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The Puntland State of Somalia. A Tentative Social Analysis

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THE PUNTLAND STATE OF SOMALIA

A TENTATIVE SOCIAL ANALYSIS

May 2010

Any undertaking like this one is fraught with at least two types of difficulties. The author may simply get some things wrong; misinterpret or misrepresent complex situations. Secondly, the author may fail in providing a sense of the generality of events he describes, thus failing to position single events within the tendencies, they belong to.

Roland Marchal
Senior Research Fellow at the CNRS/ Sciences Po Paris

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Nota Bene: as far as possible, the Somali spelling has been respected except for “x” replaced here by a simple “h”. The letter “c” in Somali corresponds to the Arabic letter □ (cayn).

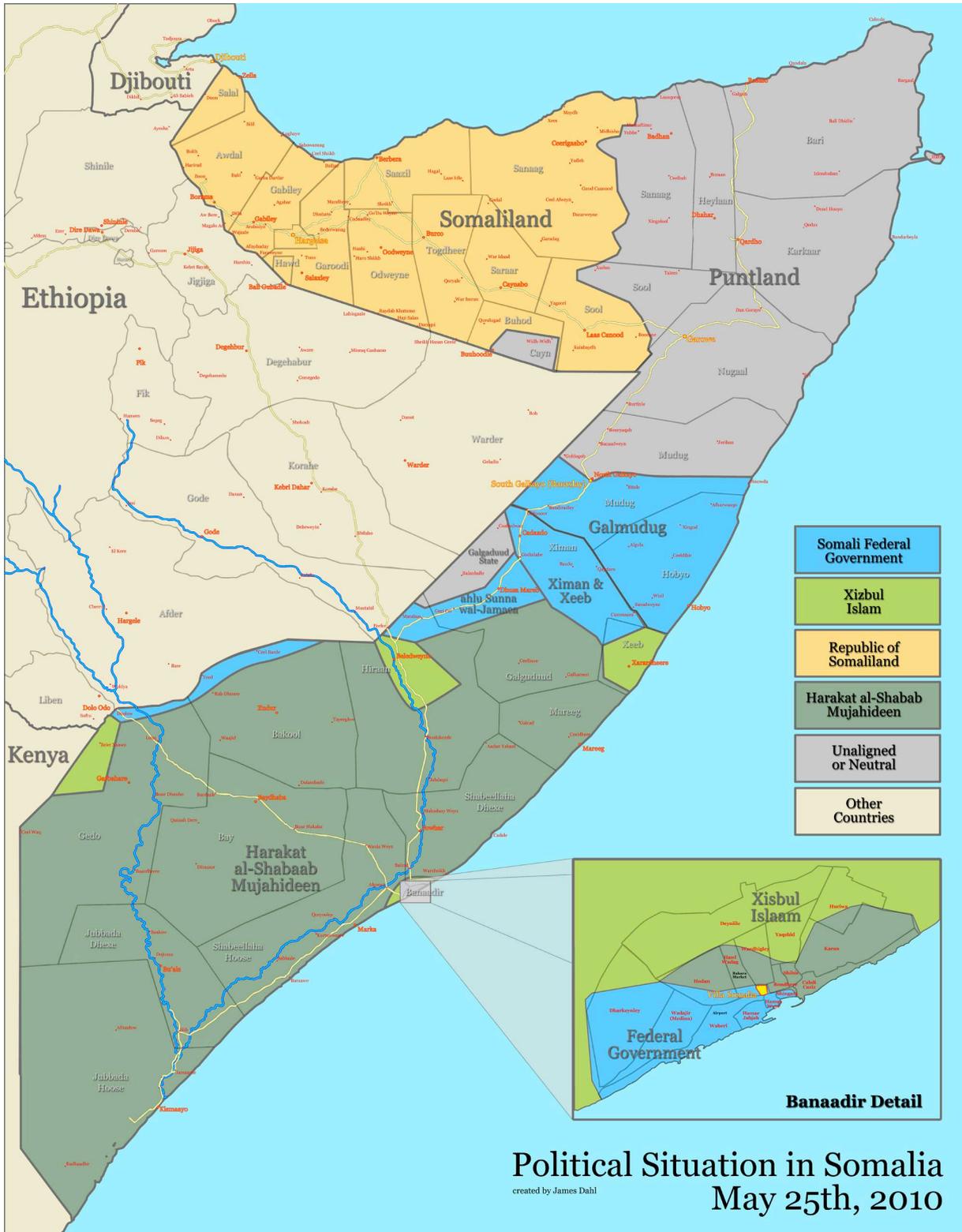
Somalia: administrative divisions



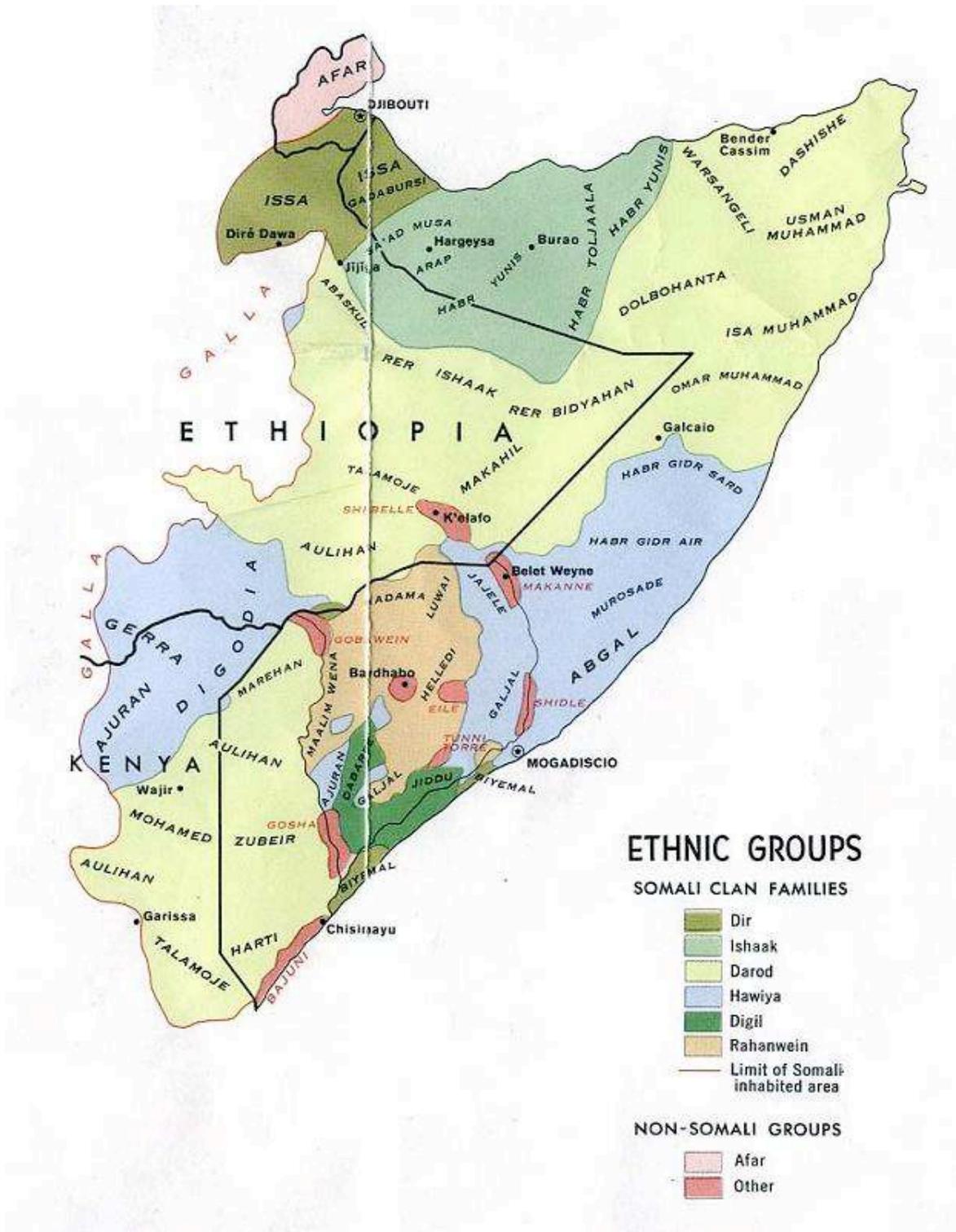
The Puntland State



Political situation in Somalia
A tentative map
(Hisbul Islam is not well treated!)



Clan divisions
 (just an indicative map/ see annex 1 for details)
)



TERMS OF REFERENCE

PUNTLAND STUDY: TERMS OF REFERENCE

This consultancy, to be divided between two consultants (Consultant A, Professor Khalid Medani, and Consultant B, Roland Marchal), will provide a comprehensive assessment of specific areas of interest within Puntland and will include the following:

(Consultant A) will address:

(i) Political Environment:

- details of the current political structures and entities (including political parties and factions) in Puntland, including the main political players and other key influencers;
- details of constitutional arrangements and prospects for democratic transition;
- overview and assessment of recent Presidential election process;
- overview of the legal mechanisms of the state and a review of their effectiveness;

(ii) Economy:

- analysis (including supporting statistics) of the current economic status in Puntland e.g. major internal and external revenue streams, key trading partners and opportunities for economic development (including rural areas e.g. the previous frankincense industry);
- assessment of current financial systems, including use of diaspora finance, hawala flows; the effects of maritime piracy revenue on the local economy;
- details of livestock trading and import/export concessions and how current legislation impacts on this revenue stream for the local economies and the Puntland administration; options for support of the livestock industry;
- details on the fishing industry and the effect of piracy on the fishing industry and associated revenue streams; options for the rehabilitation of the fishing industry;
- overview of the oil and gas industry as a source of revenue; internal management of concessions and local impact; consideration of Puntland/TFG understandings over oil and gas concessions and revenues;
- consideration of Puntland's economic relationship with regional neighbours (including Yemen) including legal/illegal trading (diesel fuel, people, arms);
- analysis of gender balance in the economy and options for policy;

(iii) Environment:

- consideration of environmental factors that may impact on the political, economic and socio-economic landscape (e.g. primarily climate change);
- assessment of claims of the degradation of the Puntland coast (toxic dumping and foreign over-fishing); recommendations for further action;

(Consultant B) will address:

(iv) Societal/Clan dynamics:

- overview of the main clans and areas of control and how these co-operate and integrate (or not) and play a part in political and economic life in Puntland;
- analysis of how clan dynamics play out in the urban context; the relationship between key urban centres of Garowe, Bossaso and Galkayo;
- analysis of the role of gender/family e.g. marriage, within societal/clan dynamics;
- consideration of minor clans and how they fit into societal/clan dynamics;
- the impact and effect of Internally Displaced People on Puntland;

(v) Islamism in Puntland

- Islam in Puntland and impact on society and its political role;
- the role and influence of Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiyya and connected clerics;
- the profile and presence of Shabab in Puntland;
- the profile and presence of Al-Sunna wal Jamaa in Puntland

(vi) Relations with Somaliland and Central Somalia/Transitional Federal Government:

- assessment of the current status of relations with Transitional Federal Government; assessment of Puntland's (federal) agenda within Somalia
- assessment of the current relationship with Somaliland;
- overview of the current areas of conflict between the regions (e.g. Western border with Somaliland; Southern border with Mudug);
- assessment of Puntland's external relations, primarily Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, and Gulf states.

(vii) Diaspora:

- consideration of political and economic role of the near diaspora (Yemen and the Gulf)
- the regional and local impact of the Puntland diaspora worldwide

(viii) Security Apparatus/Structures:

- the background to Puntland's security complex
- assessment of structure, role and effectiveness of the Puntland armed forces

- assessment of structure, role and effectiveness of the Puntland police forces
- assessment of structure, role and effectiveness of the Puntland Intelligence Service.
- any technical assistance or interventions that may be used to facilitate better working and co-ordination and implementation of effective rule of law;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultant B

Social setting

1. Puntland defines itself as the land of the Harti/Daarood clan confederation, of which Majeerteen is the main sub-clan. Simultaneously, its provisional charter encompasses those clans within a definite territory whose borders have been contested until today.
2. A main factor in the enduring existence of Puntland is the centrality and unity of the Mahamuud Saleebaan, the main Majeerteen sub-clan. Although the other Harti sub-clans may make up the majority of the Puntland population, the ability of Cismaan, Ciise and Cumaar Mahamuud to work and accommodate each other is the essence of Puntland survival in the civil war.
3. This has not been achieved without difficulties since rivalries divided them bitterly at different periods of history, including in the pre-colonial and colonial times. Even under Mahamed Siyaad Barre, only a section of them joined the first armed opposition, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), while the others were promoted by the regime. The internal SSDF competitions throughout the 1990s should also be seen as a continuation of those recurrent tensions, beyond the personalities who led the various factions.
4. Smaller Harti clans, although vital for the existence of Puntland after 1998, reacted in different manners to their *de facto* more than *de jure* secondary position in the regional balance of power. Influential economically, the coastal small clans kept intense relationships with the other side of the Red Sea and their elites often supported, openly or not, political Islam as the best way to curb the influence of bigger clans. Others, such as Dhulbahante, played the Somaliland or Puntland card according to the reward they were offered by Hargeysa or Garowe.

A heterogeneous business class

5. The growth of a vibrant private sector could be claimed by those who established Puntland. The traditional (mostly coastal) bourgeoisie was expanded and new comers (often former civil servants or military officers who escaped the civil war in Southern Somalia) built a re-export economy beyond supplying the Puntland population that grew at each moment of crisis in the South as IDP were in search of a safe haven or a way out of Somalia to Yemen. More recently new entrepreneurs, who emphasize their religious commitments, are becoming very active.
6. The two main economic assets of Puntland are Boosaaso Port and the 750 km Boosaaso-Gaalka'yo road. Thanks to them, parts of Bakool, Hiiraan, Galgaduud and South Mudug are supplied with imported commodities and food as insecurity prevents easy access to Mogadishu. Exports benefit also from the poor economic governance of the Somaliland authorities.
7. These advantages are not competitive, but are linked to the current circumstances. Improvements (unlikely at this stage) in Berbera and Mogadishu may affect Puntland's economy negatively. Its fragile (yet enduring) advantage could also be challenged by the macro-economic impact of certain policies decided in Mogadishu (such as issuing a new currency).

Divided Islamists on jihad

8. While Islamic references frame every day life in Puntland, the region has not witnessed the same politico-religious dynamics as the South despite an early confrontation between the SSDF and al-Ittihaad al-Islaamiyya in 1991-1993. The *de facto* reluctance to endorse more radical stances is due to the success of a Puntland identity and the peace that has largely prevailed due to its "regional nationalism". Although the business class shows sympathy towards sectors of the current armed opposition to the TFG, a cautious approach prevails as far as Puntland is concerned.
9. The first reason is the political alignment of Cabdullaahi Yuusuf with Ethiopia and the West and the hunt of any opponents who might be linked to Islamism. The second is the clan equation that

left little hope of a take over without parts of Mahamuud Saleebaan shifting towards a more militant stance. The third is a strategic design by which Mogadishu and Hargeysa are seen as more important than Puntland itself by Shabaab leadership.

10. While many Puntlanders follow Sufi orders (mostly Qadiriyya), there has been no need to build a group such as Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaaca (ASWJ) since the Puntland security apparatus has been coercing Islamists who campaigned for challenging Sufism.
11. Before the election of Sheekh Shariif Sheekh Hasan at the TFG presidency in January 2009, Shabaab was not proactive in Puntland despite the October 2008 bombings in Boosaaso. However, Shabaab decided to develop its presence in Puntland in the spring 2009, especially in western Bari, Sanaag and Sool.
12. Although security deteriorated from May 2007 (hijacking of aid workers) until now, all incidents cannot be attributed to Shabaab since clan rivalries, corruption of officials and piracy provided ample motivations for targeted killings. Yet, the dubious odyssey of Mahamed Saciid Atoma in 2009 shows a possible (but uneasy) starting moment for Shabaab.
13. If lessons from southern Somalia apply, a very disturbing point is that Shabaab knows how to benefit from local or clan conflicts. Conflicts do not need to be caused by religious differences to benefit a Shabaab encroachment. Destabilisation constitutes its most fertile ground.
14. Yet because its tactics are better known today by Somalis (and foreigners), one could envision not a “domino” but rather a “counter-domino” scenario. But this optimistic forecast would take place only if stability and safety increase in Puntland and conflict with Somaliland does not escalate.

Difficult neighbours

15. The competition with Somaliland is serious and exists at different levels. The issue of secession may less affect people than the very claim of territories populated by the Harti population. Yet, the case is losing support, as the first problem being witnessed by all in Somaliland and Puntland is the division of the Dhulbahante elites and their taste for betting on Hargeysa or Garoowe according to the rewards they receive.
16. These recurrent shifting loyalties give a social credibility to the claim for a Maakhir State, independent of Puntland and Somaliland, as an expression of an overall frustration against the marginal role Sool and Sanaag have in both administrations. Yet the duration of such an entity is doubtful due to the intense clan divisions and the lack of an economic basis. Laas Qoray won't be able to play the role comparable to Boosaaso or Berbera before long.
17. Although the creation of Galmudug was not welcomed by the incoming TFG President, Cabdullaahi Yuusuf Ahmed in 2004, and though clan conflicts erupt from time to time at their (undrawn) border, for the time being, the only real stake is the management of Gaalkacyo city and its infrastructures. Although the Galmudug administration is even weaker than Puntland's, it offers a good ally in the opposition to Shabaab and other militant movements.
18. Whatever has been achieved under international pressures, it seems unlikely that the TFG and Puntland would genuinely deepen their cooperation. Agreements could be signed but the TFG appears increasingly anchored only in Mogadishu among the Hawiye and, therefore, of little relevance for anyone in the regions. What may mitigate such a view are the spoils provided by international donors.

Measuring insecurity

19. Piracy has a longer history in Puntland than the last three years when the international community decided to act militarily. The roots of its legitimacy have not been fundamentally challenged and the pirates have a definite policy to build social support. They are also significant military actors, though closely connected to the clan system.

20. Bombings and targeted killings have increased significantly over the last year. Although Shabaab is the usual suspect, in a number of cases other arguments are justified: clan rivalries, corruption of officials, and power excesses by the Puntland security apparatus. This latter dimension should be singled out because of its political consequences.
21. As far as the security apparatus is largely maintained by foreign funding, its misbehaviour and its mistakes are perceived as the expression of a conspiracy to divide and kill Somalis. Concerns raised by many civil society quarters cannot be simply dismissed but should be tackled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although most recommendations are dependent on a political assessment which is beyond the ToRs of the consultant B, the following steps could be considered.

1. There are three sectors that deserve more attention: clerics, business people and youth. Usually, most of the international concerns are focusing on the security apparatus and the judicial system. This is not incorrect, yet there is little hope to reform them deeply and quickly enough to cope with the current challenges. Furthermore, the will to grab foreign money is so entrenched that any heavy foreign involvement (by funding, training and the like) may sooner rather than later become dysfunctional. The long UNDP presence in assisting Puntland should teach some unpleasant lessons.
2. Clerics are divided on how to assess the current situation and the only good choice for external actors is to keep the discussion alive, not to endorse the “good” Muslims against those who, at one point or another, would appear hostile on certain policies or States (e.g. Ethiopia). One should accept that too often the “good” Muslims are seen as stooges of the West and lose the influence they may have had on the public audience.
3. As in Mogadishu, the international community has a genuine problem engaging economic operators. Either they are invited to cocktail-like discussions (typically UNDP or UNPOS seminars) or transformed into informers/clients through generous contracts. There is an urgency to engage them for who they are in the market: operators who want to make money. Doing so would imply linking their interests with stability and some Western long term interests.
4. Although Shabaab actually recruits people who are still deeply attached to their clans, one should not underestimate the identifying factor by which many youth (in Puntland and Somaliland) may identify with a group that promotes them and the call for destroying a system in which they have been marginalised.
5. This is important at a time when the fight against piracy may become more efficient on the ground in Puntland. Although one should not generalize, many former militias or delinquents in Mogadishu found their way to this jihadi organization, as a kind of born-again phenomenon.
6. Relations with Somaliland are bad but can be worse. The main concern should be more the flawed elections (to be optimistic) in Somaliland and their impact on Eastern Somaliland than Puntland as such. Dhulbahante are going to stay divided because those divisions eventually provide them with better leverage on Hargeysa and Garoowe. Warsangeli, though they are significant economic brokers with Yemen, have too little political weight to change the course of events despite the claim of a Maakhir (federal) State.
7. At this stage, due to the level of violence, it seems unlikely to start projects in Sool. Yet, a better understanding of the livestock trade in that part of the country may provide food for thought on how to maintain an “armed peace”.
8. Oil and the management of oil exploration should provoke serious concerns. The Greater Horn has a long and sad experience in this kind of conflict. A greater level of political inclusiveness and transparency – a process that should go beyond the constitutional debates – might mitigate the contradictions.
9. Any international player should also reflect on the ambivalence of its intervention. There is no way, Puntlanders could be left alone as some pundits claim, because the former are parts and parcels of a global world and won't be left out by unpleasant actors even if the West leaves the region. Yet, a cautious approach is more necessary than ever to avoid a “contamination” effect that has so greatly weakened the credibility of the West in Somalia. It may mean to (at least rhetorically) show differences with other allies such as Ethiopia or the USA.

SOCIETAL AND CLAN DYNAMICS IN PUNTLAND

1. State building trajectories: *U Dhashay/Ku Dhashay*

Puntland and Somaliland could be considered as the two only attempts to rebuild a State in Somalia without major involvement of external actors. At least, this is the dominant view, though not shared by the author. Beyond the discussion on this important point, both trajectories illustrate a strategic difference in the way “a Somali State” should be rebuilt. This debate was very apparent in all discussions related to federalism and it has been summed up in the confrontation of two terms: *u dhashay* versus *ku dhashay*. The first one refers to people who belong to the clan that claims the ownership of the region. The second refers, on the contrary, to people who are born in the region, without any specific conditions on their clan origin.

This debate on “autochthony” has been going on for most of the civil war and only the reassertion of Islamic identities has moderated (not eliminated) the vigour of that argument¹. This issue is not specific to Somalia but has also framed bitter arguments in other conflicts in Africa and elsewhere (Côte d’Ivoire, Eastern DRC, Southern Sudan, Darfur). Contrary to a first glance, it is rarely a claim for a parochial identity but a way for local elites to manage their relationships with the State.

Therefore it is interesting to consider how Somaliland and Puntland trajectories reflect this debate and which concrete forms it takes in the two would-be polities. State building in Somaliland is therefore an illustration of a legitimacy defined by the colonial past: all people settled in Somaliland are supposed to be the subjects of the Somaliland State. Broadly speaking, this seems to be the situation, though actually one can argue about the nature of the citizenship and the groups that have been denied this (or refused it).

The case of Puntland is more intriguing and to a large extent refers more to what is often described as a “Somali process”, because clanship seems to provide the rationale for the new State²: Puntland is indeed the land of the Harti (a Daarood sub-clan) that encompasses Majeerteen, Dhulbahante, Warsangeli and many other smaller clans (such as Leelkaase, Awrtable, Sawaaqroon, Dashiishle). Again, the interim charter adopted in 1998 is very ambiguous as it also defines a territory. As stated by its own constitution, the territorial sovereignty of Puntland shall extend to: Bari, Nugaal, Sool, South Togdheer (Buuhoodle District), Mudug except the Districts of Hobyo and Harardheere and Sanaag Region except the District of Ceel Afweyn and Northeast of Ceerigaavo District. It is remarkable that this territory does not completely fit with the clan definition: for instance, what should be the status of Kismaayo?³

As discussed by Markus Hoehne⁴, the reasons why Puntland was not called Harti-land demonstrate already how the political players were aware of the competition for State formation and the international response to their initiative. The name “Puntland” established a territorial claim and therefore provided more credibility than a clan-based claim in front of international actors. Punt also made a historical reference that let foreigners assume that that region was once in history united (which was not the case) and therefore could define a political identity. But clearly, it was a way to fundamentally challenge Somaliland’s attempt to get recognition. It was also a way to dismiss a new attempt by Hawiye leaders supported by Egypt to build a central authority⁵.

¹ One should not see it as a coincidence that the TFG, Hisbul Islaam and Shabaab have appointed among their key leaders in Mogadishu Reer Mataan members, since this Abgaal sub-clan is seen as the “traditional” owner of the land.

² For a favourable description of Puntland’s birth with interesting insights, see: Puntland Development Research Center, *The Search for Peace. The Puntland Experience: A Bottom-up Approach to Peace and State Building*, Interpeace, Nairobi, 2007.

³ More details should be provided by consultant A

⁴ Markus Hoehne, “Mimesis and mimicry in dynamics of State and identity formation in northern Somalia”, *Africa*, vol. 79, n° 2, 2009, (especially pp. 261-266).

⁵ See Consultant A report on this important aspect that is often played down by Puntland activists.

An interesting dimension of this competition is the way population numbers have been manipulated by Somaliland and Puntland authorities. Concerning Puntland, while in the mid-1990s, the UNDP estimated the population to be about 700 000 citizens⁶, it was confirmed to be one million in a study funded by the UNDP which was published in 2000⁷. In 2003, a booklet published by the Puntland Ministry of Planning and Statistics (with UNDP's support) mentioned 2.4 million. Some websites have gone up to 3.9 million in 2010... Demographic realism seems not to have a say.

It is beyond this report to assess and compare the success of both trajectories⁸. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that they are contradictory, not only because they dispute populations and territories (Sool and Sanaag) but also because their logics are at loggerheads, though the day-to-day functioning of their claimed State apparatus may not be that different.

2. Unity as survival?

Descendants of Daarood make up one of the four large groupings (or 'families') of agnatic Somali clans in Somalia with Hawiye, Dir, and Rahanweyn. Save for the sentimental ties that groups related to one another on that level may have, the effective level of descent is to be found in the internal subdivisions of the clans. Most Puntland clans descent from an eponymous ancestor called Harti⁹ (Majeerteen, Warsangeli and Dhulbahante, and other marginal sub-clans¹⁰). Harti, in turn, traces descent back to Sheikh Daarood, an Arab immigrant who arrived on the North-eastern shores in the 13th century. One should also add other clans, related to Daarood, but not to Harti and often reflect the regional economic insertion of North-Eastern Somalia: Ugas Laabe (a product of the Indian settlement around Laas Qoray, sometimes considered a sub-clan of Warsangeli, sometimes seen as independent) or Arab Saalah (offspring of Yemeni-Somali marriages)¹¹.

The main Harti clan in Puntland today is Majeerteen and its main division, the Mahamuud Salebaan, encompasses three major sub-clans which each dominates one of the three North-Eastern regions. The southernmost Mudug region is inhabited by the Cumaar Mahamuud; north of them in the Nugaal region live the Ciise Mahamuud, and the Bari region on the tip of the Horn of Africa, is the area where the Cismaan Mahamuud clan dominates. These three clans are by no means the only Majeerteen clans. In Bari region alone, there are 19 other Majeerteen clans and 6 more Harti clans.

But key to the understanding of Puntland viability is the centrality of the Mahamuud Saleebaan and their ability to control the two main trading outlets (Boosaaso and Gaalka'yo) and provide their leaders with militias numerous enough to counter any attempt to marginalize them. That is why the political chronicle is often the mere description of the fractious allegiances among this sub-clan and the allies from much smaller clans they got in their adventure.

It does not mean that other clans are meaningless (especially if the economy is considered). Yet, the way they have leverage on a situation is linked to their ability to ally with others and build a regional narrative for their grievances. Warsangeli and Dhulbahante are no exception to this rule, though their potential leverage is higher thanks to Somaliland.

All of these clans are organised on principles of patrilineal descent and their interrelations are governed by the traditional Somali law (*xeer*), a codification of compensations, *mag/diya* or blood money, for breaches of moral norms derived from the Muslim Shari'a law. The effective unit for regulating *mag* payment is normally a subdivision of the clan or a unity forged by some smaller such divisions. This is the most stable

⁶ K.E.Vaidyanathan (consultant UNFPA), *Report on Population Statistics in Somalia*, UNDP, Nairobi, 1997.

⁷ WSP Somali Programme, *Rebuilding Somalia: Issues and Possibilities for Puntland*, London, Haan Associates, 2000.

⁸ See the text written for a conference on the 10th anniversary of Puntland that was cancelled at the last moment by General Cadde Muuse: Mohamed Abshir Waldo, "What achievements by the 10th anniversary of Puntland Statehood", dated 1 September 2008.

⁹ Harti/Amlaale/Koombe/Kablallah/Daarood. Awrtable are Yuusuf/Daarod; Leelkaase Tanade/Daarood.

¹⁰ Kaskiiqabe and Geesaguule, rarely quoted in discussions with Puntlanders.

¹¹ Often, they are considered as a brother of Daarood.

group in the clanship system and it is usually called a diya-paying group. For instance, 28 clans in the Bari region sub were divided into some 50 diya-paying groups.

Traditionally, the Cismaan Mahamuud clan claimed supremacy over the other Majeerteen clans and, to some extent, over the whole of Harti (and even Daarood). These claims are based on the powers that were vested in the historical kingdoms that the Cismaan Mahamuud established in Bari and that, for some periods, ruled over vast areas. The king (*boqor*) is a hereditary position within the Majeerteen/Cismaan Mahamuud/Bah Dir Rooble/Bah Dir lineage. Yet, the Cismaan Mahamuud monarchs were never in full control of any sector or area nominally falling under their dominion. Nevertheless, the very fact that hereditary rulers were able to establish some form of control of political life of their own agnatic groups is remarkable, and has relatively few precedents in Somali political history.

While the Cismaan Mahamuud might have been the largest of all the Majeerteen clans, the emergence of the strong kingdoms from the end of the 18th century was largely effectuated by the support and submission of the smaller Harti and Majeerteen neighbours of the clan. This point is important to stress, because even if the kings were exclusively from the Cismaan Mahamuud clan, their power base had a pronounced multi-clan character. This implied that the kings had to pay special attention to the interests of the minority clans. The political decision making was not monopolized by the king since the paramount leaders of the larger clans formed an advisory council that met regularly with the king to discuss larger issues, including redistribution of royal wealth. This council is called *Isimadda*, 'the supreme clan leaders' and it has remained a political force in the region ever since.

It is interesting to compare the situation of that Sultanate with what happened in the 1990s. The emergence and the character of the Cismaan Mahamuud kingdom were, indeed, promoted by economic factors. Economically the Bari region has always benefited from its proximity to the Yemeni and Emirati markets. Family-based small-scale trade relying on dhows overseas and camel caravans for the hinterland has a time-honoured history. While potentially lucrative, small-scale trade was also a dangerous pursuit that required wide-reaching networks of contacts along one's trade routes. A characteristic of the trade in the area in the middle of the 19th century is that the large livestock producing clans (e.g. Cismaan Mahamuud, Ugar Saleebaan and Cali Jibrahiil) did not have regular access to the seaport settlements. At the same time some of the clans with a high degree of specialization in trade (e.g. Dashiishle, Cabdi Koombe and Arab Saalah), were locked on the hot and barren northern shores that only provide grazing for a limited time of the year. These conditions, coupled with the rising demand for livestock in Aden, seem to have fostered an increasing amount of interdependency between the producers and the traders which supported the emergence of a common political format in the shape of the kingdom.

It is of some interest here to mention that already by the end of the 19th century the royal powers were contested by close relatives of the king. Yuusuf Cali Boqor Yuusuf Kenadiid and later on his son Cali Yuusuf established their own sultanate farther south along the coast in Hobyo¹². The competition from this southern sultanate appears to have been one of the factors that blocked the Cismaan Mahamuud kingdom's southward expansion so that the Ciise Mahamuud in Nugaal were never fully under the rule of the king. To some extent one might say that the vast Nugaal valley, largely the centre for the present Nugaal region, became a frontier between the sultanate and the kingdom. After the very divisive episode of Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan's upheaval, the bloody Italian conquest of the Bari region in 1927 put an end to the sultanate existence.

The influence of the Cumaar Mahamuud is connected to modern post-independence politics. Beyond economic changes (mostly access to urbanization and education) that fostered drastic transformations in rural Somalia with a growing encroachment of the State, two events played a role in drastically improving the status of the Cumaar Mahamuud. The first one was the appointment of Cabdirisaaq Haaji Huseen

¹² He succeeded thanks to Hadhrami musketeers, further proof of regional integration. Therefore, that Shabaab claims to connect both sides of the Red Sea is not so original! The disagreement between the two leaders allowed Italy to take a foot in the region in December 1888, which again could be compared to current events...

(Cumaar Mahamuud/Reer Hirsi) as a Prime minister (June 1964 – July 1967)¹³. This provided a new opportunity for many of his kinsmen to move to Mogadishu and find employment in the civil service, a trend that was already palpable due to their role in the Somali Youth League for more than a generation.

The second event was signalling the crisis of the dictatorship that took over in October 1969. Following the Siyaad Barre's defeat in 1977-1978 to conquer the Ethiopian Ogaden, disenchanted Majeerteen officers staged an attempted coup-d'état. In its aftermath the first armed opposition movement – Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF)¹⁴ – was created among Majeerteen officers with Ethiopian and Libyan backing and on Ethiopian soil. The SSDF was led by an experienced Colonel from Cumaar Mahamuud/Reer Mahad, Cabdullaahi Yuusuf. He became known for his strong autocratic tendencies but he enjoyed a firm support from his clansmen, many of whom had fought under his command during the Somali-Ethiopian war. While the core members in Ethiopia came from a military background and many who were from the Cumaar Mahamuud clan, other members had a more intellectual background and did not feel at home with the military discipline that characterized the organization. In 1986 Cabdullaahi Yuusuf was arrested by the Ethiopian government and that event sent the organization into hibernation until after the fall of the regime in 1991.

The government of Siyaad Barre reacted in two opposite ways. It worked to divide the Majeerteen and corner the Cumaar Mahamuud using both coercion and cooptation. For instance, as it did in the South, it escalated local feuds. One particular incident of this type was the skirmishes over grazing land that occurred in the mid-1980s between Cismaan Mahamuud and Cali Saleebaan. The gradual movement of Cali Saleebaan into areas the Cismaan Mahamuud regarded as their territory, was a “normal” conflict of a type that often leads to sporadic clashes and then gets resolved by clan leaders. However, Siyaad Barre chose to supply arms to members of the Cali Saleebaan tribe which greatly aggravated and prolonged the dispute. Towards the end of the 1980s the government also contemplated the splitting up of the Bari region in order, some people argue, to isolate the Cismaan Mahamuud from the smaller clans in the north and east of the region, thus weakening the clans' ability to take a stand against the government. At the same time, key Majeerteen figures were rewarded in Mogadishu. For instance, Hasan Abshir Faarah became the governor and mayor of the capital city from 1982 to 1987, not to quote the role played by Siyaad Barre's son in law, General Mahamed Saciid Hirsi Morgan, who is from a small clan of Qardho.

Warsangeli (literally “those who bring good news”) and Dhulbahante (literally “starving for land”) are both similar and very different. The revival of the United Somali Party¹⁵, an organization that was set up in the late 1950s to gather the elites of these two clans against the “dominance of the Isaaq”, was twofold. First it intended to demonstrate the wish that their elites had to be represented in any “national” forum and not let other organizations to pretend to do so (such as the Somali National Front that for a while claimed to be a pan-Daarood organization in 1991). Second, despite all claims made by Somaliland supporters, many Daarood members (especially among Dhulbahante) did not support the declaration of independence: they simply could not oppose it¹⁶.

Warsangeli had their own Sultanate, the Maakhir Sultanate led by a charismatic leader for decades, Mahamuud Cali Shire. Family problems seem to have been as serious as in the Cismaan Mahamuud. A succession competition between the father and the son provided Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan with new Warsangeli supporters while splitting the Warsangeli Sultanate for decades. Sultan Mahamuud Cali Shire was eventually sent to exile in Seychelles by the British authorities.

¹³ The first Prime minister of Somalia from February 1956 to July 1960, Cabdullaahi Ciise Mahamuud (Haber Gidir/Sacad/Beer Nimaale) also contributed to the rapid development of the Mudug city.

¹⁴ It was initially called the Somali Salvation Front, then Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia and eventually SSDF.

¹⁵ The idea of establishing the USP was raised by the Dhulbahante traditional leader, Garaad Jaamac Garaad Cali and others Dhulbahante chiefs who then convinced the Warsangeli chief, Mahamuud Cali shire. The USP won 12 seats out of 33. One went to the son of the Dhulbahante Garaad.

¹⁶ An illustration of this stance is provided by Cali Khalif Galeydh, who supported the Somali National Movement after he defected in 1981 but, after June 1991, never accepted the independentist stance.

But, maybe because of these complicated early decades of the 20th century, the colonial power used them to connect with their base in Aden and the other side of the Red Sea. Often, this allowed them to get a better education than the average in Somaliland or north-eastern Somalia. This sheds light on their continued presence in the economic realm, the permanence of their trans-national connections but also their relative political marginalisation. In spite of a prestigious history, their land lacks infrastructure and major urban centres.

The civil war in South Yemen that started in December 1963 pushed many of them to settle back in Somalia. Many cadres who were employed in the Yemeni police found their way to the Somali Police Force commanded at that time by Mahamed Abshir Muuse. Others just kept their businesses in Somalia without cutting their links with Yemen.

The Warsangeli did not benefit much from the 1969 coup. In April 1971, their “representative” in the junta, Major General Jaamac Cali Korsheel¹⁷, was jailed after having been accused of attempting a coup in 1970 and hence lost all influence. The only option left for the Warsangeli was to lower their profile and keep business as usual since no alternative existed.

The Dhulbahante trajectory is radically different, not because this clan is more numerous but because it got luckier with Mogadishu. In the events of the late 19th century and early 20th century, the Dhulbahante sided with Mahamed Cadbulle Hasan and, though they eventually rallied the British, they kept a distinctive nationalist flavour. Although they are neighbours to the Isaaq, intermarriage between them was marginal at least up to the 1960s as showed by Ioan Lewis¹⁸. Although little is known by the author on Dhulbahante development until Siyaad Barre, the turning point was the appointment of Ahmed Saleebaan Dafle in the Security apparatus, and eventually as a head of the National Security Service.

This meant that Dhulbahante had a better chance to get access to military and intelligence positions within the State apparatus. This also implies that Dhulbahante elites felt often that they were the essential link between Somaliland and Somalia Italiana (let us not forget that Siyaad Barre regime was very nationalistic). The war in Somaliland did not change these perceptions much since only a minority of them sided with the Somali National Movement. Ahmed Saleebaan Dafle kept his position up to the end and went to exile in Eritrea¹⁹.

The Dhulbahante clan also provides an illustration of a phenomenon that deserves full attention. While the traditional leadership was once represented by 2 chiefs²⁰, they are now represented by more than 15. This dilution of the traditional authority could be explained by the number of potential representatives (often educated military officers) of sub-clans who were able to use all opportunities to criticize clan representation. This is true, but it might not be the sole important reason. The very fact that elders are increasingly seen as parts of the State apparatus and therefore engaged in often contentious deals with officials, provoke a delegitimizing process as their kinsmen see them as more distant and inclined to protect their own interests more than those of their lineage or diya-paying group.

3. The Puntland business class

Although international interest in Puntland grew only after the civil war and the creation of Puntland, the development of a private sector in that region was not linked to that moment. It was older and reflected first its insertion on the Red Sea region and typically the proximity of Yemen. Yet, post-independence events also played a role in offering new opportunities. The conflict in Northern Somalia, first with the SSDF and later with the SNM, had ambivalent effects on the social fabric and the development of new economic opportunities.

¹⁷ His son Said was minister with different attributions from 2002 to 2007, notably he was at one point a minister of agriculture and livestock in Puntland in 2005.

¹⁸ Ioan Lewis, *Blood and bone: the call of kinship in Somali society*, Lawrenceville, Red Sea Press, 1994.

¹⁹ Eritrean nationalists benefited from Mogadishu, because they shared the same enemy and also had parallel claims against decisions made by colonial powers.

²⁰ As reflected in the competition between Ahmed Cali Habsade and Hasan Daahir Afqurac in 2007, between the Faarah Garaad and Mahamuud Garaad sub-clans of Dhulbahante.

North-eastern Somalia suffered from the repression in the early 1980s. Siyaad Barre also tried to offer new economic opportunities to broaden his support in the region. He did so by first allowing Boosaaso to work as a duty-free port and then by allowing the rehabilitation (or construction) of the road connecting Boosaaso to Gaalka'yo and the Central Region. The war in Somaliland (especially after 1988) also provided a net advantage for the region since livestock exporters used Boosaaso due to the insecurity in north-west or their reluctance to deal with the SNM that controlled Seylac hinterland from 1988 onward.

A real breakthrough was achieved with the creation of Puntland. The popular enthusiasm was such that it provided business in (or through) Puntland with a greater credibility and convinced the Puntland diaspora to invest. Today, a new generation of businessmen seems to appear, much more religious (but not systematically politically active) and much less rooted in (or confined to) the region or the Harti.

The first set of actors to be mentioned here is the “traditional” bourgeoisie from the coastal area. These traders have been working for generations in the Red Sea area. Many had developed important trade networks with Aden before the war broke out in South Yemen in 1963. The majority of the big traders came from the population settled on the coast, especially near Boosaaso area, mainly Dashiishle, Cali Saleebaan, Sawaaqroon, Cabdi Koombe and Cismaan Mahamuud sub-clans. In the latter, one may find more traders in the sub-section Bah Dir Rooble.

This description evolved due to the post-independence economic changes. The main transformation was the emergence of Cumar Mahamuud traders. The latter were involved in the livestock trade in Mudug and/or benefited from political patronage during the period of Cabdirisaaq Haaji Huseen (Majeerteen/Cumaar Mahamuud/Reer Hirsi) and, even under Cigaal²¹ A section of the Ciise Mahamuud (Mahamuud Ciise Mahamuud) also developed a noticeable business group apparently thanks to Mahamed Abshir Muuse's first circle when the former was a respected Chief of the Somali Police Force from 1960 to 1969²² as he was a member of this sub-section. An alternative or complementary explanation was the development of a Kismaayo business class where Ciise Mahamuud and Cali Saleebaan were dominant in the Majeerteen community. This also explains why a fraction of this “traditional” bourgeoisie tried to settle in Kismaayo at the beginning of the civil war. Most of them gave up because of the offensives led by General 'Aydiid in April 1991 and March-April 1992 and the acute competition between the former Daarood leaders and/or the clans that were backing them: Majeerteen, Marreehaan, Ogaadeen, Dhulbahante.

The second most important section of the business class is made up of former civil servants and military officials (and their offspring) who shifted occupation after 1991. High-ranking officers were often involved in politics throughout the first years of the civil war but decided at one point either to migrate abroad or to get into business. They became involved in livestock trade (a difficult market to enter without proper background), fishery or frankincense export. An explanation is that before the civil war some had already worked in State agencies (ministry of Fishery or Livestock, ...) and had an expertise in those markets. They also knew better than others how to raise the interest of international institutions. Import trade was also common as the commercial capital was big enough.

The creation of Puntland did not reshape the business class but provided it with fresh money and a better international network to provide expertise. Throughout those years, what became significant was Puntland's economic actors' ability to play collectively: shareholding became the most popular (and successful) way to aggregate interests. There are contentious explanations to this practice. Some underline the imitation of the most successful companies in the 1990s (such as al-Barakaat): although other telecom companies (NETCO) were competing, clearly al-Barakaat (today Golis) made a breakthrough in the sector. But there is an alternative reason: few Puntlanders (piracy investors were not yet so active) were rich enough to move alone and the safest way (as in the South) was to build a board of directors and share

²¹ Yaasin Nuur Bide, the powerful ex-minister of Interior belonged also to the Omar Mahamuud but was a rival of the former Prime minister, who was very vocal against Cigaal's cabinet.

²² He left his position in January 1969 after a strong public disagreement with his minister

benefits and losses. The lack of capital reflected also the tiny market Puntland represented and still represents despite an unrealistic inflation of Puntland population figures as explained earlier.

Over the last years, a new trend has been represented by young business people coming from the diaspora. This return was witnessed in southern Somalia much earlier: in Mogadishu those returnees came back with an interest in small plants and services (FM radios) in the late 1990s. In the case of Puntland, this new generation is also distinctive because its religious identity is strongly asserted and the shareholding it gets involved in is based on new principles that hardly existed ten years ago. Although Harti might still be privileged, there is no restraint to go ahead with Marreehaan and Ogaadeen despite the fact that not so warm “traditional” clan relations exist between the three. One may see this change as a nuance since it has not deeply affected the business class. One may also find here another example that shows how the reassertion of an Islamic identity produces a new centralization process.

To a large extent, Puntland’s economy benefits from the mismanagement of Berbera and the war in southern Somalia. For the rest, it has not much changed over the years, except for the vibrant development of urban markets. What has considerably helped the economy has been the mismanagement of Berbera port, the contentious taxes Hargeysa intends to levy on imports and exports and the heavy corruption this taxation allowed. Not only did this provide a new strength to the livestock sector in Puntland, but it also convinced Isaaq traders to offload their imports in Boosaaso, even if the commodities are then sent to Bur’o market. After 2006 (it happened before for short periods), most goods for the Central region, Hiiraan and Bakool are coming through Boosaaso. This is an opportunity that should not be missed.

ISLAMISM IN PUNTLAND

1. A rich Islamic history

Puntland does not cultivate particular meaningful religious differences compared to the rest of Somalia: all people are Muslim and many could be said to be followers of the Qadiriyya or Salihyya. Religion is a key aspect of the everyday life for people though its public expression may vary. As everywhere else in Somalia, changes are more visible in urban areas since their population is more sensitive to global dynamics.

Although most of the population adhere to Sufi orders (sing: *tariqa*; plural: *uruq*) or at least show strong respect for them, the odyssey of Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan in the early 20th century proves that religious extremism is not contained by them and could challenge clan regulations even in a very pastoral society. While his upheaval has similarities with Mahdist movements (e. g. Sudan or Nigeria), Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan fought against those who did not accept his *tariqa*, the Salihyya²³. Numerous studies have underlined the fractious effects of this period in Northern Somalia and how clans from Somaliland and Italian Somalia split and fought bitterly one against the other²⁴.

As in Southern Somalia, urban Islam was in contact very early with Wahhabism (often called the Khamsiyya, the fifth²⁵ after the four traditional *madhabs*) and other Salafi viewpoints. This was first due to the migrations between Somalia and the Arabian Peninsula. Even before Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan, there were attempts to develop a more puritanical kind of Islam, especially with Sheekh Cali Cabdirahmaan born in 1787, trained in Mecca and Baghdad, who set up a madrasa near Taleeh but met hostility from his own clan to the extent that he eventually took refuge in Merka until his death in 1852²⁶.

This trend did not stop because of the colonial control. Trade, migrations, clerics training and family connections with the Arabian Peninsula provided ample opportunities for the expression of new Islamic trends. Those changes went unnoticed for a long time since they affected only a tiny section of the population and the focus was on urban centres in the South (Mogadishu and Kismaayo). Moreover, one should not forget that Wahhabism has been mostly a quietist doctrine and still is for most of its supporters.

In the 1980s, Islamic movements became more successful in big urban centres in the South of Somalia. A generation of young clerics came back in the late 1970s and early 1980s and was promoting a more militant version of Islam inspired by the growth of Islamist movements in Arab countries and the Islamic Revolution in Iran²⁷. Leaders, such as General Mahamed Abshir Muuse, became known Wahhabi before 1991. His own trajectory illustrates this trend. Although he was known as a mundane officer in the 1960s, he became religious, and Wahhabi, after being arrested in 1969 and being put either in jail or house arrest up to 1990. For this past and his piety, he was seen as untarnished and uncorrupted by most Majeerteen who endorsed him as the SSDF leader in 1991.

Local conditions also prompted this shift against a more secular understanding. Politically these new movements offered an alternative to both the dictatorship and the armed opposition. It also prevented further clan polarization. This dynamic was eventually challenged by the following events. In the last weeks before the upheaval in Mogadishu, Majeerteen elites allied with Mahamed Siyaad played the clan card with some success. The Hawiye opposition did the same also as it targeted Daarood citizens for their

²³ This past reference explains why some analysts feel uneasy about certain religious stances taken by some leaders of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaa'a.

²⁴ Robert Hess, "The 'Mad Mollah' and Northern Somalia", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 5, n° 3, 1964.

²⁵ Wahhabism endorses the Hanbali *madhab* but its social organization in Somalia was too different from the others schools of thought that it became considered on its own.

²⁶ See Lee Cassanelli, *The Shaping of the Somali Society 1600-1800*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

²⁷ Roland Marchal, "Islamic political dynamics in the Somali civil war" in Alex de Waal, *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, London, Hurst, 2004.

clan identity more than their political allegiance. Mosques could not provide the safety anymore and clan allegiance was more vital than any other identity²⁸.

2. The civil war

There is no need to remind here what happened in Puntland when al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyyah fighters got the control of Boosaaso port thanks to General Mahamed Abshir Muuse's green light. What is interesting is that this organization was divided on the question to set up an Islamic State. Among them, one should quote Sheekh Cabdiaziz Faarah Mahamed (Ciise Mahamuud) who actually called Hasan Daahir Aweys then refugee in Saudi Arabia and was killed by 1993, Sheekh Mahamed Ciise (Majeerteen) who died in the Boosaaso battle. Despite an initial success in Boosaaso, Qardho and Garoowe, al-Itihaad was over ambitious and thought it could jail elders without facing consequences.

The Islamists' defeat against SSDF forces in 1992 had different explanations that are more or less emphasized according to the personal background of the interviewees. One can stress the regional configuration: Ethiopian security services were involved alongside Cabdullaahi Yuusuf since they were adamantly opposed to admit any room for Islamists. One should also quote the SSDF internal rivalries: this confrontation weakened Mahamed Abshir Muuse in his own clan while offering Cabdullaahi Yuusuf and his Omar Mahamuud sub-clan a say in the management of the Boosaaso port (and its revenues). One should not forget clan polarisation: al-Itihaad leaders in Boosaaso were from all clans including the very Hawiye who were held responsible for the predicament of all IDPs. Clan hatred was at a peak and this feeling provided support for their expulsion though many lay people would have been more supportive, had the Islamists been only Daarood. Ironically, the exact opposite version at the same time developed in Southern Somalia: Islamists were labelled Daarood as Hawiye "secular" factions wanted to dominate the political arena.

Interestingly enough, this rout was followed by a desperate attempt to reorganize itself in Sanaag. The defeated Islamist militias got reinforcement from Dhulbahante (led by Colonel Cabdinasir Fareey) and Sheekh Ahmed Hasan (Ogaadeen). Despite their numbers (more than 1,000) they were defeated and lost many officers. This led to a major crisis in the organization and, eventually, the creation of al -Ictisam²⁹

To a large extent, the following years did not reshape political and religious dynamics that were observed elsewhere in Somalia. The influence of Salafi trends was indeed reinforced by the presence of international Islamic NGOs promoting those brands of Islam. Yet they were not as numerous and active as in southern Somalia. Simultaneously, the emerging Puntland business class needed to connect with Gulf people and the best place to do so was the mosque and the affiliation to religious practices that were favoured by their counterparts.

Long before 9/11 and the subsequent polarization, the religious commitment of the business class had evolved towards Salafism and organizations that were proselytizing it. For some, it was a way to keep clan politics at bay while again developing relations with other Somali partners, who shared the same religious views though not the same clan identity. The same techniques were also used to homogenize the market place: employing people who had the same vision of Islam and getting rid of those who were of different views.

This was a peaceful dynamic and was not seen as problematic because this new business class was very supportive of the Puntland idea and showed little inclination to be involved in clan politics *per se*. Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's first priority was indeed to restore law and order, and dismantle the road blocks that were hampering trade. As elsewhere, these people also paid for public services and donated to various schemes set up to help the poorest section of the population. At one point, they also funded the police in

²⁸ Roland Marchal and Christine Messiant, *Les Chemins de la guerre et de la paix. Fins de conflit en Afrique orientale et australe ?*, Paris, Karthala, 1997.

²⁹ Roland Marchal, "A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat al-Shabaab", *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 3, n° 3, 2009 (especially pp. 383-385).

Garowe, which could be seen as an attempt to root their influence in the Puntland State, although this support was also motivated by clan reasons.

3. After 9/11

Things changed in 2001 and drastically in 2006. Over the years bitterness against the cooperation between Puntland authorities and US or Ethiopian governments grew and the global effects of the War on Terror were also felt in Puntland as anywhere else. In 2006, the Islamic Courts Union in Mogadishu emerged as the first credible attempt to build an Islamic regime in Somalia and appealed to all Islamic views as it was clearly (apparently more for Somalis than the international community) a broad coalition.

While a few hundred fighters went from Somaliland to strengthen the Courts' militias, Puntland's contribution was more devoted to logistics. Funds and facilitations for moving equipments were its key contribution. This continued after the Ethiopian military intervention in late December 2006 and the subsequent war until the election of Sheikh Shariif Sheikh Ahmed in January 2009. Only it went more underground. One should remember that after June 2006, a section of Cumaar Mahamuud (the Mahamed Cumaar sub-clan) called for the establishment of a Mudug Islamic Court. This claim was only repressed when the ICU collapsed in Mogadishu. Although this fact should not be overvalued, it shows how deep divisions were in Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's own clan when Islamic reassertion was at stake.

The current situation could be described as follows. The claim for an Islamic State (or a more Islamic Administration) is a way to criticize the many weaknesses of the past and current Puntland administrations. Free expressions of those views are not possible as the PIS and others would target the supporters of an Islamic agenda.

If one may allege an inclination that the public opinion had an inclination to favour Islamic stances, one should also mention how diverse their foundations are. As in Southern Somalia, the Islamic trend is plural and many organizations compete to organize sympathisers³⁰: more than one group, one should envision a large spectrum of movements whose borders are blurred. Factionalism is not a monopoly of secular armed groups but a structuring feature of Somali political activities.

Second, the division between Hisbul Islaam and Shabaab in the South which becomes every day more apparent, has its own effects in Puntland. While Ethiopian troops were still in Mogadishu and Shabaab expanding its realm elsewhere, a number of al-Itihaad figures from Puntland visited the South and discussed with the armed oppositions' leadership. For what interviewees said, the huge majority of the Puntland delegation supported the view that war should not be brought to their region, despite the clear partiality of the Garowe administration: the situation was not seen as mature and costs would be much higher than benefits (in terms of support to their fellow Islamists in the south). Recently, an Islamic conference in Puntland allowed again al-Ittihaad local figures to distance themselves from the call for jihad³¹

Moreover, the sympathy Shabaab had clearly enjoyed at one point in 2007 and 2008 has decreased due to the harsh treatments to which it submits the population that it controls, a number of arbitrary killings and the December 2009 bombing in Mogadishu³². In Southern Somalia, people were often naïve towards Shabaab up to the moment the latter was able to fully enforce its political and ideological agenda. In Puntland people benefit from a demonstration effect that provokes stark opposition or, at a minimum, bitter discussion. Yet, this "counter-domino effect" does not fully apply.

³⁰ Salafi Jedid, al-Islah, Ansar-e Sunna, Tagligh, ...

³¹ Contrary to what was declared by Garoweonline, the conference was gathering mostly Harti religious figures as well as a fair number of al-Ictisam cadres. One of the chairpersons, Sheikh Baashir Ahmed Salaad, belongs to the national al-Ictisam leadership. See:

http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_war_not_jihad_concludes_Islamic_conference_in_Puntland.shtml

³² All killings and bombings are not rejected the same way...

Sections of the population, especially among the local youth, IDPs, and returned diaspora people, may still see Shabaab as an alternative to other groupings that appear too compromising with the Puntland administration (as reflected in the March 2010 reshuffle³³) or prisoners of clan politics.

Shabaab also proactively gained support using techniques that provided it with success in Southern Somalia. Two of these techniques should be quoted here as they seem to be working well in Puntland despite the attention of the Garoowe administration and its international friends. Shabaab tries its best to create, develop, and radicalize clan problems so that it could intervene as a decent peacemaker or build support by siding one part of the conflict³⁴. This has been used efficiently in Southern Somalia and should prompt to assess local contradictions, but not in a light way. In a number of cases, the Puntland President Faroole and its ministers seem to have been aware of those stakes and have reacted speedily and accurately. Yet, more is to come.

The second option is the promotion of radical stances in all sets of debates. Although the PIS and its foreign allies claim to monitor media and da'wa speeches in main mosques over Puntland, interviewees still quote long discussions about “the past and current jihads” and the like. The point made here is not that those talks are Shabaab conceived or gatherings organized by Shabaab supporters. It is to underline the juncture created by events (not always in Somalia), creeping Islamic opposition, laud viewpoints and radical militants to build the “cultural” or ideological context in which religious tolerance, plurality of praying practices, and compromising with mundane authorities, are interpreted as a fundamental disrespect of Islam and the collusion with ungodly foreign powers. A side aspect of this strategy is the will to eliminate whoever could stand up against this trend. A number of journalists, civil society activists or Puntland MPs may have paid their life for opposing too efficiently this school of thought³⁵.

At the risk of mistaking³⁶, the dubious saga of Mahamed Saciid Atoma, a Warsangeli Shabaab commander, shows that his organization might not succeed as easily as expected in Puntland. Shabaab got a fair number of Majeerteen recruits (mostly Mahamuud Saleebaan) after it took over Kismaayo in August 2008³⁷. In March 2009, the PIS arrested Sheekh Mahamed Ali Shire in Boosaaso under the allegation of connivance with Shabaab (he had just returned from a trip to Mogadishu and Kismaayo). Riots erupted in town and killed two people. The situation was then quiet for a while.

Mahamed Saciid Atoma was commanding the troops that took over Jowhar in May 2009. After setting up an administration there, he was sent to Puntland to (re)launch the activities of his movement. Allegedly, he was able to build a small force made up of Warsangeli fighters that he used for his own protection and also put some dozens of fighters in the Bari region under the command of someone appointed by Shabaab leadership. By the end of September 2009, disagreements between the two leaders became palpable as Atoma was advocating a more cautious and less warlike approach.

By January 2010, he was settled with his own forces near Galgala (a Warsangeli village in north western Bari)³⁸ and was in discussion with his elders about a possible way out. Shabaab activists have scattered in Northern Puntland and in Sool. The main reason is that Shabaab bets on a rigged electoral process in Somaliland that would allow gaining sympathy against Hargeysa's political elites that would have once more grossly cheated the electoral process.

³³ As a good example of “negative propaganda”, see Somalilandpress, “Ethiopia disapproves of Puntland government ministers”, 4 April 2010.

³⁴ According to one of his close relatives, the killing of the Mudug governor in 2008 or 2009 was aimed at destroying the working relations between Omar Mahamuud and local Islamists. If this is true, it points to two opposite suspects: the PIS (quoted in the interview) or Shabaab that could not get support from the local Islamists.

³⁵ Many resemble the killings that occurred in Mogadishu in 2004 and 2005 for which responsibility was later claimed by Shabaab or other militants.

³⁶ For an alternative version see the last Somalia monitoring report that contradicts parts of what follows.

³⁷ As known, Anoolle –a faction within Hizbul Islaam, is made up of Puntlanders. Although it claims to be Islamic, it is more a clan gathering of old fighters from all (whether Islamic or not) factions that were present at one point in Lower Jubba.

³⁸ Amazingly enough, this city was the place of an important battle during the time of Mahamed Cabdulle Hasan and al-Ittihaad fighters rested there for some time...

The Puntland administration claimed several times that IDP provided Shabaab a constituency. In 1991 and 1992 the IDP who had reached Puntland were Daarood and non armed clans (Gibil Cad, Jareer, Madhibaan³⁹, etc.): it was an uneasy situation but local clans always had the upper hand. After 2006 many were Rahanweyn and after 2009 Mudullod (e. g. Abgaal). Rahanweyn had indeed a hard time with General Caydiid and preferred to settle in north Mogadishu and Middle Shabeelle after 1995 where they felt less harassed. After July 2008, many educated Rahanweyn escaped Baay and Bakool because of Shabaab's take over, and reached Mogadishu but had to move again when Shabaab was progressing northwards. Due to the popularity of Mukhtaar Robow (Abu Mansur) among his kinsmen, the Puntland authorities may consider that he has followers among those IDPs.

As far as Islamism in Puntland is considered, the situation is fluid. As in Somaliland, the social influence of Salafism is very significant, yet the political impact (if any) is unclear. Clan feelings are not as strong as they used to be (as reflected by the decreased authority of elders). The weakening legitimacy of Puntland authorities at a time when they get more international support should also be seen as a strategic concern for the immediate future as this reinforces the view that they are stooges of debatable friends.

Yet the chaos created by the war and some of the policies carried out by Shabaab in the zones it controls or fights for in southern Somalia makes sympathy and identification with this latter movement more uneasy. As in Somaliland, the authorities have not achieved much, but peace prevails and is considered as the sole genuine asset compared to the South.

Paradoxically enough, in such a context, the best deterrent against a take over by radicals may be the weakness of the Administration more than its strength (or better expressed, the strength of its security apparatus). Because Puntland State is not strong enough to challenge key constituencies, there is no much need to fight against it. The ambivalent dimension of any international support in this period has to be measured.

³⁹ The Madhibaan are known by a variety of different names, most of which are of a pejorative nature, such as the widely used term 'Midgan'. Many people argue that the term Madhibaan is of a relatively recent date and some added that it is a cover-term for all those minorities who are regarded as socially inferior to the other Somalis. This would include the Tumaal, the Yibir, the Midgan and the *xoryeel* (i.e. the 'freedmen' or ex-slaves). Another is *Gabooye*, 'quiver', referring both to their historical role as hunters and, more metaphorically, the unity of arrows in a quiver. *Gabooye*, however, seems more to refer to the whole set of 'low-caste' groups in a political sense.

RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS

1. The straddling strategy between Somaliland and Puntland

The government of Somaliland claims all regions included in the former British protectorate as its State territory. Puntland, as explained earlier, is the (federal) State of the Harti confederation that includes Sool and Sanaag inhabited by Dhulbahante and Warsangeli. Since 1998, these two regions have been claimed by both governments. But both authorities were realistic enough not to wage a meaningless war.

Warsangeli and Dhulbahante were politically represented in Hargeysa and Garoowe and built their own patronage networks thanks to the limited resources Somaliland and Puntland allocated them. In a nutshell, there were two administrations and therefore no administration. It is a convenient situation to deal with very divided populations and elites. Puntland and Somaliland governments never were interested in investing or promoting Sool and Sanaag internationally: the presence of international NGOs has been minimal in those two regions. Both Hargeysa and Garoowe were able to mobilize the support of some elders and politicians, though they were aware that their opponents were numerous and powerful.

Yet this fragile balance was threatened in December 2002 after the death of a cautious Mahamed Ibraahim Cigaal and after the appointment at the presidency of his vice-president, Daahir Riyaale Kaahin, who visited Laas Caanood. A short battle resulted in the withdrawal of Somaliland militias and the Administration. The vacuum was filled by Puntland. A few days after his election in Nairobi as TFG President in October 2004, Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's forces and Somaliland army clashed near Laas Aanood.

The course of events was not very favourable to the Somaliland government. Although most military and financial Puntland resources were used by Cabdullaahi Yuusuf in the South which made Puntland weaker, the TFG installation in Mogadishu in January 2007 led Hargeysa to believe that eventually Sool and Sanaag would be fully controlled by Garoowe. This course of events was too simple to happen.

Dhulbahante divisions provided Hargeysa with a new opportunity. One of the prominent Dhulbahante politicians, Ahmed Cabdi Habsade, acted decisively. After 1993, he was appointed to different positions in Hargeysa including Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one chamber of the bicameral Somaliland Parliament. Eventually, he broke with president Cigaal. He then joined Cabdullaahi Yuusuf in 1998 and played his role in the creation of Puntland. Eventually he became the minister of Interior under General Adde Muuse. But this appeasement lasted only until the rivalries among Dhulbahante took the upper hand.

On the one hand, Habsade had endorsed Cabdullaahi Yuusuf at a time the latter was fighting against Jaamac Cali Jaamac and Cadde Muuse. Therefore the trust between the two men was limited. Moreover, Habsade did not accept that the Puntland Vice-President (Hasan Daahir Afqurac) who belonged to another Dhulbahante sub-clan monopolized the allocation of positions for his own sub-clan⁴⁰. Those events were taking place at a time, when Sool even more than the rest of Puntland resented that resources were allocated to the TFG President, not to the region.

Eventually, when Habsade lost his ministerial position in August 2007, he launched a bitter campaign against the Puntland Administration and initiated fresh talks with Hargeysa. This “rapprochement” eventually provided the ground for the take over of Laas Caanood in late October 2007 by Somaliland forces supported by local militias, a victory that Daahir Riyaale needed to improve his own record⁴¹.

Nearly three years after those events, the situation basically remains unchanged. Whatever both sides allege, there seems no end to the current shifting loyalties whenever political administrations fail to accommodate grievances. Nonetheless, there are concerning points.

⁴⁰ Habsade belongs to the Faarah Garaad, while Afqurac belongs to the Mahamuud Garaad sub-clan. Yet, divisions went deeper since a section of Mahamuud Garaad sided the former.

⁴¹ Markus Hoehne, “Somaliland vs. Puntland over the future of Somalia”, *Horn of Africa Bulletin*, February 2008.

Laas Caanood witnessed a number of officials' killings that emphasize the fragility of the current balance of forces. Somaliland supporters maintain that most killings are the product of a determined Puntland Intelligence Service's policy to avoid Somaliland territorial claims to get deeper ground. Puntland supporters are more divided. Some agree with the previous version, many underline the depth of bitter divisions among the Dhulbahante clan that might explain some murders. The Shabaab option is also very successful, though not so evidently convincing. But, as explained in the previous section, Shabaab benefits from destabilisation and is eager to build a constituency in that context.

2. The Maakhir / Puntland controversy

As already mentioned in this report, Puntland is a political entity that cannot be seen as the mere output of any historical structural agent or any significant geopolitical argument. It came into being as a strong reaction against claims made by Southern Somali (mostly Hawiye) factional leaders after the collapse of the Sodere agreement⁴² and the will to counter any separatist argument made by the Somaliland authorities. It also provided room for Cabdullaahi Yuusuf to gain better leverage on the situation.

All those conjectural reasons do not mean that Puntland was neither responding to a genuine popular will, nor that it was doomed to failure. It also responded to a long local political process to tackle the predicament of the population and provide a better (unified) administration and security. One actually may consider that it was a success and that the offer made by some politicians and their Ethiopian ally met the demands made by large sectors of the population. Yet, opponents could also mobilize historical references to challenge the notion of Puntland and the 19th century was rich enough in power struggles between various northern Somali Sultanates to provide the repertory for revolt, as hinted at in the first section.

Those dynamics of centralisation were indeed challenged because of the fragile roots of Puntland's concept. The emergence in July 2007, reasserted in 2009, of a Maakhir State reflects this conflicting reality. Maakhir refers to a (Warsangeli led) Sultanate that existed for centuries and played a significant role in the early 20th century due the shrewdness of its prestigious Mahamuud Ali Shire (see first section).

At its very beginning, this claim for an entity different from Puntland and Somaliland reflected the bitterness of elders and politicians of (mostly eastern) Sanaag to be contained in a surrogate position by the Mahamuud Saleebaan and to be used for an argument with Hargeysa that only marginally benefited their every day life.

Furthermore, while the Dhulbahante had better representation and even more numerous positions within the Puntland State apparatus (17 MPs plus the vice-president and ministers), sections of the Warsangeli elites felt that they should claim more than they had received. The return of General Ahmed Jaamac Ilka Jiir in August 2008 at the dawn of the electoral campaign for the new Puntland presidency softened those grievances but did not dissipate them⁴³.

At this stage, the likelihood of Maakhir survival is flimsy. Although both Puntland and Somaliland have shown little empathy and interest for investing in the Maakhir area, it is doubtful that this new alleged regional State may gather the means for its own survival in terms of the Administrative apparatus.

First, although many Dhulbahante and Warsangeli – as again proven by an elders' meeting in Nairobi in October 2009 - might stand for the concept, the economic and military realities incline them to compromise either with Puntland or Somaliland. Doing so otherwise would require the control of an

⁴² Signed in the Ethiopian city of Sodere, this agreement constituted a new attempt to build a central State by organizing a national conference in Boosaaso. Egypt and Hawiye leaders were adamant to offer a new solution: the Cairo agreement signed in December 1998. The Benaadir Administration was supposed to be the first consequence of this latter deal: this never happened. See consultant A's report for details.

⁴³ On 22 December 2009, Puntland introduced a new flag that clearly assimilates with the Maakhir Sultanate's. Yet, symbolism does not fill stomach and provide with *qaat*...

economic hub that neither Laas Caanood nor Laas Qorey can attain in the short or medium term. The lack of any infrastructure and all-weather roads mean that the political map of Northern Somalia is not going to evolve quickly.

The only alternative at this point would be the taking over by Islamists but, despite the dubious odyssey of the Shabaab commander, Mahamed Saciid Atoma, this seems unlikely at this stage. One may foresee the continuation of the current (in)stability, while local politicians and elders are trying to play one card and/or the other according to offers from Hargeysa and Garoowe.

While sections of the traditional and modern elites in Sool and Sanaag look for an alternative to always being a bone of contention between Hargeysa and Garoowe, there is another economic dimension that significantly strengthened the viability of a separatist claim for regional and/or (federal) statehood identity: oil⁴⁴.

The possibility to generate oil revenues from the region made some people adamant to raise the profile of “autochthony” and claim that nothing would be possible without the region benefiting significantly from oil exploration and exploitation. This explains why some Warsangeli elders are today mediating between the Shabaab commander mentioned above (known for his military expertise and bravery) and the Garoowe administration. If problems come, they will need skilled manpower.

Without entering into a discussion on what may happen, one can witness how the very notion of federalism could quickly be reframed in a more contentious way. There should be no ambiguity in the fact that oil discovery under the current circumstances would mean conflict more than State building and development.

3. The Galmudug neighbourhood

Politicians have to be ambitious and the creators of Galmudug indeed were. Just as is the case for Puntland, the very territory this name encompasses is very unclear. Galmudug’s supporters mention South Mudug and Galgaduud but one may doubt if the population which settled in that part of the country is actually aware of its new identity.

The duration of the civil war provided many events that could be read today as a crystallising moment for a regional identity. Yet, one can still quote the last National Reconciliation Conference in Mbagathi/Nairobi (October 2002 - October 2004) as a turning point. Haber Gidir/Sacad sub-clan elites were well aware of the federal debate and the opportunity a prime starter could get. A former Somali Ambassador to the USA, Mahamed Warsame Cali Kiiimiko, took the lead and framed the project while the first local response was enthusiastic. He was elected the first president of Galmudug in August 2006. From 2004 onwards, the rehabilitation of South Gaalka’yo was carried out, while the North of the city had already achieved a remarkable development. At least, one scarf of the civil war would disappear.

From the very beginning however, Galmudug suffered from the precarious commitment of the diaspora people in the sense that those persons, often elected in key administrative or political positions, were not permanently settled there and were not able or willing to spend the time needed to convince lay people on the ground and articulate realistic solutions to day-to-day problems.

The claim for Galmudug was freshly received by Cabdullaahi Yuusuf. This new (federal) State potentially raised the question of borders with Puntland and could reframe local clan competitions into political contradictions between two Administrations. A better organized regional setting meant also that the TFG President would have less room to handpick whoever he wanted as representatives of the area.

⁴⁴ This aspect should be discussed by consultant A.

After his defeat in June 2006 against the Islamic Courts' Union, General Cabdi Hasan Cawaale Qeybdiid⁴⁵ lost his leverage in Mogadishu and could only settle safely in Galmudug, which he did. This had a positive effect on strengthening the credibility of the new region and also convinced his diaspora kinsmen to invest more.

The Gaalkacyo incidents in January 2010 should not be overestimated, despite the number of victims. Beyond Gaalka'yo, the pastoral environment means that skirmishes between clans that belong to Puntland and Galmudug are likely. Yet, those incidents should not escalate, except if outsiders interfere. What happened in January 2010 was clearly linked to a lack of consultation. Too much is at stake for the two sides of the city to expect a large scale confrontation. Traders, other economic actors, and diaspora people in Gaalkacyo have clear interests in a peaceful atmosphere. The threat of Shabaab is another clear deterrent against violent competitions in the area.

Both sides also remembered the mass killings that happened at the beginning of the civil war in the city. That is why in June 1993, Mahamed Faarah Caydiid and Cabdullaahi Yuusuf reached a peace settlement that gave the control of the (military) airport to the Puntland authorities, despite the fact that it was located in Sacad claimed territory. The Barahleey market, the very cause of the fighting in January 2010, had a more ambiguous status. Before the civil war, it was "controlled" by the Majeerteen but became part of South Gaalka'yo in June 1993, though most of its traders were actually from Puntland. Two legalities confronted each other.

For what Galmudug is in early 2010, four clans in the central region can claim to be represented in it: Sheekhaal, Dir, Madhibaan, and Sacad. One contentious issue is the stance taken by the Saleebaan. They are practically not part of Galmudug and some of them have developed their own claim for an entity called Himan and Heeb (though not strictly populated by their clan). Closer to the Cumaar Mahamuud, they were used at one point in 2003 to weaken the Sacad before the TFG elections took place in Kenya. Another, and maybe more credible explanation of this inter-clan strife was that over these years the number of roadblocks was astonishing⁴⁶ and created easy opportunities for skirmishes between militias of these two clans.

The current Galmudug President, Colonel Ahmed Mahamed Caalin, is a strong supporter of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaaca⁴⁷, his vice-president is Sacab/Cabdallaah, his second vice-president Dir and most ministers sympathise with ASWJ, whatever meaning this could be. The Parliament is made up of 26 MPs: 16 Sa'ad, 4 Dir, 3 Sheekhaal and 3 Madhibaan. As has been referred to, most of them are diaspora people and are not permanently settled in Galmudug. Galmudug still has a long way to go to become what it claims to be.

4 The Mogadishu anchored TFG and the case for federalism

The election of Sheekh Shariif Sheekh Ahmed in January 2009 marked a turning point in the relations between Puntland and the TFG. Cabdullaahi Yuusuf gave up his position a month before in an atmosphere of "fin de regne" when he had lost the support of his Ethiopian ally. This move was bitterly received in Puntland since resources were siphoned for years to support the TFG President's adventures. Moreover, while the old TFG institutions were framed under the close watch of Ethiopia and Cabdullaahi Yuusuf, the incoming group was clearly characterized by a strong Hawiye dimension (to the extent that it was difficult for Sheekh Shariif to find Daarood to fill the MPs positions allocated to him by the Djibouti agreement). It could be read as a farcical repetition of the Sodere/Cairo (dis)agreements.

The eviction of the then Prime Minister, Nuur Hasan Huseen, evidenced the Daarood bitterness against this latter, in spite of all disagreements many could have had with Cabdullaahi Yuusuf. The Majeerteen

⁴⁵ A leading Sacad/ Reer Hilowle figure in Mogadishu. Right hand of General Caydiid, he fought against him after June 1995. He became TNG and TFG Mogadishu Police Commander, though his records are controversial.

⁴⁶ Interviewees mention up to 150 road blocks from Gaalka'yo to Gelinsoor (about 120 km)

⁴⁷ He is also contested by Ahmed Shariif Cali Hilowle.

were at the forefront of this opposition and the appointment of a Cismaan Mahamuud (from a prestigious family) Prime Minister did not cool down their grievances. Cumaar Cabdirashiid Cali Sharmaarke could hardly appear as Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's heir. He has been away from Somalia and Puntland politics for too long and was well inclined toward al-Islaah.

He, of course, was aware of those challenges and the context of his appointment as a Prime Minister. He tried to narrow the gap between Garoowe and Mogadishu. Yet, his situation was fragile for a number of obvious reasons. He was not particularly close to the President and worked mostly under the auspices of the Minister of Finances. The limited trust he enjoyed from the President was visible in the rebuff he felt when the agreement he signed with Garoowe in August 2009 was undermined by his own government.

Under international pressure, the Puntland Administration and the TFG signed an agreement on how the two parties could cooperate until the federal system of Somalia was finalized, in August 2009. The 15 point deal was supposed to break the deadlocks over divisive issues regarding the security, constitution, social affairs and power distribution based on the National Charter that was agreed on by Somali factions in Kenya 2004. According to the agreement, Puntland would become a base for counter-piracy operations, host the process of drafting federal constitution, and receive 25% of the education funds allocated for Somalia including scholarships. It also allowed Puntland to participate in international conferences on Somalia alongside TFG officials, enter into agreements with international agencies, and sign commercial deals with foreign companies until Somalia's federal constitution is passed and approved in a public referendum.

This agreement signed by the Prime Minister and the Puntland president, Cabdirahmaan Mahamed Faroole, could hardly be endorsed by the TFG as the former further undermined the reasons of its own existence and put the TFG and Puntland on an equal footing. In November 2009, the disagreement broke out as the TFG President, Sheekh Shariif, refused to fully endorse it.

Among the clear bones of contention were piracy (and the support the international community wanted to provide the TFG, while the problems were mostly in Puntland), oil and fishing rights. Those issues illustrated how dubious deals passed with non transparent international players could just jeopardize the interests of the population, the long term resources of any administration, and reduce the notion of federalism to a void expression.

The April 2010 deal between Puntland and the TFG again reflects more international pressures on both entities than a genuine will to cooperate against common enemies. It would hardly affect the average perception of the TFG in Puntland. In a nutshell, the TFG is perceived as being stuck in a few districts of Mogadishu and its legitimacy is thinner than ever elsewhere. Seen from Puntland, it seems just irrelevant for the problems Garoowe should cope with. In that view, the TFG only created limitations of sovereignty, and reduced access to international resources (such as fishing contracts, issuing of currency and the like). At least Puntland converges on this with Somaliland.

SECURITY ISSUES

1. Piracy

Piracy is a relatively new phenomenon in the region as it basically stopped in the early 20th century; but even in that period it was marginally practiced⁴⁸. There were very few incidents in the 1980s at the initiative of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Somali National Movement that wanted to keep an embargo on main ports in their respective countries as part of their struggle against Addis-Ababa or Mogadishu. Incidents started after 1991 and grew to a point when the international community had to make drastic decisions in 2008⁴⁹.

One can identify different periods in the piracy sector off the coast of Somalia throughout the civil war. Up to the creation of Puntland in July 1998, piracy was amateurish and lacked the expertise and the equipment to really threaten ships moving close to the Somali coasts. Its existence was linked to the attempt by various players (mostly big business people and faction leaders) to either keep a monopoly on fishing in territorial waters and/or target illegal (though the actual meaning of this word in that context maybe very unclear) ships and trawlers. As a side effect, cargo ships were attacked, especially dhows coming from Dubai that were carrying commodities to the most southern ports (Ceel Macaan, Merka and Kismaayo). Increasingly, they became targeted as the spoils became more important.

The establishment of the Puntland State created a context in which the new authorities needed to increase their revenues and were adamant to strike deals with foreign fishing companies, and therefore, control their waters. Some Mogadishu business people argue that they also wanted to make shipping lines between Dubai and Ceel Macaan or Kismaayo (taken over by Barre Aadan Shire Hiiraale's forces in August 1998) more insecure and expensive.

The rules were not surprising compared to the extortion economy that had taken shape onshore. If the hijacked ship had an acceptable licence, it had only to pay a very minimal fee (*duco*). If that was not the case, the fine was heavy and those who stopped the ship were given a much higher reward. Those rules were adapted to commercial shipping. If the cargo belonged to a group of Puntland traders, it was released with a minimal payment. If it belonged to traders from other regions (e. g. Mogadishu), the fine/ransom depended on whether the owners of the cargo could find a shrewd representative in Puntland to mediate the case. The amount of the ransom again depended on the ability to get closer to the Puntlanders.

The outsourcing by Puntland authorities to private security companies in 2000 was a direct consequence of two dynamics. On the one hand, the Somali pirates were becoming richer and therefore better armed, which made challenging Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's rule possible. It was therefore necessary to curb their activities and reassert Puntland's authority. On the other hand, the newly established Transitional National Government (established in summer 2000 in Carta in Djibouti) led by Cabdi Qaasim Salaad Hasan was also keen to sell fishing rights to foreign companies and increase its own revenues. Moreover, the TNG enjoyed some kind of international recognition that could give more credentials to such deals. Likely also, international pressures on the Puntland authorities to restrict human trafficking across the Bab el-Manded, convinced some business people to reorient their boats to piracy activities.

The ambivalent role played by private security companies (PSC) needs to be emphasized. They provided the training in using better speed boats, up-to-date GPS, satellite phones, and Internet searches and getting on board the ships⁵⁰. When those PSC were expelled from Puntland, dozens of skilled coast guards became jobless and many could easily join the very gangs they had fought before. The involvement of those PSC did not increase safety on sea but actually contributed to a significant leap in the piracy's

⁴⁸ Marco Lenci, *Eritrea e Yemen. Tensione italo-turche nel mar Rosso 1885-1911*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1990.

⁴⁹ Roland Marchal, "Flibustiers ou corsaires? Des enjeux de l'opération maritime internationale contre la piraterie à proximité des côtes somaliennes", *Politique africaine*, n° 116, December 2010.

⁵⁰ Stig Jarle Hansen, "Private security firms and local politics in Somalia", *Review of African Political Economy*, n° 118, 2008.

techniques and convinced business people that rewards were likely if their investments allowed buying that equipment. The change of skills meant therefore that piracy was becoming a genuine business sector and was no longer left to mere gangs of militias loosely connected to coastal communities.

Another dimension has to be highlighted. Although initially pirates were using little military hardware, the success of their activities allowed them to invest in heavy weapons and technicals that were used onshore to guard the crews and protect their operations. It meant that long before 2008 pirates became significant military players and of course aligned themselves with their clans in any confrontations they had with the Puntland administration. In 2009, they were described as the first military force in Puntland, much more powerful than the Daraawiish set up by Cabdullaahi Yuusuf at the beginning of his mandate in 1998.

The first Puntland President was not ready to accept having his authority challenged and tried to counter their influence. That is why in 2003/2004, the pirates were forced to leave their bases in Eyl and Garacad and be the guests of Mahamed Hasan Cabdi Afweyne in Harardheere and Hobyo. The links between them were twofold. First, one leading commander of the Puntland pirates, Garaad Mahamuud Ciise, was a relative of Afweyne through his mother's side; second Afweyne had been a member of SSDF: as did many Saleebaan in 1983, he had left the Central region to join the armed opposition against Mahamed Siyaad Barre as a result of the feud against the Marreehaan/Wagar-Dhac. The election of Cabdullaahi Yuusuf in Kenya was therefore good news for the pirates: General Cadde Muuse was a quite different leader and clearly had other priorities⁵¹.

Most of the pirates belong to Cumaar Mahamuud or Ciise Mahamuud sub-clans, though rank and file militias could be recruited from other clans. Had he been willing to tackle this problem, President Cadde Muuse would have taken the risk of serious clan clashes. The case of the current Puntland President is even more sensitive since the two main leaders in Eyl and Garacad, respectively Abshir Cabdullaahi Boyah and Garaad Mahamuud Ciise, belong to his sub-clan of Ciise Mahamuud/Muuse Ciise, which reinforces the likelihood of financial support to his presidential campaign and beyond⁵².

Today, the main centres (and their hinterlands) are Garacad, Eyl, and Laas Qoray (which means that Warsangeli figures are also involved). To a large extent, the duration of the business meant that this latter would become more sophisticated and bring more expertise since money was increasingly available. This trend has been unchallenged by the course of events and the international intervention.

The most likely development is not an exhaustion of piracy because of the international maritime presence. It is a piracy that would become more violent towards the crews, militarily more sophisticated and eventually try to sabotage the ships that they fail to take over. While figures show that attacks are half as successful than two years ago, their numbers keep being a major concern for the maritime security on the whole area.

What makes Puntland's piracy distinct from Harardheere's and Hobyo's is a definite strategy to build support among clan elders, officials and intellectuals as well as a very entrepreneurial approach of the ransom's use. The key beneficiaries (business people as this report holds) are indeed investing locally or regionally and do not spend this money in only celebrating their victory. This also contributes to strengthen their popular legitimacy and the sympathy of the public, even though some clerics, elders and civil society activists have talked against them publicly. Their strategy explains why they still are perceived as protecting territorial waters against illegal fishing while the great majority of their targets are cargo ships⁵³.

This context has strong practical implications in the way the Puntland government should/could challenge them. As some experts underline, Puntland officials may not want to take the risk to fight them and prefer

⁵¹ See consultant A report for elaboration.

⁵² The last Somalia Monitoring Group's report provides convergent analyses: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/246/89/PDF/N1024689.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵³ Mohamed Abshir Waldo, "The two piracies in Somalia: why the world ignores the other?", Nairobi, April 2010.

to focus on the “heart and mind” campaign despite notional improvements⁵⁴. Yet, the key reason might be different. As stated in many interviews with Somalis, Western diplomats and experts in Nairobi, key figures of Puntland politics are indeed involved and this explains why the progress onshore has been modest over the last two years. To a certain extent, the last reshuffle and new commitments made by the Puntland administration provide more evidence of the international pressures than the genuine and active commitment made by the Puntland Security forces to tackle the problem.

In southern Somalia (especially Hobyo, Harardheere and Ceel Huur), the situation is different. First, those areas are free of any kind of administration for nearly two decades, except when for a few months in the second 2006 semester the Islamic Courts Union had control of the land, which brought piracy to a lull despite several attempts to bribe the Courts.

Although the piracy is comparable in terms of skills and methodology ‘especially after the 2003-2004 stay of Puntland gangs), it is organized along lines that are very similar to *mooryaan*’ activities. There is not much strategy or tactics enforced by the pirates to win popular support, simply the usual munificence that characterizes *mooryaan*’s behaviour. *Qaat* consumption and generous donations to kinsmen are the norm. The popular support reflects more the attraction for a paid off activity rather than a definite strategy to win the support of influential people.

In both cases, there are also striking aspects that deserve more analysis. In Harardheere and Hobyo, piracy gangs and Shabaab recruit among the same Saleebaan sub-clan (Saleebaan/Faarah) but those two groups do not entertain much relation (until now) on the ground. If they co-exist, one should consider other hypotheses that don’t involve collusion⁵⁵. First, pirates are much better armed than any other group and it will be very costly to confront them. Second, at least for the time being, they do not have any political ambitions except for not being bothered in their activities and therefore are not really competing with any Islamic groups. Third, either by collusion or by kin links, movements such as Shabaab could get a (small) share of the money they distribute rather generously after ransoms have been paid.

In Puntland, pirates offer a counter model to Shabaab activists as well. Not only is piracy a crime for Islam, but pirates enjoy life in a very Epicurian manner and they make possible the dream of many youngsters (marry very early and leave Somalia with a genuine visa to settle overseas). Shabaab image is the exact opposite: the reward is not mundane.

2. Bombing and targeted killings

Security in Puntland improved dramatically thanks to Cabdullaahi Yuusuf’s reassertion of his authority after August 1998. Roadblocks were dismantled and rogue militias were disarmed and integrated into the new security forces. This drastic action was supported by clan elders since the regional identity as the search for security was paramount. But, such unanimity could hardly last for long.

Political conflicts provided new room for insecurity. At the difference of Somaliland, clans (to say it this way) can still dispose of technicals actually owned by business people or leading politicians/elders. This explains why besides major confrontations (as it happened in Garoowe at one point between Cabdullaahi Yuusuf and supporters of Jaamac Cali Jaamac) the creeping deterioration of security could happen beyond the role played by pirate gangs. Communal problems could escalate significantly before being stopped.

There are different ways to assess the security situation in Puntland. If one considers a broad time scale (1991-2010), it is not so sure that the situation has deteriorated dramatically, though foreigners and local figures are indeed more targeted than at any time before. Many international NGOs would concur that the deterioration became palpable from May 2007 when foreign aid workers were kidnapped. This at first could be explained by the mobilization of the security apparatus to support Cabdullaahi Yuusuf in Mogadishu. Yet, one may also point to a more pessimistic scenario: the exhaustion of the international

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, “The trouble with Puntland”, *Policy briefing*, n° 64, Nairobi/Brussels, 12 August 2009.

⁵⁵ Yet collusion is not impossible. For instance, pirate leaders move freely in territories controlled by Shabaab and often are seen either in Kismaayo or Bakaahara market.

NGOs' dividend in Puntland at a time its Administration was becoming close to irrelevant. Because of corruption or lack of resources, policemen and soldiers were not paid, or only partially paid with long delays. Only with President Faroole did the situation normalize. However, under international pressure, General Cadde Muuse established a new ministry of internal security in December 2007, which was tasked to curb those crimes.

If the former explanation had been relevant, the security would have improved significantly after January 2009. Cabdullaahi Yuusuf was no more in Mogadishu and the new Puntland President made sure that the security apparatus would be better treated than before. Yet, security did not improve accordingly.

Many interviewees, however, believe that the insecurity currently faced by Puntland is of a different nature, very much fed by the war situation in the South and Shabaab's ambitions.

List of major incidents (up to February 2010)

11/09/09: hand grenade at night time targeting a warehouse of the Mudug Administration

09/11/09: plastic bomb at night time on the road Boosaaso-Garoowe, targeting the Speaker of Puntland Parliament.

14/11/09: hand grenade at night time targeting a movie theatre.

01/12/09: hand grenade at night time in Boosaaso targeting a movie theatre

01/12/09: grenade during night time in Boosaaso, targeting the police.

00/01/10: bomb against Cabdi Qeybdiid in south Gaalka'yo

03/01/10: Hand grenade at night time in Gaalka'ayo (south of the town)

26/01/10: Hand grenades during night time in Boosaaso (near NETCO building) targeting the police that was investigating the killing of a MP.

27/01/10: Mines exploding during day time in Boosaaso (near presidential lodge): PIS technicals targeted.

06/02/10: plastic bomb in Gaalkacyo at night time targeting the town police commander.

List of killings over the last year up to February 2010)

April 2009: killing of a PIS officer in Gaalka'yo.

June 2009: killing of the minister of information, Mahamed Warsame Cabdi (Biciidyahan) in Gaalka'yo [Cumaar Mahamuud were accused to have taken revenge].

September 2009: killing of the Head of the Regional Court in Boosaaso.

November 2009: killing of the respected MP, Ibrahim 'Cilmi Gaab (Nuuh Jibril/Majeerteen) in Boosaaso [one suspect who happened to be a member of the Presidential guard]

November 2009: Attempted killing of the Speaker of Puntland Parliament.

January 2010: killing of the Dashiishle MP, Cabdullaahi Addow Cabdi Garaad in Boosaaso [two persons arrested but released as they were PIS].

January 2010: killing of the Dhulbahante MP, Mahamed Cabdi Jibril, in Boosaaso [no one arrested].

January 2010: killing of the Chairman of the Puntland Students Association and human rights activist, Cabdullaahi Mahi Sayedka.

3. Who is responsible?

There are two narratives to make sense of this deterioration of the security, despite a much better management of the civil service by the Faroole administration. The first one claims that most of the security incidents are related to Shabaab who attempts to take over Puntland in the next year. The second is a partial opposite: the whole population is absolutely committed to oppose religious extremism and the focus on Shabaab is only a way to dismiss genuine clan problems and power struggle within the Puntland administration or between Puntland and Somaliland security services⁵⁶. Both could be valid.

As law enforcement agencies in Puntland seem to have little skills and even less accountability, it is difficult to share their views on incidents since their explanations are politically motivated and/or groundless. To give an example, a close relative of the Gaalkacyo Governor who was shot dead stated to

⁵⁶ Though several people underlined that Puntland and Somaliland secret services exchange information and cooperate on terrorism issues, mostly due to the pressure of their Western colleagues.

the author that his close family undertook its own investigation and maintained that the latter was killed to sharply deteriorate the relationships between Cabdullaahi Yuusuf's sub-clan, Cumaar Mahamuud/Reer Mahad, and the local Islamists⁵⁷. It is basically impossible to the author to certify, amend or deny this version of event. Other incidents could be used to illustrate the same point.

When discussing with people who directly experienced the ICU period in Mogadishu, the first thesis is privileged. Al-Shabaab indeed uses clan conflicts to further destabilize the situation and create a sense of insecurity. Clearly, a number of tactics used in Mogadishu are repeated to muzzle civil society activists and clan elders who adamantly oppose Shabaab. In the same way, supporters of the latter movement try to promote religious discourses that are reflecting its stances: da'wa broadcasted on FM radios in Puntland may suddenly spend long moments discussing "Jihad" without clearly defining it.

The second argument is often made by people who are older and still confident in the impact of secularism under Mahamed Siyaad Barre and/or in the dread widely shared because of the extremism of Shabaab. They still consider that clans structure Puntland society and that the population at large will over-react against any attempt to take radical steps in the religious arena. They certainly have a point in this regard. Somalis in 2005 and 2006 misjudged al-Shabaab and were convinced that Shabaab would have as little success among the youth as Takfir wa Hijra had had in the past⁵⁸. A few years after, this appears as a gross miscalculation on their side. But Puntland is certainly in a different situation as the population at large is certainly much less naïve about the implications of getting Shabaab rule a place than the Hawiye were in the South. A kind of counter domino theory could also apply.

Two remarks can be added. First, the youth in Puntland may find some sympathy to a group like al-Shabaab. Interviews for instance underlined the development of youth gangs that could properly be described as delinquent and no more respectful of their clan elders. Second, this social trend allows the control those clan elders can have on their lineages to be qualified and show how their authority is already contested for petty issues.

4. The Puntland Security Apparatus

As defined by its constitution, Puntland owns three different security forces: police; custodian corps; and Daraawiish. According to the Somali Monitoring Group⁵⁹, the size of the forces was about of 4,973 serving members. The Puntland Five-Year Development Plan (2007-11), however, claimed that the total figure was 10,000, and envisaged a plan to reduce them by 60 per cent by 2012. Despite these reduction plans, the 2007 Puntland budget envisioned an additional 2,500 trainees. The annual cost of maintaining these forces was evaluated approximately at \$12.6 million, or 78 per cent of the overall Puntland budget, according to the same report. According to another report⁶⁰, there were, in 2006, 5,243 Daraawiish in the payroll, police were 2,013 and this Custodian force was 215, which means a total of about 8000 staff.

The Daraawiish is a paramilitary force estimated at a strength of 5,000 that was supposed to primarily assist the police in incidents that require more re-enforcement and participate in internal security. Since 2007, an estimated 1,500 Daraawiish have been deployed to southern Somalia but left back in December 2009 when Cabdullaahi Yuusuf resigned from his presidential position. In October 2007, Daraawiish forces were also engaged in combat operations against Somaliland military units near Laas 'Aanood, in the Sool region. The Puntland authorities and the Ethiopian Government cooperate closely on security matters, including intelligence-sharing and weapons supply.

The Puntland Intelligence Service (PIS, often also ironically called Puntland Intelligence Agency, PIA) was established with support from the US government in 2002, and serves as the Puntland authority's

⁵⁷ Dubai, February 2010.

⁵⁸ In February 2005, before taking over the "Italian cemetery", Takfir wa Hijra only controlled one mosque in Mogadishu.

⁵⁹ <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/604/73/PDF/N0860473.pdf?OpenElement>

⁶⁰ Puntland Good Governance Bureau, « Addressing better administration in Puntland », *Report and Recommendations of the Puntland Security Commission*, Garoowe, September 2006.

principal intelligence and counter-terrorism agency. This cooperation seems to have grown after the election of Cabdullaahi Yuusuf in Kenya and with the subsequent assertion of radical groups in the South. Djiboutian and Ethiopian services also entertain the idea of a warm cooperation with the PIS. The latter also shares intelligence with the Somaliland National Intelligence Services that came into being in mid-2003, despite deep political controversies.

On 29 October 2008, its headquarters in Boosaaso was the target of two simultaneous suicide bomb attacks; his officers were also considered until now as priced targets. As underlined by a recent ICG report, “it accumulated extensive authority and acted with impunity, targeting perceived enemies and routinely using torture to extract information”⁶¹ There is no possibility to review here the achievements of an institution that is absolutely not transparent. Yet, some arguments have been too repeated in interviews not to be considered as underlined a recent ICG report.

A State within the State, the PIS is allegedly accused of misbehaviour in important aspects. First, there are concerns that money provided by donors is used in a very patrimonial manner. Second, the sole focus on Islamism may have created a kind of dependency syndrome: in order to keep foreign donations, the PIS may increase or create the dangers it is supposed to contain. As a corollary, the PIS is often accused to have eliminated civil activists and officials who were highly critical of its freedom or not convinced that the repressive policy against Islamist people would eventually achieve a stabilisation.

The new Puntland Administration seems to have ambivalent feeling concerning the PIS. Because it is the proof of a working relation with the US government, the PIS could go unchallenged but at the same time, Garoowe at a minimum would like to have a share of the resources that are poured into PIS management.

Beyond PIS and considering the all security sector, while one can detail the lack of training and the poor governance of those institutions, a key aspect should be tackled first that makes the difference with Somaliland. In the latter case, President Cigaal succeeded to disarm the clan militias and give to the Somaliland institutions an almost monopoly of violence⁶², Puntland has not yet reached that point. The public record of those institutions is low in Puntland. Clan bias, favouritism and political racketeering are widely spread internally. The justice system is not unscathed of those criticisms. This provides another easy argument for claiming a radical shift in supporting an Islamic State that in the opinions of its supporters could erase all those misbehaviours overnight.

⁶¹ International Crisis Group, Somalia: the trouble with Puntland », *Africa Briefing*, n° 64, August 2009, p. 7.

⁶² This view could be easily qualified since many weapons are owned by individuals in Somaliland. Yet, especially in urban areas there cannot be any demonstrations of force as it happened in Puntland over the last years.