literature pertaining to the theoretical topic of peace building

Peace research is an interdisciplinary field, combining various fields of study such as international relations, peace and conflict, philosophy, psychology, and law. This great width has resulted in many different theories of peace, peace-making, peacekeeping and related sub-fields. The diversity has lead to incoherence and thus there has been a recent trend to make the study more scientific and therefore also more positivistic (Williams, 2007: 3). However, one thing many of these theories have in common is their root in Western culture

and norms, where the "basic characteristics of both thought and practice on peace are rooted in the Enlightenment, and the notions of rationality and sovereignty, underpinned by various forms of liberalism and progressivism," (Swain et al., 2007: 21). This notion of rationality disregards the importance of looking at peace processes from a perspective of situated knowledge,[10] with which we can produce a "richer, better account of a world, in order to live in it well and in critical, reflexive relation to our own as well as others' practices of domination and the unequal parts of privilege and oppression that makes up all positions," (Haraway, 1988: 575-99). However, peace research has become "driven by its normative commitments and its desire to impact the policy of national leaders and their advisors within as short a time-frame as possible," (Williams, 2007: 2-3). Thereby neglecting the need to understand peace building as subjective, bottom-up and local process, unbound by Western norms.

The currently prevailing theory of peace is based on notions of liberalism and liberal peace. In 1983, Michael Doyle suggested the theory of Democratic Peace, which has become dominant in the field since the peak of intra-state conflicts during the mid-1990's (see Doyle, 1983; Krampe, 2013: 57). The theory, predominantly focusing on interstate conflicts, has been broadened to apply to intrastate conflicts as well (Swain et al., 2007: 5). The liberal peace has been advocated by "Western political elites as a comprehensive strategy for addressing the problems of war-torn states and societies," (Krampe, 2013: 57). Thus, the liberal peace is applied like a general formula combining the fundamental concepts of liberalism – "democratization, the rule of law, human rights, free and globalized markets," (Richmond, 2007: 17). This approach lacks the cultural, religious, and social aspects of peace, which are significant in a religious and traditional society such as Somaliland. Liberal peace sees democracy as a necessity for peace, and in conflict situations, the "mere imposition of democracy [is] prescribed as the most important step towards peace," (Swain et al., 2007: 4). However, this takes away the need to look at the root causes of a conflict in their specific context. All states and societies have different cultures, norms, values, and traditions that contribute to their uniqueness. Hence, modeling peace-building research on generalizable concepts rooted in Western thought is skewed and unrepresentative of the problems and

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[10] The concept of situated knowledge is used here briefly in an attempt to better explain the importance of understanding social phenomenon as related to their context.

solutions to peace building. Additionally, with democracy being a highly contested concept, what body can legitimately determine which version is 'right'? Another concerning aspect of this theory is the fact that its "proposition has not been explicitly tested with reference to third world post-colonial states, where most civil wars take place," (Swain et al., 2007: 5).

However, there is an emerging literature criticizing the liberal approach to peace making and instead stressing the need for bottom-up peace making. In the article "Introduction: Beyond Northern Epistemologies of Peace: Peacebuilding Reconstructed," Kristoffer Lidén et al. introduces a series on bottom-up peace making articles in the journal *International Peacekeeping*, and questions liberal peace building's "compatibility with cultural and political pluralism," how it depends on "global and regional hegemonies of power," and how it should "engage with non-liberal other," (2009: 588). The authors call for more research to understand local expressions and comprehensions of peace "that allow for multiplicity or hybridity, human needs, welfare and human security to emerge in a bottom-up manner," (ibid.: 593). Due to the dominance of, liberalism and neo-liberalism, such discussions have been heavily influenced by liberal methods, expectations, elites and policy-makers (ibid.). However, this discourse is undergoing a shift where the voices of those contesting the liberal approach are becoming stronger and more defined (ibid.).

Oliver Richmond contributes to this debate in his 2013 article "Peace Formation and Local Infrastructures for Peace," in which he argues that since societies develop their own methods and capacities to deal with local matters and conflicts, "recognizing the 'local' constituent aspects of any peace framework may offer a better understanding of peace processes worldwide" (2013: 272). Richmond contends that liberal peace overlooks local agency with local legitimacy, yet does not dismiss all aspects of the liberal peace, but instead argues for a hybrid form, mixing local and international "interests, identities and needs … [for] both state and non-state" actors (ibid.: 274). Such a hybrid form would utilize local knowledge and legitimacy, taking into account specific identities, histories and culture, while at the same time conforming to the legitimacy of international law (ibid.). The view of peace making as a bottom up and locally lead process entails a deep understanding of local contexts to conflict. In this way, the following literatures represent current study of the Somaliland peace process and can be seen as a backdrop to this study.

3.2 Review of literature pertaining to peace building in Somaliland

Veteran Somali historian and anthropologist Ioan M. Lewis and the Somaliland-based Academy for Peace and Development (APD) provide essential background reading and material for this study (and will be extensively utilized in the background to this study). Lewis provides oft-cited introductions to the Somali context in *Modern History of the Somali* and *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland* – historical and anthropological studies of the Somali people inhabiting the Horn of Africa; their culture, traditions and characteristics. Lewis briefly covers the Somaliland peace process, and compares it to its counterpart in southern Somalia. "Particularly striking," he says, "was Somaliland's success with low-cost, local clan-based peace initiatives," which provide a stark contrast to the "high-profile, internationally sponsored and highly unsuccessful conferences which came to dominate what was optimistically called the 'peace process' in southern Somalia," (Lewis, 2002: 266). Lewis brings up the above factors as key to the success of the Somaliland peace-process.

The Academy for Peace and Development is a Hargeisa-based NGO under the umbrella of Interpeace, which works specifically with issues relating to the peace-process in Somaliland, and has produced a wealth of detailed material. The organization utilizes both expert and local knowledge in an effort to produce reliable material. The research produced on the peace processes (see *Peace in Somaliland: An Indigenous Approach to State-Building* and *A Synthesis Report of the Peace Mapping Study*) as well as the documentary film "Peace Mapping,"[11] shows the significance of the grassroots approach employed in Somaliland. The research provides detailed information and historical account on the peace processes. The organization attributes the success of the process mainly on the role of elders.

A significant 1993 study commissioned by ActionAid and undertaken in the field by Ahmed Yusuf Farah and I.M. Lewis, entitled the "Roots of Reconciliation"[12] has been abridged in a 1997 article entitled "Making Peace in Somaliland," which details the peace-making process in Somaliland. The article provides essential background information, and later analyzes key

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[11] This documentary is divided into four parts and is freely available on YouTube.
[12] Farah, Ahmed Yusuf & Lewis, I.M., 1993. "The Roots of Reconciliation: Peace making endeavours of contemporary lineage leaders; A survey of grassroots peace conferences in Somaliland." London: ActionAid.

factors leading to the success of the process. According to Farah and Lewis, four main factors facilitated the success of the process – 1) the environment and the drought-resistance of the nomadic pastoralism prolific in Somaliland, which kept huge influxes of relief aid out; 2) the banning of relief aid in 1992 after the looting of aid by adversarial clan militias, which denied access to valuable funding for the militias; 3) the hegemonic clan structure of Somaliland, where the Isaaq clan dominates and does not have any similarly sized adversaries; and 4) the use of bottom up approach to peace making, utilizing the *guurti* system, starting at the grassroots level and largely locally driven and financed in the absence of foreign aid and interference (1997: 349-50). Nicholas Eubank extends this fourth factor and argues in his 2010 article "Peace-Building Without External Assistance: Lessons from Somaliland" that the lack of international recognition positively effected Somaliland's peace making and development, because legitimate internal solutions had to be found which contributed to the productive engagement of local resources in the process (2010: 17-8).

This emphasis on the locally driven bottom-up approach employed in Somaliland with the use of the *guurti* system is also found in the 2009 article entitled "Local State-Building in Afghanistan and Somaliland" by Tobias Debiel et al. which compares the Somaliland peace making with that in Afghanistan. The authors argue that the process in Afghanistan has had similar factors, such as the use of local clan leaders, however, the largest difference is the bottom-up nature of Somaliland's peace process compared to the top-down approach lead by outside forces in Afghanistan. In this sense, the use of clan leaders may not be a deciding factor *per se*, rather underlying norms, structures and legitimacy are key elements (2009: 41).

In "Somaliland: Choosing Politics over Violence," Mark Bradbury et al. (2003) argues that the key to peace in Somaliland was the people's conscious choice of reconciliation and the clan's willingness to negotiate a political settlement of the conflict rather than choose violence. The authors see the peace making as a process of state building, in which the integration of 'traditional authorities' (i.e. clan leaders) into the state administration has played a prime role in stabilizing Somaliland (2003: 462). Further factors seen as important to the outcome of the process include the history of democratic practices within the SNM movement itself, and, in concurrence with Farah and Lewis, the lack of foreign interference and the specific clan structure of the Somaliland region (ibid.).

Another substantial contribution to the literature on the Somaliland peace process is Michael Wall's 2009 article entitled "The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland." Walls agrees that local leadership, lack of outside interference, along with the utilization of existing political structures and customary law that hold popular support and legitimacy has been the key factor of the peace (2009: 373). Similar arguments can be found elsewhere, such as in articles by Iqbal Jhazbhay and Tim Murithi.[13] According to Jhazbhay, "peace was reached using indigenous reconciliation initiatives integrating tradition and modernity," (2009: 50). In line with Bradbury et al.'s argument of the importance of choosing a political settlement to the conflict, Walls emphasizes the significance of a willingness to negotiate between adversaries, but his main contribution lies with the argument that underlying norms in the Somaliland society helped to strengthen the peace building (2009: 387-9). Walls alludes to four norms: 1) good faith and a willingness to talk even during fundamental disagreements; 2) a willingness to forgive and let go of compensation rights (*xalaydhalay* or *duudsi*); 3) the use of third-party mediators (such as a third clan in a two-clan conflict); and 4) a sustained norm of consensus building (ibid.).

This overview has presented a selection of prominent views regarding the contemporary development of the theoretical approach to peace making as well as studies of the key factors contributing to the success of the Somaliland peace process. These studies have all made valid points, however, this thesis argues that they overlook the necessity to investigate the underlying forces that influence these factors. Thereby, this study will select key ideational forces, such as beliefs, traditions and norms, which have built a strong foundation for the peace to be built upon. The following chapter provides a historical and social context to the Somaliland case, which is essential for a deeper understanding of these underlying forces.

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[13] See further: Jhazbhay, Iqbal (2009) "Somaliland: post-war nation-building and international relations, 1991-2006," and another 2009 article entitled "Somaliland: the journey of resistance, reconciliation and peace". Tim Murithi has written excellent pieces relating to the use of traditional community-based peace-making processes such as those employed in Somaliland, see Murithi, Tim & Murphy Ives, Paula (2007), "Under the Acacia: Mediation and the dilemma of inclusion, and Murithi, Tim (2006), "African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity".

4 BACKGROUND

This chapter aims to provide appropriate background information and an adequate understanding of the context surrounding the Somaliland peace process so as to make possible the constructivist analysis coming in the following chapter.

The Somali Civil War has caused tremendous chaos in the Horn of Africa region as a whole. In 1991, the northern region known as Somaliland unilaterally claimed independence, separating from the union created in 1960 with Somalia. Somaliland has prospered and development seen in the several working and running universities, small businesses thriving, and "undoubtedly has the most democratic political system in the entire Horn of Africa," Kaplan, 2008: 143). However, the stability of Somaliland is not the result of a single peace conference, but rather a continuing process of talks and negotiations spanning many years (1990-1997). The process has been "low-cost, local [and] clan-based," and provides a striking comparison to the "high-profile, internationally sponsored and highly unsuccessful conferences" in southern Somalia (Lewis, 2002: 266). Although there have been a few key national conferences, there have been nearly 40 conferences in total, including many small and local negotiations. All of these have played a part in the stability of Somaliland, and will therefore be viewed as a part of a whole series of grassroots peace talks. This series of talks is also part of a long tradition of reconciliation by kinship leaders in Somali culture.

4.1 The Somali society

The Somali clans (see Table 1 and Map 1) trace their patriarchal lineages back to Arabia during the spread of Islam in the middle ages. However, a history of merchants, kingdoms and civilizations dates back much further. The tradition of the Isaaq clan for example is that the founding father of the clan, Sheikh Isaaq ibn Ahmed al-Hashimi emigrated from modern-day Iraq around the 12th-13th centuries, escaping war and bringing Islam to the Horn of Africa (Lewis, 2002: 16-7; Lewis, 2008: 1-2; Pearson, 2000: 46). Although other

clans have similar traditions, the Somali society is strongly clan-based, which has meant "although the Somali did not traditionally form a unitary state, it is this heritage of cultural nationalism which, strengthened by Islam, lies behind Somali nationalism today," (Lewis, 2002: 16). The clan system, and an individuals lineage functions as a system of identification equivalent to an identification card or address (ibid.: 10). The structure of the Somali society is strongly rooted in clans, and all aspects of social life adhere to this structure, such as marriage, social gatherings, welfare, and peace making. The clan system is a construct of the people's adaptation to their geographic environment. The nomadic mode of life, a life-style of approximately 60-70 percent of Somalis, is perfectly suited to the arid deserts of Somalia, largely centers upon the allocation of scarce natural resources (mainly grazing lands and water) (Lewis, 2008: 3). Conflicts arise often due to insecurity and mistrust among the different clans, as well as fighting over scarce resources (Lewis, 2002: 11). This strengthens clan loyalties, because clans are the primary political and legal authority, and also "the most clearly defined political unit in [Somali] pastoral society," (ibid.: 11). There are five major clans in Somalia, the Darood, Dir, Isaaq, Hawiye, and Rahanweyne (also known as Digil and Mirifle). The Isaaq clan – the most populous and dominating clan in Somaliland – is divided into six sub-clans; Garhajis, Habar Je'lo, Habar Awal, Arab, Imran, and Ayuub. However, Somaliland is home to three major clans – the Isaaq, Darood (specifically the Dhulbahante and Warsengeli sub-clans), and Dir (the Gadabuursi and Esa sub-clans) (APD, 2008: 9).
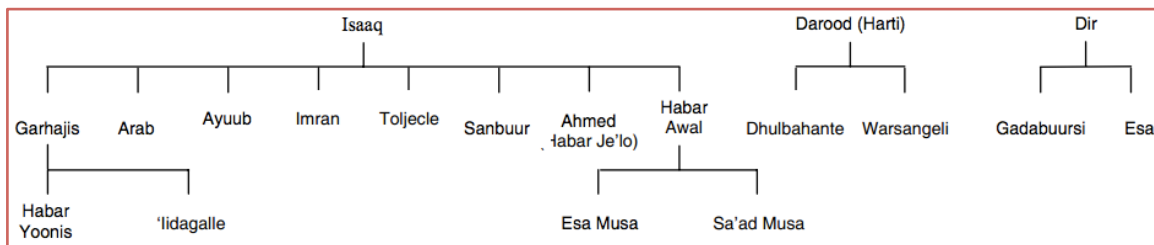

Table 1 Northern clan lineages (APD, 2008: 9)

4.2 Colonialism

The Somali nation was between the late 19ᵗʰ century and 1960[14] split between rival colonial powers – French Somaliland to the far north (modern-day Djibouti), British Somaliland in the north (present day Somaliland), and Italian Somaliland to the south (the south-central region of modern-day Somalia) (see Map 2; Kaplan, 2008: 146). However, the Somali people are spread further afield in northeastern Kenya (the Northwest Frontier District NFD) and eastern Ethiopia (the Ogaden region). Combined, these regions make up five territories symbolized on the flag with a "five points of a white star, set on a blue background," (Hanley, 2000: 11). The colonial rule of Somalia has had a profound impact on the modern country due to the differing styles of government employed by the different colonizers. Whereas the Italians transferred more of their systems and culture during their reign, the British rule was much more simplistic and less thorough (Lewis, 2002: 169). Whereas the Italians saw Somalia as a settler colony, the British primarily valued Somaliland's strategic location on the Gulf of Aden for its geopolitical and naval interests, thereby to a large degree disregarding the land. Therefore the level of infrastructure development in the two regions has historically been vastly different. These differences would come to have a great significance in the years to follow.

4.3 Unification

Modern-day Somalia represents the unification of only two of the five Somali territories - the former British and Italian Somaliland. These two regions were the first to receive independence, and therefore formed the foundation of the Somali state. However, independence was won in very different ways in the different regions – British Somaliland was granted independence in a simple process with a quick handing over of government to locals. However, Italy were hard pressed to leave their administration, but were forced by the UN mandate of trusteeship to relinquish control over the country, but also to train local civil servants for the administration of government (ibid.: 139-40). Immediately upon the independence of Somalia from Italy, Somaliland and Somalia agreed upon a political and territorial unification forming the modern Somali state on the 1ˢᵗ of July, 1960 (Kaplan, 2008:

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[14] With an exception of Djibouti, which remained a French colony until 1977.

146). Mogadishu became the capital city due to its developed infrastructure and government. Two further regions, the Ogaden and the NFD, were now part of two other sovereign states – Ethiopia and Kenya. The primary international political goal of the newly independent state was to unify all five regions. This ended in disaster after a bloody war in Ogaden with Ethiopia and failed negotiations with Kenya and Djibouti (Laitin & Samatar, 1987: 129)

4.4 Discontent in the north and causes of civil war

Opposition to the union was evident a mere year after the two regions unified, when the SNL[15] called for a boycott of the 1961 national referendum on the proposed constitution of the unified Somalia. The boycott resulted in only 100,000 votes from the northern region, half of which voted against the constitution (Lewis, 2002: 172). Unification was problematic because the different regions had very different political and juridical systems, which were difficult to integrate. This, along with a host of other factors that lead to polarization in the state played a role in Somalia's descent into civil war. After defeat in Ogaden in 1978, the heavily indebted economy stagnated and Barre lost considerable popularity and political support (Kaplan, 2008: 146). This growing discontent lead Barre, in order to ensure his political survival, to replace key political figures with clansmen whose loyalty he could count on because they were "linked to him by birth or marriage," (ibid.). This in turn led to a build-up of tension between rival clans and political elites, all wanting a part of the political power. Clanism, corruption, nepotism and poor leadership brought Somalia to the brink of collapse. (Lewis, 2002: 254-5). The population of the northern region suffered systematic repression in the hands of the government. The government marginalized the population, oppressing and imprisoning anyone who opposed it. The climax came when Siad Barre bombarded the two largest cities in the Somaliland region – Hargeisa and Burao – "killing an estimated fifty-thousand people and making refugees of a million more," who were forced to flee to Ethiopia (Kaplan, 2008: 148).

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[15] The Somali National League (SNL) a political organisation (opposition) with strong support among Isaaq Somalilanders.

4.5 Rise of the Somali National Movement

In 1981, a group of political exiles based in London mainly of the Isaaq clan formed an opposition party, the Somali National Movement (SNM) in an effort to counter the government's oppression of the north. They quickly gained popularity and public support in the north after they successfully managed to release prominent civil servants from a governmental prison in 1983 (Lewis, 2002: 253). The SNM rose in an effort to highlight "Isaaq grievances ranging from inadequate political representation, neglect in development, and the frustration of local businessmen and exporters chafing at economic controls," (ibid.: 252). The Barre regime's bombardment of the northern regions made the people rely even more on the SNM, which was seen as the only group opposing the government and protecting the interests of the north (Ridout, 2012: 154). The Mogadishu government crumbled shortly after in 1990, which lead to division and a scramble for power.

4.6 Reclaiming Statehood

With the implosion of the Barre government and the power struggle that ensued between the clans in the south, the northern region, represented by the SNM, chose not to negotiate with the warring parties in the south or to engage in revenge against the clans that supported the government in the northern region. The SNM, primarily of the Isaaq clan, decided to forgive and build a peaceful and stable country with the other fellow clans that had opposed and supported the government. In 1988, "the Gadabursi clan conducted a general conference that deliberated on the defense of its land and people against the SNM at Qunujed," (Farah & Lewis, 1997: 359). This act for many of the Isaaq clan, was a betrayal, nevertheless it did not prevent the Isaaq clan and elders from pursuing a peaceful relationship with the Gadabursi. In an effort to show solidarity to the Gadabursi, the biggest peace conference was held in their town Borama in 1993. The SNM and the elders opted to conduct a region-wide peace negotiation among the northern clans independent of the south (Lewis, 2002: 282-6). This was inspired by the oppression the population felt under the Mogadishu government, as well as the insurgencies in the south forming a government without consulting the SNM or the northern population – significantly indicating continued neglect and oppression of the north in any potential Mogadishu-based government (Lewis,

2002: 264; APD, 2008: 24). Between 1991 to 1997, there have been 39 identified peace processes in the northern region (APD, 2008: 13), including "meetings and negotiations leading up to major conferences [which] allowed for extensive discussion of injustices and possible remedies [...] to allow a full airing of grievances and to take the time to work toward reaching consensus on intractable issues," (Ridout, 2012: 153). For example, prior to the Borama national conference, elders representing the Jibril Abokor and Gadabuursi sub-clans met in Dilla[16] in an effort to negotiate a ceasefire and prevent more killings. Thereafter they proceeded to Borama in a continuation of their mission "to address the problems on the ground: visible looted properties and land confiscated from owners," (Bradbury, 2009: 31). Different conferences had their own significance and role, from settling local disputes to national disputes, and many conferences took place concurrently in different places and with different actors, however they all had the same unifying goal – to bring an end to conflict and bring peace to the whole region. Major conferences are shown in the table below (reproduced from Farah & Lewis, 1997: 351).

Reconciling clans	Meeting place	Duration	Title of the meeting
Gadabursi/Iisa	Boorama	17-19 May 1991	
Baha Samaron/Jibril Abokor	Boorama	17-19 Oct. 1992	Guul Allaa
Habar Yonis/Iisa Musa	Hargeysa	4 Oct. 1992	
Habar Yonis/Iisa Musa	Sheikh	28 Oct.-8 Nov. 1992	Tawfiiq
Dhulbahante/Habar Yonis	Dararweyne	2 Jan.-5 Feb. 1993	Khaatumo
Warsangelis/Habar Yonis	Jiideli	6-9 Oct. 1992	
Warsangelis/Habar Tol Jalo		11-18 Aug. 1992	
Habar Tol Jalo/ Dhulbahante/Sawaqroon	Garadag	23 Nov.-1 Dec. 1993	Danwadaag Beri
Boorama National	Boorama	24 Jan.-May 1993	Allaa Mahadleh

Table 2 "Major *guurti* reconciliation conferences in Somaliland, 1991-93" (Farah & Lewis, 1997).

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[16] A town located in the Awdal region in Somaliland.

4.7 The role of customary law (*xeer*) in the peace process

Recurring conflicts over scarce resources necessitates a strong peace making mechanism. Hence, the context, social structure and environment have constructed not only a conflict-oriented mindset but also specific roles for resolving conflicts. This shapes the social customs and traditions, resulting in customary laws that bind the society. Depending on the scope of a conflict or region, clan elders or sub-clan elders meet to mediate between conflicting parties and draw up agreements between them (Lewis, 2002: 11). These agreements are binding under customary law, and clans are obligated to respect them. Agreements typically represent the protection of livestock or persons from rival clans in cases of trespassing or allocation of resources. The rival clan is usually held responsible for the safety of trespassing livestock and people (ibid.).

This system of customary laws is known as *xeer,*[17] a "set of orally transmitted conventions, values and practices that govern the everyday life of the community," (APD, 2008: 39) acting like a system of laws and contracts between clans and sub-clans in the pastoral Somali society (Walls & Kibble, 2010: 37). *Xeer* covers a range of areas relevant to the society, such as rights, obligations and understandings related to "domestic matters, social welfare, political relations, property rights, management of environmental resources, and rules of war," (APD, 2008: 39). The *xeer* law works as a juridical and moral framework and is continuously evolving through the negotiation and renegotiation by elder councils known as *xeer-beegti* (ibid.: 39-40). Many parallels can be found between the Somali *xeer* and Western legal frameworks, such as the *biri-ma-geydo* – "to be spared from the spear[18]" – law in *xeer* which regulates legitimate targets and weapons of war, and corresponds to similar *jus in bello* laws found in the Geneva Conventions (ibid.: 40).

Xeer laws are contractual agreements that are "sustained through a sense of honor, social sanctions, agreed forms of compensation, and a fear of divine retribution against those who

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[17] Pronounced similarly to the English "hair".
[18] The ubiquitous AK-47 and other similar mechanical weapons have largely replaced the spear, the traditional weapon of Somali nomads. The introduction of automatic weapons has largely changed the dynamics of war and conflict in Somalia (as elsewhere).

[violate] them," (APD, 2008: 40). Sanctions against deviations from *xeer* agreements follow a system of blood compensation, known as *diya*. *Diya* payments are proportionate to the offense, and paid from clan/sub-clan of the offender(s) to the clan/sub-clan of the victim(s). Payments are not merely monetary but hold symbolic value, and therefore, camels – highly prized among nomads – and other livestock are the most common form of payment, but sometimes compensation includes the giving of a woman from the offending clan as a gift of marriage, intended as a "public acknowledgment and appeasement strategy to restore relations threatened by the brazen aggression," (Farah & Lewis, 1997: 366).

Traditionally, *xeer* is used as a dispute and conflict resolution tool, "dependent on the deliberations of elders [*xeer-beegti*] who gather to resolve specific problems within a clan or between clans," (Bradbury, 2009: 11). This process has been an ancient method used by Somali nomads[19] and after the collapse of the government, the SNM immediately started campaigning between clans to settle their disputes using the established *xeer* system. The *modus operandi* of peace making according to the *xeer* is for elders of rival clans or sub-clans to meet in decided upon locations – often-neutral areas friendly to both parties (see Box 1 below) – and to settle their disputes and negotiate solutions for coexistence. An elder from a neutral clan typically mediates stalemates between adversaries (APD, 2008: 47; Bradbury, 2009: 53; Farah & Lewis, 1997: 262).

4.8 The role of elders

Due to the lack of British (during the Protectorate) and Somali (during the union) institution building, the north was left largely undeveloped, which "led to an increase in the duties and power of 'traditional' local lineage elders and indeed to a proliferation of such offices throughout the lineage system," (Lewis, 2008: 100). As honored members of society, elders in the Somali context are adult males, "chosen by their clans for their particular attributes, such as piety, knowledge of history, customary law, their powers of oratory, negotiating skills and sometimes wealth," (APD, 2008: 38). Thus elders are held in high esteem and are given legitimacy to act as leaders and representatives of clans and sub-clans and to apply *xeer*. A council of elders forms a *guurti,* which gathers to consider issues relating to *xeer*, politics and

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[19] The system of *diya*-compensation was continued under the administration of the British in the Somaliland Protectorate for settling matters on their behalf (Farah & Lewis, 1997: 353).

governance (Bradbury, 2009: 11). Their responsibilities include actively negotiating between rival clans, sub-clans, and families for peace and stability. Even in the presence of a functioning government, the role of elders and *guurti* have provided the most effective system of "redressing wrongs and adjusting political and legal issues," between the "warlike [nomadic Somalis, who are] driven by the poverty of their resources to intense competition for access to water and grazing," (Lewis, 2002: 11). For these reasons, and their capability to persuade others to listen and accept their decisions, their integrity in handling sensitive matters, oratory skill, ability to make things better for their clans and sub-clans, their knowledge to the customary law (*xeer*) and their integrity and honesty in representing their people without gaining political power or economical gains the elders are endowed with the people trust, admiration, and respect (Bradbury, 2009: 11). One Somali proverb stipulates that such 'true respect is achieved by neglecting one's own business to focus on the interest of all,' (ibid.: 12). The role of the elders comes from a long tradition that shapes their way of thinking and being, and their ability in following a general customary law which is kept strongly in place in an effort to retain the culture, traditions and cohesion of the society (ibid.: 11).

The elders can be distinguished from the rest due to their attire and grooming, which also signifies their characteristics. The traditional attire is typically assembly of the *macaawis* (sarong), shawl, *bakooraad* (walking stick), and *koofiyad* (Islamic hat). Archive footage[20] of the peace process shows elders wearing this traditional attire (see Images 2 and 3). The elders can easily be picked out of the crowd due to their way of dressing and grooming, as shown in the images on the following pages.

4.9 Meetings (*shir*) to settle disputes

During the peace process, elders traveled from one village to another in an effort to meet their counterparts and settle disputes among rival clans in assemblies known as *shir*[21] (Bradbury, 2009, see Image 1 and 7). Peace conferences were held all over Somaliland, which meant that elders had to traverse long distances through tough terrain to get to some

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[20] Archive footage from the peace process is difficult to find, especially in high quality. These pictures are screenshots taken of the APD *Peace Mapping* documentary (2008).
[21] *Shir* translates to meeting, assembly, gathering, or conference.

conferences. Some 'peace caravans', or groups of elders walking to the conferences took 14 days to complete their trek (APD, 2008: 31). A telling example of the considerable efforts exerted for the sake of peace on the part of the elders is that of the senior chief *aqil* and peace activist Ismail Musse, who after a preliminary round of meetings left him frail and weakened

> …traveled for several days to El Afweyn, much of the trip on foot, to meet with the Habar Je'lo whom had left Erigavo. His health suffered further from this long journey, preventing him from travelling to further meetings. He therefore appointed his son, Jama Ismail Musse, as his representative at the meetings in Jiidali, Dararweyne and elsewhere. His condition worsened, but he continued to agitate for peace, and he remained involved in organizing and speaking for reconciliation meetings right up until his death in 2003, (ibid.: 71).

After sending messages to rival clans calling for peace negotiations, elders would convene and negotiate agreements by consensus from all participants. For this reason, the process took a long time, but the "conference resolutions [were] legitimized by unanimous consensus of the delegates of the reconciling parties," (Lewis & Farah, 1997: 354). Lewis elaborates in illuminating detail the *modus operandi* of the elders working in *shir* councils in the excerpt from his seminal *A Pastoral Democracy* from 1961 in Box 1.

The informal council (*shir*) summoned as need arises, at every order of segmentation, and attended by all the adult men, or their representatives chosen at smaller lineage-group *shir*, is the fundamental institution of government. It has no formal constitution except that of membership of the lineage concerned, no regular place or time of meeting, and there are no official positions on it.

All men are councilors, and all men politicians. Agreements are reached by majority decisions following the direction taken by the consensus of feeling at a meeting. Usually the participants sit in a rough circle in the shade of a tree, in the central clearing of a nomadic hamlet, or they may meet in a "coffee-shop" in a village or town. Where a large lineage with a male strength of several thousand is concerned, delegates may be chosen to represent each of the component lineages and sent to a central meeting-place. Sometimes, however, all those concerned, even if they number several thousand, attend the council and form a large loose ring.

Representatives may then be appointed for the smaller units and sent into the middle of the circle to thrash the matter out while their kinsmen sit listening in the outer ring. Men sit or squat on the ground at a *shir* and when they wish to speak often rise to their feet. Although there may be a great deal of argument and wrangling, all those present are expected to behave courteously and breaches of good manners may be punished. Thus at a large Habar Awal *shir*, which had met to discuss the rights of cultivators and pastoralists in the west of the Protectorate members of two of the lineages represented insulted the elders of other groups present. The offenders were directed by the Sultan to pay insult compensation (*haal*) to the affronted elders.

Source: Lewis, 1961: 198-99

Box 1 A description of the workings of *shir* (meetings).

The smaller proceedings were typically held under the tranquility of a shading acacia tree, whereas bigger conferences were held in old government buildings, offices or schools. For example, one of the largest conferences, the Borama national conference, was held in a hall at the *Sheikh Ali Jowhar Secondary School* in Borama (APD, 2008: 56, see Image 4). Images 6, 8-9 show the venue for the first national peace process held in Burao (*Peace-Mapping Somaliland,* 2008). The achieve footage shows the building to be quite simple, with visible damages of the war, such as bullet holes riddling the walls. The Burao peace conference was partially held outside, (see Image 6), and furniture was brought from surrounding homes to seat the participating elders, politicians, intellectuals, and businessmen. The tree provides well-needed shade from the sun, and the setting is basic, sandy and locally supported.

4.10 Images

Image 1 Peace meeting taking place under the shade of an Acacia tree (APD, 2008).

Image 2 Participants gathered outside during the Burao conference. Elder can be seen in the middle wearing traditional attire (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 1, 2008).

Image 3 Elders in traditional attire (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 3, 2008).

Image 4 Deliberations underway at the Borama national peace conference in 1993, taking place at the *Sheikh Ali Jowhar Secondary School* (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 3, 2008).

Image 5 The oldest elder in the *guurti*, also the current head of the *guurti* house in parliament (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 1, 2008).

Image 6 An outdoor meeting during the Burao conference. Furniture was brought by nearby families (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 2, 2008).

Image 7 A group of elders convene (*shir*) to settle a dispute (Untitled [TV Somaliland Europe], 2013).

Image 8 Participants at the Burao peace conference (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 2, 2008).

Image 9 The venue of the Burao peace conference – an old hall riddled with bullet holes (ibid.)

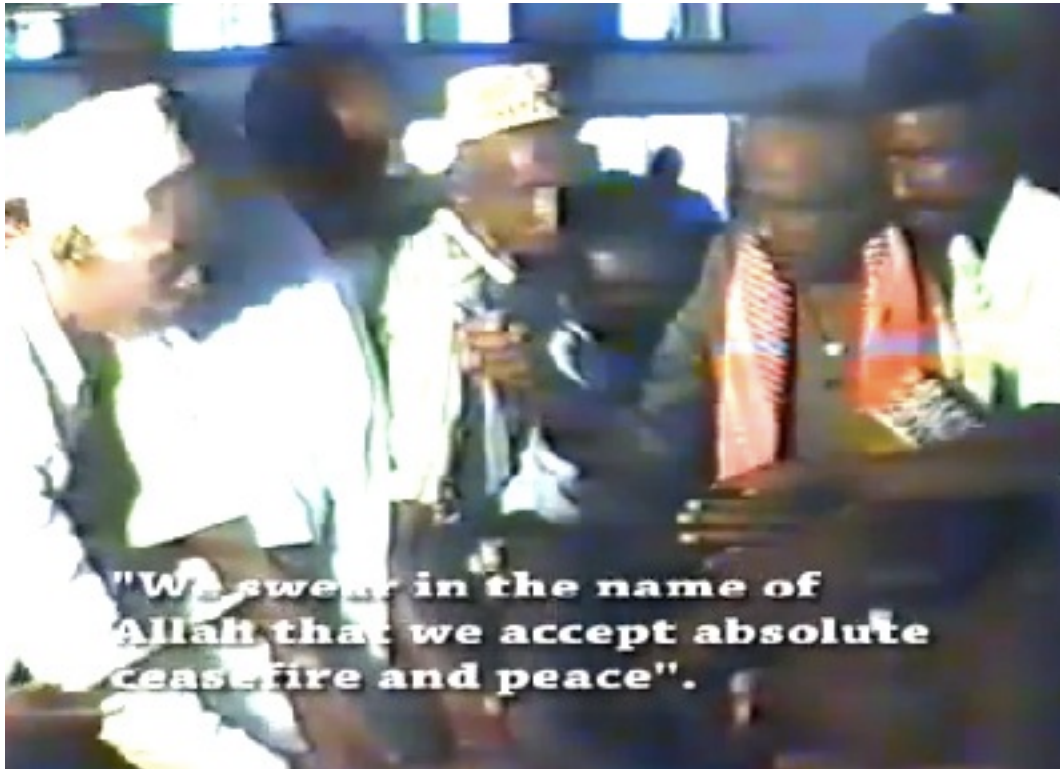**Image 10** Elders swear in the name of God that the clans they represent will honor the ceasefire and peace at the Sheikh conference of 1992 (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 3, 2008).

Image 11 The *basmalah* (*"Bismillahi rahmani rahim"*) is written in Arabic calligraphy (center top) and is held above everything else in the room, symbolizing the placing of God above everything else (APD, 2008: 56, cropped by author).

Image 12 Women campaigning outside the Borama conference, 1993. The sign on the placard reads '*WE WANT PEACE*' (Peace-Mapping Somaliland, Part 3, 2008).

Image 13 This photo from the International Somalia Conference held in London, 2013, shows the extravagance and Western-inspired aspects of the peace conference for southern Somalia. The photo demonstrates three things – 1) the process has adopted Western norms of dress, 2) the conference is held outside of Somalia at a very fancy venue, and 3) the process involves a large amount of foreigners in positions of power. (Horseed Media, 2013).

4.11 Islam as an integral part of Somali society

Islam plays an integral role in Somali society thus "Somali customary law is influenced by Islamic law (*shari'a*)," (APD, 2008: 39). Islam influences all aspects of life, for instance dress code. Traditionally, Somalis "set most store by their Arabian connections and delight in vaunting those traditions which proclaim their descent from noble Arabian lineages and from the family of the prophet […] part and parcel of the traditional and profound Somali attachment to Islam," (Lewis, 2002: 5). The Somaliland peace initiatives were also driven by Islamic teachings of reconciliation and settlement. The peace process is dedicated to Allah in whole and individual speeches etc. The Borama national conference was initiated with seven days dedicated to reciting the Qur'an in preparation for the conference (Farah & Lewis, 1997: 373). In addition, the Qur'an was used during oaths for parties to swear on their acceptance of the established agreements. Image 10 above shows participating parties swearing in the name of Allah to stop fighting and instead accept 'absolute peace'.

4.12 Islam and peace

In order to understand the importance of Islam in the construction of society and the peace building efforts in Somaliland, the values of peace in Islam will now be presented. Islam is an Arabic word meaning 'submission to the will of God,' that derives from the Arabic root S-L-M, which has to do with peace – the core tenet of the religion (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 45). This is also evident in the Islamic daily greetings of *As-salaamu 'alaykum* meaning "peace be upon you," (ibid.). The centrality of peace in Islam is also evident in one among the 99 names of God, *As-Salam* – "the source of peace and safety." Islam is a way of life, which covers all facets of life, thereby instructs the believer on matters of interactions with everyone he/she comes across in the community and the world at large. Peace is "understood as a state of physical, mental, spiritual, and social harmony," (ibid.: 60). Hence, Islamic peace-building focuses on

> "repairing and maintaining social relationships; emphasizes linkages between people and group identity, collective responsibility for wrongdoing, face-saving, restorative justice, and maintenance of social harmony: and call for reconciliation, public apology, forgiveness, and compensation, among other things," (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008: 561).

Core values in Islam promoting non-violence found in the Qur'an include – "*adl* (justice), *ihsan* (benevolence), *rahman* (compassion), and *hikmah* (wisdom)," (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 37). As such, the purpose of the revelation of the Qur'an to the human beings is to "create a peaceful and just social order […] living at peace with God through submission, and living at peace with one's fellow human beings by avoiding wrongdoing," (ibid.: 60).

In case of conflict, the first step in solving it is not through violence, but rather, "Qur'anic verses instruct believers to refer disputes to God and to His Prophet," (ibid.: 61). This means that Muslims should refer to God's advice and instructions when solving conflict such as acting prudently, rationally and not in anger, and always aiming for reconciliation, peaceful understanding, and coexistence. The religion purifies the whole social structure, starting from the soul of the individual, to immediate family to the larger community. This act of purification takes place, when an individual reads God's word - the Qur'an - and acts in accordance with it. This means that societal change and structure starts from the agency of the individual, and thus the teaching becomes inextricably linked to the norms of society. "*Shari'ah* [the Islamic law,] is the norm by which Muslims seek to administer and supervise a just order," (ibid.: 53). Islam teaches the individual to use the religion in all parts of life, for example when solving disputes in the family, community or government. People must try to live in peace with each other, but due to the limits of human nature, conflict is bound to arise. However, violence is strongly denounced. Some verses in the Qur'an discouraging believers from violence can be found in verses 40:12; 5:95; 40:47-48; 2:13; 3:55, for example, verse 8:46 states, "And obey Allah and His Messenger; and fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power depart; and be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere." But when it does arise, the religion teaches them to go back to the teaching and see how they are supposed to solve the problem. Verse 8:61 in the Qur'an states that "if the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things)," (ibid.: 60).

Peace is seen as a fundamental right for all human beings in Islam, which is also present in the traditions and practices of the Prophet. Abu-Nimer states, "for thirteen years the Prophet fully adopted nonviolent methods, relying on his spiritual preaching in dealing with aggression and confrontation. During this time, though he was tortured, accused of

blasphemy, and humiliated, and his family and supporters were ostracized, he neither cursed his enemies nor encouraged violence," (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 61). The actions of the Prophet are guidelines for believers following him to use in their every day lives.

Firstly, before conflict is going to be resolved, Islam has certain obligations to be followed. The first and foremost is the face-to-face communication, where the parties have to meet, which is also an act of worship. A third party is also recommended in cases of stalemate – a person who is both respected in the community and knowledgeable in conflict resolution. The role of the mediator is vital, which is present in one well-known *hadith*, where the Prophet was the mediator in the problem of the Black Stone in Makkah. The dispute was based on which clan would have the honor of placing the Black Stone to its position on the *Ka'aba*. The Prophet solved the problem both simply and creatively by placing the Stone on a cloak, and where each clan held a corner, together lifting the Stone and placing it at the desired location (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 63).

4.13 Reconciliation and settlement

The concept of reconciliation, or *musalahah*, is a keystone of the Islamic faith, which obliges Muslims to strive for peaceful co-existence, understanding and cooperation with both Muslims and non-Muslims (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008: 560). As elucidated by Albayrak below, societal well-being and order is paramount in Islamic societies:

> "Since Allah created the universe in complete order, it is not acceptable for anyone to ruin this harmony by spreading disorder in the universe. Preservation of this order is a responsibility placed on the shoulders of Allah's highest creation, namely human beings. From this perspective, the culture of reconciliation is considered as *raison d'être* (reason for being) of humankind," (Albayrak, 2009: 103).

Reconciliation is a cornerstone in Islamic teaching, especially forgiveness, which has a higher ground than revenge. According to the Qur'an (42:40-42) "the recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah," (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 43). Reconciliation follows a process of *suhl,* or settlement, which aims at ending conflicts and hostilities through a contract-based negotiation, legally binding in Islamic law (Irani & Funk, 2000: 22). After a settlement acceptable to all parties, a public show of reconciliation is carried out to cement the agreement, and sealed with handshakes and shared eating (ibid: 25).

5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to structure a theoretical framework that will provide a toolkit for analyzing the Somaliland case. Social constructivism is the basis for this framework in the form of theoretical ontology, epistemology, and key concepts. The concepts that will be employed in this framework are Social change (5.1), Ideational forces (5.2), and Agency (5.3). The section about ideational forces/structures is further divided into the following sub-concepts in order to clarify the main aspects of this key concept and make it easier to apply in the analysis section: Perceptions (5.2.1), Traditions, norms and values (5.2.2), and Beliefs (5.2.3).

Social constructivism is a well-matched tool for analyzing peace processes because "constructivism understands the social outcomes in terms of their ideational components.[22] Therefore, it can shed light on the movement of groups of human beings along the continuum between conflict and peace in a way which other theories and approaches cannot," (Williams, 2007: 1). There are many version of constructivism, exists as a theory of science in many academic fields – the term is generic and consists of more elaborated and 'nuanced subsets', such as social and psychological forms, which this study will not go into (Lee, 2012: 405). Rather, this study will focus on central tenets of constructivism as applied to the social sciences, and political science in particular.

5.1 Social change

What social changes can be attributed to any successful peace process especially in Somaliland? Social changes can only take place in the presence human beings because "we are cultural beings, endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend it significance," (Moses & Knutsen, 2007: 8-11). Due to this

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[22] These are factors such as norms, ideas, beliefs, religion, identities, ideologies, cultures, and traditions, etc., which lend meaning to the actions of agents.

social nature of man, societies constantly change, and the future is unpredictable, because there are always factors which continually lead to changes and shifts, such as unforeseeable events of nature, preferential trends, new technology, political events, cultural expressions, religion, demographic change etcetera. Social change takes place everyday, and everywhere, but the magnitude of the changes varies. An example of social change is a shift of attitude towards a certain issue, such as a desire for peace at a time of conflict. Constructivism holds that ideational forces are continuously effecting change and shaping everything around us – constructing a socially subjective world. Thus, constructivism is more relevant in understanding the dynamics and flux of society compared to other leading theories of social life and international relations (Reus-Smit, 2005: 197). Leonard Jason suggests five main keys that lead to social change:

    1) Identifying the desired change;

    2) Identifying key power holders;

    3) Identifying commonality and shared goals;

    4) Persistence, perseverance, and commitment; and

    5) Constant evaluation, reflection and flexibility; (Jason, 2013: 24, 136).

These keys can be used to better understand how social change can be effected and will be utilized in the analysis to explain the social change from conflict to peace that took place in Somaliland during the peace process.

A conflict and its subsequent resolution is a time of great social flux – norms change at blistering rates and societies alter their values, perceptions and characteristics while fighting, and later find compromises to make peace. As a social construction, war is no exception – just like other phenomena, it is an expression of social norms, and socially constructed interests pursued by agents internal or external to a society or state. Similarly, peace and peace building are socially constructed concepts based on values, perceptions, identities, etc. Just as material structures such as military power is important, so are normative structures such as ideas, norms, and values in shaping the social world. Thus it is important to understand "how non-material structures condition actors' identities […] because identities inform interests and, in turn, actions," (Reus-Smit, 2005: 197). Promoting the notion that "system of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics, and that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action," (ibid.).

5.2 Ideational forces

Social change cannot take place without influence from meaning-bearing, ideational forces/structures such as perceptions, norms, traditions, values, beliefs, religion, rules, ideas, social institutions, identities, etc (Williams, 2007: 8). Social constructivists focus on the intersubjective "dimension of knowledge, because they wish to emphasize the social aspect of human existence – the role of shared ideas as an ideational structure constraining and shaping behavior," (Copeland, 2000: 189). This outlook blurs the distinction and the "borderline between ontology and epistemology," because "construction is the underlying mechanism that creates both reality and knowledge," (Lee, 2012: 407). Reality is subjective – a product of meaning-bearing ideational forces in a socially constructed world. Thereby, knowledge is also what we make of it, also a product of these same forces. The world as we know it is a result of socially constructed structures and systems. In contrast to dominating realist perceptions of the world and the anarchic world-system, Alexander Wendt argues that any state of being, "whether a system if conflictual or peaceful is a function not of anarchy and power but of the shared culture created through discursive social practices," (Copeland, 2000: 188). These practices refer to what this thesis calls ideational forces - norms, ideas, values, traditions, perceptions, identities, ideologies, and beliefs, (Williams, 2007: 4, 8). These forces lend meaning to social actions, which in turn produce social change. Furthermore, they are context-based, because different societies have different norms, values, and beliefs that are produced by different factors such as the environment, religion, culture, politics etc. A society's behavior, actions, and interests shape what it wants and desires. Thus, "ideational forces can be said to act as a condition precedent to a peace process, as the identifiers and definers of the substantive components of the negotiation, as the constituent elements of peacemaking as a practice and as the cultural environment of the process," (Williams, 2007: 10). Several forces particularly relevant to the analysis of this study will be elaborated below.

5.2.1 Perceptions

During conflict situations, perceptions are especially volatile. Within the context of a peace process, perceptions have a considerable importance in understanding the direction and outcome of social change, because perceptions, although unpredictable and dynamic during

conflict, play a large role in fueling conflict and reconciling differences amongst perceived enemies (Williams, 2007: 10). Values and perceptions of people are prone to change, especially when opportunity cost is taken into account. For example, a society might opt for peace and compromise when the cost of war is greater than its expected benefits. The volatility of perceptions are due to the emotional aspects of conflicts – parties to a conflict have strongly rooted personal and emotional feelings and agendas connected to their cause. Furthermore, a party may decline reconciliation if it perceives that the other party is gaining the upper hand even though the offer or solution is beneficial to both parties (ibid.: 11). According to Christopher Moore, "conflicts are often escalated or deescalated on the basis of parties' perceptions of each other," (2003: 183), and therefore, perceptions can be either barriers or gateways to negotiation and reconciliation.

Perceptions are key to a peace process, because they significantly enter the realms of legitimacy and trust – two key components of peace building. Legitimacy means that each party sees the other party as having reasonable, genuine and legitimate causes and interests (Moore, 2003: 188). Perceptions are fundamentally important, and "without a perception of legitimacy, negotiations may never begin," (ibid.: 188). Perception functions in many levels of peace efforts, between the leaders, the adversarial parties and also between the people and their chosen leader. People need to have a positive perception of their leaders, granting them the legitimacy to negotiate on their behalf. Trust is seen as a party's "capacity to depend on or place confidence in the truthfulness or accuracy of another's statements or behavior," (ibid.: 192). During negotiations, perceptions of trust for other's intentions and interests are extremely important to building a conducive environment for peace making.

5.2.2 Traditions, norms and values

Traditions are social practices influenced by norms over long periods of time and passed on from generation to generation. Norms are shaped and structured by society, through their practices and values. Viewed through a constructivist lens, traditions are dynamic and continuous interpretations and applications of social practices by both individuals and society as a whole. Traditions are constantly formed, reformed, and reinterpreted, continuously constructing and restructuring social systems, or structures. These social

structures constitute a public store of behavioral codes, roles, practices and expectations. As phrased by Yaacov Yadgar, "while 'public memory is the storage system for the social order'[23], this 'memory' is, like private memory, elastic, and it is constantly shaped and reshaped as it is evoked and remembered (and its 'neglect' can also bring about its 'forgetting')," (2013: 456). Thereby, traditions can be seen as an integral and dynamic aspect of society that shapes and gives meaning and identity to society.

Traditional practices are bound by norms and values, which provide the environment for traditions to be constructed, reconstructed and practiced. Thereby, values, norms and traditions are inextricably linked in a mutually constitutive manner. Norms and values shape traditions, but traditional practices can also shape values and norms during its continually reconstructive process. However, values have a more fundamental place in this triad – values are strongly held beliefs and principles about what is desirable or undesirable on a grander scale. Norms are accepted and expected manners of behavior within communities, and traditions are specific social practices belonging to a group of people. According to Finnemore and Sikkink, "norms are a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity," in addition they are constructed by society and "are actively built by agents […] having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior in their community," (1998: 887). Although values are more fundamental, they can also be changed when norms, traditions and attitudes shift. In this manner, codes of conduct are constructed and enforced by the society itself, defining what is acceptable, expected, and reprehensible behavior in the context of a certain community or society.

5.2.3 Beliefs

Belief is a strong force that is central to individuals, and shapes their actions, the way they view the world and the way they construct their society. Belief is a concept connected to words that have value and meaning attached to them, such as trust, dependency and reliance, which are also connected to faith (Hacker, 2013: 198). Religion is an especially big influence on belief, which is "bound up with rationality and reasonableness, and given the role of these in the optimal conduct of human life, belief is interwoven with a variety of intellectual and

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[23] Douglas 1986: 70, as quoted in Yadgar, 2013

moral virtues and vices," (Hacker, 2013: 198). As such, beliefs are fundamental convictions held to be true, which in turn inform values and norms. Beliefs of divinity transcend to a spiritual level, within the body and soul where they are so central to a human's existence that people may live and die for what they believe. Belief enters the realm of religion due to this. Religion is "an attitude of awe towards God … accompanied by beliefs and affecting basic patterns of individual and group behavior. In Latin *religare* means 'to bind', and religion is traditionally what most deeply binds a society," (Bullock & Stallybrass, 1977: 537). Thereby, religion has a significant and fundamental influence on societies' values, norms, traditions, and identities; and has over the passage of time have intertwined with culture and traditions. As an ideation force, religious beliefs may unify or divide, form bonds transcending race, gender or class, and construct identities. Thus, to understand a society and its individual and collective actions, beliefs are a central aspect to take into account when seeing the bigger picture, or context.

5.3 Agency

Conflict and peace are socially constructed phenomena, thus, as humans construct conflict, they can also act as catalysts for peace, because "a peace process is an intentional mechanism set up to alter the dynamics of the status quo," (Williams, 2007: 11). Constructivist's core argument is that everything is socially constructed, and thus "any understanding of a peace process requires an appreciation of the potential of agents to catalyse and shape the process within the structural constraints in which they are operating," (ibid.: 11). In other words, agents act in a certain way due to the socially constructed environment they occupy – actors are defined by their socially constructed roles and duties. Moreover, constructivists view agents and structures to be mutually constitutive, because "ideational structures and actors ('agents') co-constitute and co-determine each other. Structures constitute actors in terms of their interests and identities, but structures are also produced, reproduced, and altered by the discursive practices of agents," (Copeland, 2000: 190). This is due to the fact that both affect each other, and they would not exist without the other. People are driven by their values, beliefs, culture, etc. and thus their actions are produced by these factors. These factors also shape the outcome of any situation, and in peace processes, actors shape the process but the ideational structures also shape the actors. Therefore, "constructivism considers how

ideational structures shape the very way actors define themselves – who they are, their goals, and the roles they believe they should play," (ibid.). Furthermore, "the structure leads actors to redefine their interests and identities in the process of interacting (they become 'socialized' by the process," (ibid.). Identities places actors in their social settings – individuals and communities can identify themselves and be brought together by common agendas and interests. Traditions, norms and values form social and individual identities, and "from identities are derived interests," which are instrumental in conflicts as well as peace building efforts (Williams, 2007: 10). To sustain peace, the interests of conflicting parties must be harmonized so that the parties are satisfied that their interests have been met at least partially.

6 ANALYSIS

Previous studies have attributed the success of the Somaliland peace process to many factors, such as the leadership of traditional elders, the bottom-up nature of the process, and the lack of foreign interference. This thesis does not deny the importance of these factors but rather aims to show that these 'pillars' cannot stand without a strong foundation. This foundation will be the object of this analysis. Several key aspects of this foundation have been chosen as a focus for the analysis, in order to paint a fuller picture than present in other studies. By starting with an analysis of social change occurring in Somaliland, a contextual understanding of general attitudes towards peace leads to an analysis of *xeer*. *Xeer* is seen as a key to understanding the foundation as it forms a general structure of norms, traditions, and laws in the Somaliland context. Subsequently, a particularly important norm – selflessness – is seen as a vital component to the foundation of peace in Somaliland. Following this, appearances, and its significance will be examined, as it is a strikingly visual aspect of the success of the process. Finally, the analysis will conclude with an investigation into the importance of beliefs as an ideational structure crucial to the peace.

6.1 Social change

After decades of being treated like second-class citizens, we wanted change – Interview 4

How can social change be seen as an underlying force strengthening the peace process? This section argues how the events leading up to the process and the resultant atmosphere of social change was a powerful instigator for change to occur and peace to be made. The late 1980's and early 1990's was a period of great social change in Somalia and Somaliland – Hargeisa and Burao were bombed to ruins, the Barre government collapsed and the SNM consolidated power. With no government, the social structure of the region was left scrambled. This meant that the future was unsure and had to be shaped by the Somalilanders themselves – changes could be positive or negative. The social changes taking place can be

identified by the five key principles of Leonard Jason (5.1), which will be used to highlight the social changes – a serendipitous period of shifting attitudes and a changing social structure – and its role in essentially enabling the peace to be brokered.

The collapse of the government was especially significant because it resulted in a power vacuum, which had to be filled – thus creating an opportunity for people to shape and influence the change of governance. In this sense, the people had a chance to construct their reality through their own desires, norms, and practices, to create a government or system that would represent their common goals. There was a strong desire for change in Somaliland that was the result of decades of perceived neglect on the part of the government. The neglect, capped by the brutal massacres of 1988 and the subsequent fall of the government, meant that people were tired of war and struggle, and therefore desired peace – this shaped the peoples' reality and knowledge, thereby influencing their agency for change. In addition, the conflict in surrounding Somalia "served as a strong and constant reminder of how the situation could deteriorate if permitted" (Walls: 2009: 389). Several interviewees expressed the desire they felt for peace after the years of war and oppression under the hands of the government. Interviewee 3 stated,

> We were victims for a very long time and experienced war when the *Xamar* [people of southern Somalia] had peace and stability [under Barre]. After the government collapsed, many of us wanted peace immediately no matter what.

The people had already experienced the hardships of war, and continued war meant continued suffering – torn families, living as refugees in Ethiopia, and loss of livelihoods. In this sense, the change that occurred in Somaliland was a result of the people's desires, persistence, and commitment to make selfless sacrifices to change the *status quo* – a potent catalyst for peace. The SNM's commitment to reconciling neighboring clans using clan elders, forgoing vengeance in the pursuit of finding peaceful settlement to conflicts between clans is a testament to the attitude of the peoples' desire for peace (Drysdale, 1994: 139).

In order to resolve the differences between the clans, elders were utilized in line with Somali traditions of conflict resolution. These traditions were strengthened by the absence of government institutions, and the societies needs and desires. The use of traditional structures

represented an overt shift back towards Somali values and norms,[24] compared to the Western-styled governance as used by successive Somali post-independence governments. With this change, traditional values acted to bring the community together to reconstruct and redefine Somaliland society, thus forging a new identity based on changing attitudes and large-scale social change. During this period, the power shifted from the government to the SNM and the clan elders, who became agents for peace making. The aspiration and goal was to establish peace among the main clans, initially between the Isaaq and clans who had been loyal to Barre – Harti and Dir. In this sense, the goals and visions of power holders was fluid and changed with time. This meant that the peace process followed the norms of the people, and was not strictly time-bound, with meetings being flexibly arranged, sometimes as precursors to bigger meetings when there was a need to first settle certain disputes in order to carry on with negotiation. This gave the process ownership and legitimacy.

The secession of Somaliland, decided on during the first national peace conference in Burao, represents a significant social change. With the initial peace reached, secession was decided upon as the reconciling clans realized they did not want to share power with Mogadishu. According to constructivism, the peace process, of which the secession was a part, was an "intentional mechanism" aiming to change the *status quo* (Williams, 2007: 11). Without secession, the frail peace in Somaliland would likely collapse, due to the divisions among the clans. The south was perceived with hostility among Somalilanders, a feeling strengthened by the bombardment of Hargeisa and Burao. As one interview put it, the Barre government "would never have bombed our cities if we were from his clan or another southern clan. The Isaaq became expendable," (Interview 1). The action of Ali Mahdi symbolized terror and tyranny, and this realization pushed and motivated the people to persist in their commitment for peace by seceding and establishing their own just governance. Interviewee 12 conveyed his fear and hostility towards being a part of southern Somalia, arguing that "the southerners do not have a strong *xeer* or tradition of democracy like us – they prefer to take things by force, not caring about the damage they inflict on their people and country." This suggests that divisions between north and south were irreparably damaged, and secession provided

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[24] These traditions were already in use within the society informally during the Barre regime, but with the collapse of that government and its institutions, these traditional structures gained an official status in Somaliland.

the only viable solution during this potent time of change. The interviews exhibit a strongly shared identity, based on shared attitudes and perceptions. Common identities influence shared interests, which shape large-scale action and social change. In this way, people can be the change that they want to see. Thus, secession was a social change that strengthened the peace process, because it gave Somalilanders the independence to solve their own conflict through their own identity, norms, values and traditions, thus legitimizing the peace process in the eyes of the people. This shows how specific events led to a strong atmosphere and desire for change, which resulted in real changes.

6.2 Customary law (*xeer*)

How can customary law be seen as a foundation to peace in Somaliland? *Xeer* (customary law), is a tool social constructed by the people in an effort to give structure and discipline to the itinerant nomadic lifestyle. This section aims to show how significant the use of customary law was to the success of the peace process. As the theory has established, constructivism sees that ideational structures, such as the body of customary law, strongly influence agency. Thus the existing *xeer* pertaining to conflict resolution in Somaliland, was an established structure of norms and customs that laid the foundations for the peace process which took place in Somaliland. *Xeer* was significant for the success of the peace building in three ways: 1) it provided a tool for conflict resolution which was already tried and tested; 2) was anchored in common values, norms and traditions which people could relate to; and 3) it connected to basic religious beliefs held by the community. Thus, the structure of peace making as set out in *xeer* provided a context-sensitive tool, which, due to the possibility of the community to relate to and feel ownership towards it, made it easier for the disputing parties and the community as a whole to accept and internalize[25] the outcomes.

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[25] Internalization is a powerful concept, which implies that people accept and integrate an external will into their own

An illuminating example of how *xeer* sanctions work was provided by interviewee 16, based on an experience from his nomadic youth in rural Somaliland (during the 1960's). The episode took place when a man, sent by his family to collect their grazing camels, chased a girl who was sent by her family to collect their grazing goats. When their paths met, the man asked the girl if she had seen his camels, but the girl, immediately upon seeing the man was frightened and ran. The man followed the girl, chasing her until she met another pastoral family, who protected the girl and questioned the man, who claimed he was just asking a question. The next day, the issue was raised with the girl's family, who after reviewing the footprints left in the sand, proceeded to accuse the man of chasing the girl. The matter was settled by local elders who sentenced the man to be chained, half-dressed, in the village common, where he was shamed. As a consequence, the man's marriage prospects are severely damaged, as no family would be willing to give their girl to such a man, and the crime will follow him throughout his life, in all his dealings. This harsh punishment was used in order to scare off future offenders who might want to commit rape. The punishment is severe because the girl falls under the category of *biri-ma-geydo*.[1] Furthermore, this punishment prevented the affected families and clans from falling into a serious conflict, which might have resulted in many deaths and casualties.

[1] "To be spared from the spear" – see 4.7 *The role of customary law (*xeer*) in the peace process*

Box 2 Sanctions of *xeer*.

Xeer is a social construct that is a result of the society needing solutions to regularly occurring problems. The agreements are shaped by ideational forces, such as values and norms, but also factors such as historical ties, previous agreements, conflicts, and the specific needs between contracting parties. In this sense, *xeer* is fluid, and changes slowly with the changing needs of any particular time or context. For generations and generations, it has been the system for which the people in the Somaliland region have regulated, solved, and sanctioned certain codes of conduct. Issues, big and small, have a spectrum of ways to be dealt with in proportion to their magnitude. As one interviewee stated, "[*xeer*] works through time, even if we have progressed with better transportation to the villages and with an easier life style, our customary law still applies," (Interview 16). This fluidity, and sensitivity to the social context has facilitated and strengthened the Somaliland peace process.

A particularly important aspect of *xeer* that strengthened the peace process is the concept of *madasha nabada*, which translates roughly to 'peace at the known place'. It is a long-held norm of *xeer*, which stipulates that peace be made at the same place where a conflict took place, typically under the shade and tranquility of an acacia tree. This is significant because it shows how the fact that the peace process was held within Somaliland was not a coincidence, but rather the exercising of stipulated *xeer*. The following of this *xeer* strengthens the local ownership, authenticity, and leadership of the peace process, because it involves using locally designed tools to solve a local problem in a way that the affected people can relate to. This gives the norm of *madasha nabada* perceptional value, in the sense that it imparts legitimacy and trust to the process, which is crucial to its success. Thus, it shows how important it is to understand the underlying foundation that norms lay for the success of the peace process.
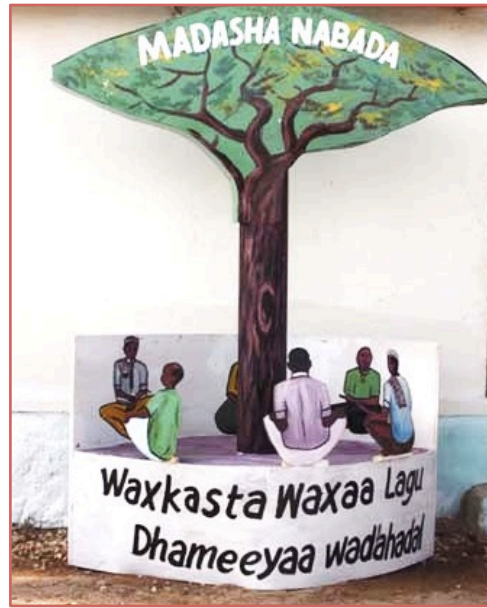

Image 14 Somaliland artwork showing traditional form of conflict resolution taking place under the shade of an acacia tree. *Waxkasta waxaa lagu dhameeyaa wadhahadal* translates roughly to 'everything can be solved through dialogue'. Source: (*Untitled* [Ufweyn], 2014).

Following the *xeer* of *madasha nabada* made the choice of location significant in three primary ways: 1) it lead to greater participation, legitimacy, and validation of the process; 2) it lead to the process being conducted in villages and towns all over Somaliland; and 3) it focused scarce resources for the use on essential needs, instead of sending delegations abroad. By keeping processes local, it became possible for all members of the affected community to participate in the processes. As for the bigger, national conferences, such as the Borama conferece of 1993, some participants had to travel far within Somaliland, but at least it meant not having to cross boarders into neighboring countries.[26] The Borama conference was organized with the planned participation of 150 *guurti* and 100 observers, but it is estimated

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[26] Compare this to the large internationally-funded Somali peace conferences, such as the 1997 IGAD conference in Ethiopia, the 2000 Arta process in Djibouti, and the Nairobi conference of 2004, which have taken place in neighboring countries far away from the locals affected by the conflict.

that approximately 2,000 participants took part during the conference (Farah & Lewis, 1997: 372-3; Lewis, 2002: 283). With greater participation comes a greater perception of legitimacy[27] and authenticity for the process, since participants, including women,[28] were able to raise their concerns and influence the proceedings by participating. With an increased number of people partaking in the conference, the outcomes are more likely to be validated when participants go home to parley the messages of the conference. This shows how participants become catalysts towards peace, by being agents influenced by ideational forces, such as the norms and values regulated in *xeer*. The interviews consistently see themselves as a peace-loving community, which represents a common identity that influences the actions of these agents within their socially constructed context.

The *madasha nabada* norm facilitated the healing and reconciliation process to spread from the bottom up – from individual families to the national level – since it allowed smaller, local issues to be dealt with directly. Furthermore, since the process was initiated locally and since it was conducted on home soil instead of abroad, the agenda of the peace was equally local and homegrown. As one interviewee put it,

> It's strange how many African countries use European advisors to solve their problems. Even Siad Barre had a British advisor.[29] [Somaliland's] peace building was successful because we did not have outsiders giving us their solutions to our problems, (Interview 5).

This comment echo's a strong critique[30] against foreign interference and aid, which often entail strict conditionalites and removes local agency and agendas from decision making processes. This can lead to an unequal balance of power and domination from external actors (Lederach, 1995: 214). Eubank's 2012 study on taxation, revenue bargaining and

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[27] Strong legitimacy may lead to the minimization of support for terrorist groups.

[28] Women were very active in the process and key actors to the success of the peace (see Image 12). Some women organized themselves and demonstrated outside conference venues, wanting women's voices and agendas to be heard, which they actually succeeded in doing. Some concerns of the women were incorporated into the agreements after the demonstrations. The women took many roles, and they were the biggest financiers of the process, and supported the logistics of the processes (APD, 2008: 46). They were responsible for collecting firewood, cooking, cleaning, fixing sleeping arrangements and passing messages from one group to the other. Their contribution was instrumental to the process. As Bradbury notes in his book *Becoming Somaliland*, "a woman's dual kinship ties to her paternal clan and to affinal relatives in her husband's clan would enable her to act as an ambassador and channel of communication between warring parties and to cross from one territory to another" (2008: 104).

[29] Professor Richard Greenfield was advisor on foreign affairs to Siad Barre until 1986 (Pateman, 2008).

[30] See Dambisa Moyo's *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa* (2009); William Easterly's *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Harm and So Little Good* (2006); and Werlin, Herbert H., 2005. "Corruption and Foreign Aid in Africa." *Foreign Policy Research Institute.* Vol. 49, No. 3. pp 517.

foreign aid in Somaliland suggests that if Somaliland had been eligible for international aid, it would have received an estimated average of approximately $120 million from 1991-2004, compared to Somaliland's actual government revenue, which ranged from $20-40 million between 1999-2007 (Eubank, 2012: 475; see Table 3 below). Furthermore, during the SNM leadership in 1992, conflict arose due to the sharing of Berbera port revenues – amounting to approximately $7-15 million, which was later, settled through *guurti* mediation. However, with "these levels of aid would have diminished the need of the government to take control

Imputed Somaliland Aid Levels Controlling for Population, Past Colonial Relationships, Annual Fixed Effects, and a 25% Discount Factor for Aid Not Going to Government Sector		
Period	**Net Aid Transfers Per Capita**	**Total Aid** For Population of 2 Million
1991-2004 Average	$59.4	$118.8 million USD
1999-2004 Average	$49.6	$99.15 million USD
Year of Secession (1991)	$80.4	$160.8 million USD
Year of Boorame Conference (1993)	$74.0	$147.9 million USD
Figures in Constant 2005 Dollars. Predictions based on regressions of aid per capita against the natural log of population and dummy variables for historical coloniser, minus 25% to account for aid not going to the government sector. Values for Somaliland calculated for a population of 2 million. A full discussion of this figure, source data, and methodology can be found in Appendix 1 of the version of this paper posted online at SSRN.		

Table 3 Table showing predicted levels of international aid to Somaliland had Somaliland been eligible for such aid (Source: Eubank, 2012: 476).

the port of Berbera," (ibid.: 476). Thus, if Somaliland had received such amounts of foreign aid during its peace building process, peaceful mediation and settlement regarding the sharing of resources may never have occurred, and the region may have Balkanized along clan lines. This shows how the lack of foreign aid has been conducive to peace building in Somaliland.

However, there is also criticism of locally lead peace processes, which tend to be drawn out due to the commitment to consensus (Murithi & Murphy Ives, 2007: 84). In addition, it can be difficult to reach consensus with large assemblies of participants, which means that sometimes parties are left out in order to encourage expediency and agreement, which in turn can lead to a lack of legitimacy (ibid.). A final critique leveled by Murithi and Murphy Ives is that indigenous peacemaking processes often are patriarchal in their nature, thus externalizing women (ibid.). These critiques can be applied only partially to the Somaliland

case, and pale in comparison to the benefits of this type of mediation in this context. Another criticism against traditional forms of institutions bases its critique in modernization theory, which argues that such traditions are backward and cannot lead to development in the modern world. W.W. Rostow states that in the modern world, "'men must come to be valued in the society not for their connection with clan or class, […] but for their individual ability to perform certain specific, increasingly specialized functions,'(Rostow, 1971[1960]: 19)" (as quoted in Blim, 2012: 346). However, such an outlook does not take into account the social contexts and value of such traditions and norms. As this thesis argues, such a view is counter productive to any form of development or state-building, since values, norms and traditions rooted in society are key to legitimizing governance and conflict resolution.

By conforming to the norm of *madasha nabada*, the resources needed for peace process were able to be focused on essential needs. This is because this norm emphasizes the need for peace to be made directly and in the immediate vicinity of the conflict, which means that conflict resolution does not become a prestigious event held at fancy hotels and requiring a large budget. The low-budget processes provides a stark comparison to the high-budget peace-processes of southern Somalia, which take place in fancy hotels in foreign capitals, sponsored by international institutions, with a cast of paid representatives dressed in western clothing (see Image 13). For instance, the 2004 Kenyan-led Somali peace conference hosted 300 delegates (plus their uninvited entourages, bringing the total to approximately 1,000) at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi (Tavolato, 2004: 12). Such extravagant conferences do not correspond to traditional Somali norms, but rather tend towards international and Western ones. Furthermore, they create an environment for greed and corruption, thereby wasting precious resources. The effect of this is a loss of ownership and a delegitimizing of the process in the perceptions of the affected. As Kenyan President Moi poignantly opined, "peace conferences became milch camels for the factions to milk," (Lewis, 2002: 266). Here the agents are not catalysts for peace, but rather risk perpetuating the conflict. However, this cannot be blamed on individual morale *per se* but on structural constraints of the socially constructed order they act in. For instance, the extravagance, benefits and comfort of the conferences leads to normalization of practices one might consider 'greedy'. As Nixon

Ng'ang'a of the East African Standard[31] muses regarding the Nairobi conference, "why rush to end a means to a peaceful night in a decent hotel and a full tummy, away from the sound of the gunfire?" (Ng'ang'a, 2004, as quoted in Tavolato, 2004: 12). The practice of *madasha nabada* in Somaliland prevented such outcomes, because the socially constructed system of which this norm plays an import role does not allow the process to take such extravagant forms outside of the country. Instead, this long-held Somaliland tradition localizes solutions to a conflict and thereby does not necessitate foreign funding or interference.

Common to all of the aspects of *xeer* discussed above is the convergence of ideational forces to construct a specific Somaliland identity, to which agents attach pride and loyalty. Norms and traditions, such as the *biri-ma-geydo* or *madasha nabada*, are lodged in the public memory, shape and give meaning and identity to society. Pride and loyalty runs deep in the Somali blood, and relates largely to the nomadic mode of life and its clan structures, with its inherent systems of accords and compensation. The clans protect members' safety and their rights to shared resources. Since the grazing grounds are seen as a gift from God to all, nomads have to vie for the best grazing grounds. Due to this environment and nomadic life, norms have been shaped regarding absolute clan loyalty and pride. This construction is rooted in a context of shared values, traditions, and norms. Thus, perhaps the success is not so much due to the role of traditional structures and leadership *per se,* but rather their underlying values and norms as a part of the customary law that have legitimized this role.

6.3 Selflessness (*gobannimo*)

This study argues that the peace in Somaliland was a result of individual and communal sacrifices, based on significant socially constructed values held in high esteem among Somalilanders. How can a characteristic of selflessness be a foundation for peace? Constructivism argues that "institutionalized norms and ideas define the meaning and identity of the individual actor and the patterns of appropriate economic, political and cultural activity engaged in by those individuals," (Reus-Smith, 2005: 197). For instance, interviewees expressed pride in the success of the peace process, something they see as a result of a shared culture and character of willingness to make sacrifices in order to solve

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[31] The East African Standard is a leading Kenyan daily newspaper. See 9 January, 2004 edition.

conflicts. A word that repeated itself many times in the interviews is *gob*, which translates roughly to 'noble' or 'nobility'. When asked to elaborate about *gob*, interviewees described how *gobannimo*, or the trait of selflessness (or nobility of character) is deeply ingrained and highly valued in Somaliland culture. This conveys the social construction of a Somaliland identity through the idea of selflessness, giving the people a common identifier separating them from the rest of Somalia. This value is connected to the equally significant value of generosity, or *deeqsiinimo*. These values construct norms influencing many aspects of Somali life, from the welcoming and feeding of guests (*sooryo*[32]) to clan loyalty. Whereas these values are 'ideals' for the community at large, they are expected of the elders. As mentioned by interviewee 2, the most highly esteemed elders are those who actively work for the good of the community in multiple ways, such as solving conflicts, giving generously to those in need and supporting local initiatives, yet their gains do not add up to anything when you take into account all of what they do and spend in their work. Selflessness as a value was highly significant in influencing shared goals, important to the making of peace in Somaliland, since it gave the process and its mediators legitimacy, trust, common identity and a sense of ownership. The value is a social construct, rooted in both Somali nomadic culture and Islamic beliefs. For example, due to the scarce resources that befall them, nomads must employ competitive independent self-help as a mode of survival (Lewis, 2002: 11). Selflessness and generosity is a survival mechanism that becomes a source of great pride between families and clans, and the stories of these virtues spread[33] and greatly increase the respect, and thereby power, of the receiving party; "people will talk very highly of a family who extends themselves for the comfort of a guest, and such talk will spread by word of mouth," (Interview 20).

The value of selflessness is also rooted in Islam, in which selflessness (or *ithaar*) is a highly commendable act – those who, despite the poverty of their own give to those who come to them in need, for the love of God and His creation (Qur'an, 59:9). These deeply rooted forces have shaped the norms and traditions of the Somali society, to the point where

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[32] *Sooryo* is an extremely important Somali culture of receiving guests with utmost hospitality. It includes feeding a guest with the best food available, giving gifts, and sending a *gaarhaye* (a distinguished escort or sentry) to escort the guest in and out of one's territory. In the vast and hostile territories home to the nomads, such generous hospitality may be crucial for survival.

[33] The Somali culture is fundamentally oral, and deep value is attached to spoken words.

selflessness has become so imbedded in society that it influences everything from popular music[34] to peace-building.

In what way is this value connected to peace making? Selflessness is a value highly significant to the peace, and clearly evident on the part of the participants and elders. For instance, some of the negotiations took place over long periods, and the participants were forced to leave their own affairs while living in very basic accommodation away from their families, and often travelled by foot for days to reach the conferences. The previously cited example of chief Aqil Ismail Musse[35] who traveled for days, to the detriment of his health, in the aim of reconciling clans is an illustrative example, and representative of a typical behavior among elders (Interview 18). The act of selflessness gives meaning and value, especially in circumstances where an elder overlooked his own health, comfort and business, for the good of the community. This virtue of selflessness strengthens the role of elders as peacemakers, and forms a foundation of trust and legitimacy based on the perceptions of people, who tend to judge actions and give meaning to them. In addition, the value of selflessness amongst the Somalilanders becomes apparent when one takes into account the devastation of Somaliland after collapse of the Barre government. Cities lay in ruins, and hundreds of thousands were living as refugees in neighboring Ethiopia, yet, despite this, people traveled far to go to national conferences, where they were hosted by the local population, who shared the little they had to sustain the peace process. One interviewee mentioned how he traveled from Ethiopia with his clansmen to the Burao national conference to protect his clan elders (Interview 15). This shows how sacrifices where made for the success of the peace making. Travelers were well received – furniture was brought out to the meetings, food was cooked, homes were opened for visiting participants, money was donated, etc. (Interview 3; see Image 6). In this sense, the people gave all they could for the peace process, which strengthened the process by giving it local ownership and a sense of community pride. This goes further than saying that the peace process was locally led – it shows that the values and norms present in the Somaliland society gave legitimate and empowering roots to the process.

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[34] Somali songs typically praise women for their beauty and manners, and men for their bravery and selflessness. Such songs are typically sung at weddings.

[35] See section 4.9 *Meetings (shir) to Settle Disputes*

6.4 Appearance

The interviews and archive footage show how appearance has had an underlying significance in strengthening the Somaliland identity and imparting legitimacy to the peace process. Appearance is a social construct that has situated and given meaning and identity to the participants of the process. This section will look chiefly at the connection between appearance and the elders, who played perhaps the most significant individual roles in the process as leaders and mediators. By appearance, two key aspects will be looked at – attire and grooming – since they make up perhaps the most significant variables of appearance.

In order to better understand Somali culture and politics, symbolism of dress must be taken into account (Akou,[36] 2011: 3-4). In all societies there are strong norms regarding dress, style and grooming for both men and women. In the Somali culture, these norms are strict in their following and importance. Societies are shaped and structured by many factors, such as laws, customs, or institutions, and therefore it is important to understand the social context of the society in depth in order to analyze it. Heather Akou shows the importance of dress in the Somali society and culture, and states that although "the act of dressing is both ordinary and very personal, dress nonetheless communicates in ways that are very public and political," (2011: 3).

Elders play a significant roll in Somaliland as political leaders as well as cultural figures, and they were instrumental during the peace process. Thus elders in the society are expected to dress in certain ways, which grants them an impression of legitimacy, trust, tradition, respect and dignity – "like any material object, clothing can be looked upon in terms of its brute concrete reality or as an element in some greater conceptual scheme transcending its mere materiality," (Corrigan, 2008: 1; Interview 18). The traditional attire of elders, as mentioned in the background, includes the *macaawis* (sarong), *hagoog* (shawl), *bakooraad* (walking stick), and *koofiyad* (Islamic hat) (see images 3 and 7). Clothing in this society transcends the mere material aspect, entering into the domains of politics, culture and morals. Traditionally, according to Farah and Lewis, "Somali elders wear hats as a symbol of moral authority,"

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[36] Akou's study focuses on women and their dress in the Somali society. However, the arguments she makes are largely relevant for men as well.

(1997: 370). Archive footage from the Somaliland peace processes is indicative of the importance of this traditional attire, as it is seen donned by nearly all participating elders (see Images 2-3, 5, and 10). Interviewee Boqor Buurmadow,[37] an elder and clan king specified this by stating that "an elder is supposed to dress in a way, where his people would be able to look at him with respect, and honor. The elder who is respected also has more authority and legitimacy in making the people accept his decisions," (Interview 18). The images also make apparent the prevalence and importance of the men's beard, which is based in religious teachings (the *sunnah* of prophet Muhammad PBUH[38]). Some elders color their white beards with *henna*, which tints the beard a fiery red color, based on Islamic culture and hadith. Beards, especially larger ones, signifies God-fearing and wisdom in the eyes of the society, and thus lends the elders legitimacy in representing their clans. Interviewee 18 stated that "elders have a responsibility to the people, as leaders and peace makers, therefore they need to look and dress in a respectful clothing that conforms to our culture and religion."

Apart from directly religious influences on dress, dress codes in Somaliland have also been influenced by other factors such as individual agents. Sayyid Mohammed Abdulle Hassan (*The Mad Mullah*[39]) is a Somali hero who fought against British colonialism, and "resented the disruptions of British colonialism and wanted to make a strong visual statement of opposition, mixing nomadic garments with an Arab-style turban cloth. Over the years, however, Somalis had come to see this outfit as 'traditional'," (Akou, 2011: 130). Sayyid led a social change in the construction of Somali men's dressing, which represented political views, thus contributing to the reshaping of Somali traditional, political, and cultural identities.

Thereby, the attire is a combination of socio-religious norms and environmental factors. In other words, the specificities of the attire are a construct, formed by social, cultural, religious and environmental forces. In conformity with the constructivist theory, norms are created by society and correspond to different aspects and segments of society. For different occasions, genders, ages, regions, etc., different norms govern the way people look – how they dress,

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[37] Boqor Cisman Aw Maxamuud "Buurmadow", an elder and boqor (king) of the Habar Jaceylo clan consented to being identified in this study. Buurmadow is a nickname meaning 'Black mountain', which he earned for his unrelenting and stubborn character.
[38] PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him).
[39] A nickname given to him by the British administrators.

groom, and attach meaning to it.[40] The norms governing the look, approach and customs of the elders is deeply rooted in Somaliland,[41] due to the significant role elders play in Somaliland society. The roles that the elders play in the society – leaders, peace-makers, arbiters, etc. – lend respect and dignity to their position, however, this thesis argues that the specific and traditional attire and grooming is vital to the legitimacy of the elders, because it represents intangible norms which are held dearly in the society. The interviews (9, 14, 18, and 20) have unanimously shown the importance of the tradition attire in garnering respect, trust, authority and legitimacy. For instance, (interviewee 9) stated:

> "if approached by two elders, one wearing the traditional attire and one wearing a suit, the one wearing the traditional clothes will command my respect and attention even though I don't know who's more intelligent,"

This interviewee's answer illustrates the crucial significance of outward appearances, of which clothing and grooming are two key elements. Peter Corrigan argues that "appearances are so important precisely because we do *not* have the time to get beyond them while plunged into the busyness (and business) of our everyday lives," thus, "if we apprehend the world through appearance, then appearance should be a true manifestation of the structure of the social world," (Corrigan, 2008: 154). The specific dressing, grooming and style outwardly displayed by a person says a lot about that person and the society in which s/he lives, because society constructs norms which give meaning to specific phenomenon. Clothing, as a phenomenon is given different meanings and values by the society, and therefore it is possible to understand society and its values by the norms its produces. Furthermore, a specific style of attire parleys a specific meaning in the perceptions of others – the outward appearance of a person is typically the first thing somebody notices about that person, thus perceptions are of utmost importance. The specific style of dress worn by the Somaliland elders shows that they are in fact *elders* and that they are *Somali*. The concept of *elder* is in itself a social construct – a classification made by society based on values, expectations and needs.

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[40] Dress is political as well as social, as can be seen with the 'War on Terror', which has arbitrarily targeted people dressed in Islamic attire.

[41] The custom has been preserved in the north partly due to the fact that the British interfered very little into the affairs of Somaliland.

In what ways is the attire of elders significant to the success of the peace building? The elders' legitimacy comes from many factors such as knowledge in customary law (*xeer)* and oratory skills, however their attire also shapes their legitimacy and trustworthiness. This is influenced by perception, especially when "perception is reduced to the image that which interests you," (ibid.: 1). The archive footage shows how elders are dressed in the described attire, linked to their culture and tradition. This implies that the elders dress in this manner because of the normative constructs regulating their roles in the society; this attire is expected of them due to the traditional and moral authority placed on their roles.

How does perceptions of attire contribute to or strengthen the peace making efforts? As established in the theoretical framework, perception is significant in establishing legitimacy and trust. In this sense, it is not the attire itself that is important, but rather its cultural and traditional significance, which along with "strong sentiments of national self-esteem and an ethnocentricity which borders on arrogance," are characteristic of Somali society (Lewis, 2008: 24). Traditional practices are constructed by the society's norms and values, over time forming attributes that tie individuals to specific places – an identity of what it means to be a Somalilander. Actions connected to the interests of this identity contribute to giving legitimacy, ownership and pride to the peace process. As stated by Interviewee 9, her perceptions of elders would make her choose and judge an elder without knowing his credentials. She would immediately choose to listen and grant more authority to an elder dressed in the traditional attire than an elder dressed in casual clothes or suits. This is because suits are seen as a Western creation in the Somali society, thus the elder wearing such attire would be discredited in the eyes of the people (compare Images 1-10 to 13). The archival footage also supports this claim, especially looking at the elders – the ministers and other participants are wearing pants and shirts, whilst the elders are wearing traditional attires, mostly with beards. APD and other academic literature discuss the relevance of culture in the Somali society; yet neglect to see how attire – a key element and practical expression of culture – plays a roll. The elders played a big roll in the success of the peace, however, their legitimacy and trust was strengthen with the fact that they followed the Somali culture in all matters, all the way to the dress code. This is because "the visual aspect of clothing […] is fundamental to knowing where we are in the world, who we are in the world, and what the world seems to be," (Corrigan, 2008: 7). The traditional attire helped give the process an

even greater sense of ownership in the eyes of the people, who trusted the elders to represent their best interest and in the process bestowed the elders with absolute power in making decisions for the entire clans. Due to the volatility of perception, there is always room for construction and reconstruction of practices. However, some cultural practices are kept strong because it represents and informs interests and identities of a society. There are many factors that construct the elder, and clothing is one that should not be neglected in understanding the foundations of peace in Somaliland.

6.5 Beliefs

This section aims to show how Islamic values and norms of peace and reconciliation, in connection with a fear of God, created an atmosphere of reconciliation as well as influenced the proceedings of the process. In this way, Islamic beliefs played a conducive role towards making peace. Beliefs are at the core of an individual, and therefore strongly shape an individual's behavior (agency) and the values individuals and society co-construct. Islam, as a set of beliefs, is an integral part of Somali life, influencing its every aspects. The religion is so intertwined with the culture it is difficult to distinguish what is originally Somali and what is originally Islamic, however "Islam has become one of the mainsprings of Somali culture; and to nomad and cultivator alike, the profession of the faith has the force almost of an initiation rite into the society" (Lewis, 2002: 16). The Somali context is strongly bound to Islam ever since the expansion of Arabian enterprise along the coasts of Somalia in the 12th century (Lewis, 2002: 23). Islam encompasses all aspects of life, not just the spiritual – regulating everything from trade, marriage and conflict-resolution (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 3). Thus the fundamental values of Islam shape and construct all norms and traditions around them. Looking at archive footage, the Islamic influence becomes apparent (see Images 10-11 and the way of dressing, see Image 1-5 and 7). This section explores how Islamic beliefs created a space and atmosphere conducive to peaceful reconciliation.

An important aspect of Islam is the use of greetings, which play a role in setting the tone of conversation and approach toward one another. Social norms shape how greetings are perceived – greetings take place in non-conflict or reconciliatory situations. Different social contexts have their specific forms of greetings; but the standard greeting among Muslims is

as-salaamu alaykum, literally meaning 'upon you be peace'. This greeting invites peace among parties since it makes apparent a desire for peaceful conversation. The greeting is not just a gesture of greeting however, but also an Islamic teaching, which comes with values attached. When a Muslim is greeted in this manner, s/he is obligated to respond in a likewise fashion (*wa alaykum assalaam*, 'and may peace be upon you, too'), otherwise risk sinning (Interviewee 11). Thus, greetings are an important gesture in this context. This also became apparent in the interviews, which all began with this greeting, and then proceeded to thank God for various things, such as health or the peace in Somaliland. Additionally, this had the effect of creating a shared atmosphere of brother/sisterhood between the interviewees and the interviewer, which was conducive to the smoothness of the interviews.

Although a simple phrase may carry no meaning for an outsider, words are given meaning in context. Thereby, the archive footage shows how such a phrase gains significance in the Somaliland context. The *basmalah* – "*Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim*", meaning 'In the name of Allah, the most Graceful, the most Merciful', written on a banner above everything else in the room shows the importance of beginning actions, speeches and important conversation with this phrase (see Image 11). What does this imply? This prelude is very important in that it signifies that the words following it are said in the name of God, which means they need to be chosen carefully and stay in accordance with God's message. The same goes for the greeting discussed above – it acts as a prelude and reminder of God's omnipresence, and reminds the speaker of his/her duties to God and to fellow man, throughout the act following it. Fear of divine retribution spurs agency to follow certain obligations and values of collective beliefs, which shapes the collective reality and perception of the world. Being reminded of God's omnipresence, the process becomes shaped by the powerful force of beliefs, which carry with them norms of conflict resolution, which is part of Islamic *Sha'ria* and Somali *Xeer*.

In addition, the tools and framework used for settling disputes in Somaliland, structured in *xeer* have their roots in Islamic values and teachings. Reconciliation and settlement strategies (*masalahah* and *suhl*) have been absorbed in Somali traditions, which meant that they were automatically applied to broker peace during the processes. This is evident when the elders negotiated peace among the different clans by coming to agreements of settlements, for

instance the return of a family or clan's land or livestock, thus achieving reconciliation after the parties agree to return the spoils they took during the war. The Islamic influence to this process of reconciliation and settlement is very strong, and binding when the parties swear on the Qur'an to accept the agreements (see Image 10). Furthermore, agreements are sealed with handshakes and a shared meal in line with the Islamic traditions. Thus the combination of the oath and meals shared can be seen as a way which forces people to see each other as a community, put their hostilities aside, and seal their agreements with their beliefs. This meant that during the negotiations and peace talks, the elders and people were forced to socialize with one another, experience the lives of the others in their own homes. The Islamic traditions, fused with Somali culture, accomplished a level of social harmony and communal spirit in being able to work through their differences. This is because "religio-cultural traditions inform conceptions of peace, conflict resolution processes as well as providing them with legitimacy – a critical ingredient for transforming negative enemy images and establishing lasting peace," (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008: 550).

The Islamic element present in each aspect of the peace process creates a feeling of ownership since people see it as something belonging to themselves, rather than outsiders. This is because religion plays a very large role in Somali society, and therefore, it must also play a large role in a peace process for people to relate. Although the religion is not originally Somali, it has been largely entrenched for centuries, intermixing with culture and traditions, constructing shared customs, identities and norms for people to conduct their lives. Phrasing the peace process in Islamic terminology and using Islamic tools, the society is forced to think about forgiveness, rather than about vengeance. On an individual level, the Islamic element provides a way for individuals to relate to each other on a human level, seeing each other as brothers and sisters. A brother or sister is a personal relation, and therefore removes the dehumanization, resultant of rivalries and conflict.

This act of forgiveness is not only a key factor to the peace and stability established, but also provides a sense of justice, which is preached alongside peace in Islam, where justice is "an absolute and not a relative value, a duty to be pursued among the believers and with the

enemies too," (Abu-Nimer, 2003: 52). The act of forgiveness is also very significant,[42] where Prophet Muhammad PBUH stated that "God fills with peace and faith the heart of one who swallows his anger, even though he is in a position to give vent to it,"[43] (Saiyidain, 1994: 107). Forgiveness, in combination with other factors such as the atmosphere of social change, was a key element of the Somaliland peace process; after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime, the SNM was the only military group strong enough to control the northern region. This therefore meant that they had the power to fight with their enemies, such as the Gadabuursi clan, which had been a key supporter of the government. Instead the SNM and the Isaaq clan elders decided to forgive and move past the revengeful attitude adopted in the rest of Somalia, and held one of the biggest peace process in Borama, a Gadabuursi populated area in 1993 (Lewis, 2002: 283).

6.6 Final discussion

To sum up, a shift from a liberal understanding of peace suggests that what is needed in peace processes are instruments which are "flexible and adaptable … [and] can take the more subjective, complex and deep-rooted needs and interests that underpin [African] conflicts into account" (Bob-Manuel in Brock-Utne, 2001: 6). The peace making in Somaliland represents such a process, and worked because key factors contributing to the peace had a sturdy foundation of cultural and traditional values, norms and beliefs to stand on. Ideational forces, as well as social change taking place in Somaliland after the collapse of the Barre government, made it possible for Somaliland to initiate a locally led peace process. The peace in Somaliland has been an ongoing endeavor, because the system used existed before and after the main issues were solved. Conflicts still arise and are settled using the same system.

Due to constant social change, norms, traditions and values construct and reconstruct society continuously. Since the time of the peace process in Somaliland during the early 1990's, a lot has changed. The nomadic lifestyle is declining as more and more people move to urban centers instead (Interviewee, 20). The elders, who in accordance with the 1993

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[42] See further, Qur'an 42:37.
[43] As related in Ibn Sad Al-Tabaqa Al Kubra, vol. II, 142, Beirut 1957. (Cited in Saiyidain, 1994)

Borama conference have been institutionalized into the bicameral parliament, have a changed role in society. The *guurti* in the parliament are now paid, and the people's perceptions of them are changing, threatening the legitimacy and moral authority of this traditional system (Interviewee, 13). This needs to be addressed in order to consolidate the young peace and democracy in Somaliland. Furthermore, religious fundamentalism is rising, and changing the dynamic of being incorporated into Somaliland traditions and culture – religion is starting to be seen as separate from culture (Interviewee, 6). On the other hand, women have increasingly become part of governance, and their voices are being heard in decision-making process (ibid.).

Finally, it must be understood that Somali culture is a very disciplined system which has show itself resilient and adaptable to modern times and shifts of social practices and structures. In the midst of state-collapse, war, and chaos, Somalis have been able to sustain their unique culture and traditional structures. Norms of consensus forming wide-ranging support and legitimacy is an impressive feature of Somali culture. War may be easy to start, but the real challenge lies in organizing a sustainable peace. This study has shown how peace is a complex phenomenon that requires a strong foundation and a multi-faceted approach to solve deep cuts in a society broken by war.

7 CONCLUSION

This study has shown that in order to understand a phenomenon, it must be studied within its social context. This represents a shift away from traditional liberal understandings of peace and peace making, and follows a newer current within the field of peace studies to focus more on internal engines towards peace. Although words like local ownership and participation are buzzwords of internationally led peace building, such approaches do not allow for full ownership since they are intrinsically external processes. The Somaliland peace processes, however, has been completely internal and locally led in the fullest sense.

In this study, the advantages of locally led process has been studied by triangulating constructivist theory with interviews, archive footage, and academic literature, the study has established how ideational forces and social change have greatly impacted the outcome of the peace process in Somaliland. Due to the fact that the peace making has been locally led with a steadfast anchoring in local values, norms and traditions, it has garnered legitimacy and ownership in the eyes of the society, which has been highly significant for the success of the process and consolidation of peace. For instance, the role of elders, as a traditional tool of peace making, has been considered a main factor to the success of the peace process by a majority of locals and scholars. However, this study has shown that already established values, norms and beliefs within the society that influence the dress and expectations of elders, were instrumental in making the agency of elders stronger and more effective in brokering peace. These ideational forces are a part of a constructed system of laws governing Somaliland society, known as *xeer*, which is deeply ingrained in the community and has shaped the mode of peace making. Several norms that have been especially conducive to the peace in Somaliland include *madasha nabada*, which stipulates that peace be made directly in the place of the conflict, and *gobannimo*, which is a highly valued character of selflessness that contributed to an atmosphere of sacrifice towards the peace. In addition, strongly held religious beliefs set a tone favorable to peaceful and reconciliatory meetings between

individuals and communities. Finally, a common shift in attitudes and desires in the years leading up to the peace process encouraged a process of social change, which resulted in reconciliation, forgiveness, and eventually peace.

This study paints a seemingly rosy picture of the Somaliland peace process, and does not investigate how any ideational forces may have had a negative impact towards the peace, although one must be aware that they exist. However, this aspect has been outside of the limited scope of this study. Furthermore, the study has not aimed to present any general statements or models, which, due to the intrinsic uniqueness of societies cannot be widely applicable. However, the results of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of Somaliland and its traditionally rooted, locally led peace process. In addition, the study exposes underlying currents essential to the Somali society and identity, such as norms and traditions unique to the community. Although Somalia provides a similar context, the application of this study's results to its conflict would be only partially successful, due to the profound differences between its society and the Somaliland society, which become apparent upon closer investigation.

Though the uniqueness of the case does not lead to possibilities of generalizations, the method of this study has been useful in understanding and explaining underlying ideational forces and their impact on the peace process. For this reason, this mode of analysis may be beneficially replicated in other studies with similar aims. The course of this study has highlighted a further need for study on the Somaliland case, which still suffers from little academic interest. Any study that expands the understanding of the context of Somaliland would be useful, but some topics that would be complementary to this study are suggested below.

7.1 Suggestions for further study

- An in-depth study of the role of women in the peace process.

    Women have been significant agents of peace, as is brought up briefly by some academics (see APD, 2008; Walls, 2009). However, an in depth study is

needed in showing and highlighting the women's role in Somaliland, and to bring out the sacrifices they endured during the civil war and peace building process.

- A study aiming to understand *xeer* from a legal perspective, comparing it to more well-known bodies of law.

  Since *xeer* is an oral customary law, it is difficult for outsiders to attain more than a surface understanding of it. Therefore, it would be beneficial for anybody interested in Somaliland to have a more accessible resource of knowledge about *xeer*.

- A study of the changing roles of elders in Somaliland, and its effect on the politics and culture of Somaliland.

  Some interviewees mentioned how in recent years the roles of elders in Somaliland society is undergoing negative, corrupting changes. Therefore, a study investigating the changing norms and values regarding elders would be indispensable due to the importance of elders to Somali society.

- A study of the urbanization of Somaliland and its effects.

  Urbanization was an issue brought up by several interviewees. It is highly relevant since much of Somali society is constructed around the norms and values intrinsic to the nomadic life-style. What effect would such social change have on the structure of the Somaliland society?

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide

The following questions are used as a guide when conducting the open semi-structured in-depth interviews. Firstly, the author introduces herself and the general purpose of the study. Thereafter the interviewee is assured of his/her right to full anonymity, and asked if they consent to an audio recording of the interview. Finally, the interview commences in line with the below question guide. The interviewee is asked the questions, with follow-up questions added depending on the response given. During several interview, other questions were improvised due to the knowledge of a certain interviewee.

Getting to know the interviewee
1. Age
2. Gender
3. Origin
4. Did you participate in the peace process?

Part I – The process in general
5. If you participated in the process, in what ways, and what role did you play?
6. How would you describe the atmosphere of the peace process?
7. What in your opinion contributed to the success of the process?

Part II – In-depth questions
8. How was the process conducted?
   a. Where did people sleep, eat, etc?
   b. Who was in charge?
9. How was the process financed?
10. Did any actor(s) stand to gain economically or politically from the process?
11. Where any foreign actors involved in organizing or conducting the process?
12. Can you describe what the peace process looked like?
    a. How did the venues look like?
13. Can you describe how people were dressed?
    b. In what way/s is dress code significant in Somaliland culture and religion?
14. How did religion/beliefs play a role in the peace process? Can you give examples?
15. Are you aware of any specifically Islamic methods of conflict resolution applied during the Somaliland peace process?
16. How did culture and traditions play a role in the process? Can you give examples?

Part III – Concluding remarks
17. Was there anything you consider was particularly striking about the peace process?
18. Do you feel like you would like to add anything else, missing from what we've discussed?

Table of Interviewee Profiles

No.	Gender	Role[44]	Age[45]	Origin	Participation in process	Medium of interview	Place of interview	Date of interview (D/M/Y)
1	M	SNM	50	Borama, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Nairobi, Kenya	29/05/13
2	M	SNM	59	Borama, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Nairobi, Kenya	29/05/13
3	F	Activist	64	Borama, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Nairobi, Kenya	4/06/13
4	F	Participant	69	Hargeisa Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Nairobi, Kenya	4/06/13
5	M	Intellectual	54	Burao, Somaliland	No	Video call	Malmö, Sweden/Washington D.C., USA	15/03/13, 16/04/14
6	F	House wife	48	Burao, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	16/03/13, 15/05/14
7	F	Student	43	Erigavo, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	07/01/14
8	F	House wife	60	Ziela, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	16/01/14
9	F	Activist	71	Sheikh, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	16/01/14
10	M	Participant	64	Oodweyne, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	18/01/14
11	M	Imam	58	Sheikh, Somaliland	Yes	Direct	Göteborg, Sweden	20/02/14
12	M	Participant	45	Burao, Somaliland	Yes	Phone	Malmö, Sweden	22/02/14 23/02/14
13	M	Student	34	Berbera, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	24/02/14 14/04/14
14	F	Participant	67	Burao, Somaliland	Yes	Video call	Malmö, Sweden/ St. Cloud, USA	4/07/13 24/02/14
15	M	SNM	55	Borama, Somaliland	No	Video call	Malmö, Sweden/ St. Cloud, USA	15/03/14
16	M	Nomad	52	Berbera, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	05/02/13 17/02/14 05/05/14
17	F	House wife	55	Hargeisa, Somaliland	No	Direct	Malmö, Sweden	19/03/13
18	M	Elder, Boqor	58	Burao, Somaliland	Yes	Phone	Malmö, Sweden/ Hargeisa, Somaliland	05/02/14 15/05/14
19	M	Elder	66	Zaila, Somaliland	Yes	Video call	Malmö, Sweden/ Hargeisa, Somaliland	14/04/14
20	F	House wife	71	Erigavo, Somaliland	Yes	Video call	Malmö, Sweden/ Hargeisa, Somaliland	14/04/14

Table 4

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[44] The informants self-identified role during the peace process

[45] Most informants estimated their age due to a lack of a system of birth certificates