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Diasporas, development and peacemaking in the Horn of Africa

edited by Liisa Laakso and Petri Hautaniemi

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction: Diasporas for peace and development

Petri Hautaniemi and Liisa Laakso

It is not novel to claim that not only are displaced people affected by the circumstances of instability in their home countries but that they also affect the ways in which these conflicts develop, are prolonged or are settled. The role of diasporas in the development of their home countries is also a valid point of interest. However, while some evidence on the various roles played by diasporas in their host societies is available, their precise impacts in transnational contexts, and particularly with regard to development and conflicts at home, have often remained unclear. There is little systematic social scientific research on migrant political transnationalism in conflict settings, particularly within the African continent. Consequently, debates in this field have been largely speculative, relying on anecdotal evidence rather than hard facts.

This book examines diasporic activism in countries of origin, in host states and also at the transnational level. Through its careful case analyses, it aims to contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the roles diasporas play in the dynamics of war and peace in the Horn of Africa and in the new host countries of the exiled populations. The book also seeks to integrate studies of conflict prevention and resolution, ethnic or national identity and immigration and citizenship more coherently with the study of political transnationalism. The emphasis is on examining the activities of diasporas particularly in relation to development, conflict and peace dynamics, although it should also be noted that it is not always immediately apparent which activities and interventions might be mitigating and which aggravating conflicts.

The notion of 'diaspora' has seen a revival in current political discussion. Groups that were previously labelled 'refugee communities' identify themselves as 'exiled populations' holding a distinct stake in the fate of their homeland. This is particularly evident in the case of violently displaced populations – witness, for instance, the political role played by Somali exiles in the negotiations between the country's Islamist movements and its secular government. While such long-distance involvement in conflicts is by no means a new phenomenon, the possibilities of transnational mobilization and political action have clearly increased. Motivated by their personal experiences and facilitated by broader globalization processes, diasporas play an important role in the various stages

of civil war, as well as in peacebuilding and development activities. Indeed, diasporas have become global forces which shape the interaction and inter-dependencies between countries, regions and continents.

The role of diasporas in homeland conflicts and political unrest is attract-ing attention among academia and policy-makers alike. Post-9/11 security concerns have brought about a growing realization that not only states but also individuals can threaten security on a global scale (Horst 2007; see also Laakso 2005). Concerns have been voiced about the possibility that diasporas themselves might represent a threat to domestic and international security, by 'importing' conflicts into their host societies. As a result the discourses on immigration and security have become increasingly intertwined in Western countries (Orjuela 2006).

At the same time, however, other observers have pointed out the enormous positive support which diaspora organizations are giving to their countries of origin in terms of community development as well as peace and reconciliation initiatives (cf. Mohamoud 2005; Zunzer 2004). The transnational networking activities of diasporas are regarded as resources for survival, development and welfare. In fact, there has been a recent realization that conflict-ridden countries often depend on remittances sent by diasporas as their primary source of income: these surpass by far the amounts of official development aid and foreign direct investment flows. Remittances also contribute to innovation and reform in the political and social sphere (Levitt 1998). Alongside diaspora remittances, return migration, which can often be circular in nature, contrib-utes to state-building and development. Return migrant contributions can be especially notable in the economic sector as their investments and business initiatives can boost wider economic development. (Hautaniemi et al. 2013.)

This volume responds to the need for an unbiased study generating evidence-based knowledge on the potential and actual impacts of diaspora activities. This is an emerging research agenda which encompasses many academic disciplines – ranging from peace and conflict studies to the fields of migration and development studies. At the same time, the book seeks to understand the dialogue between the various stakeholders within this transnational field. It sheds light on violently displaced populations or 'conflict-generated diasporas' (Lyons 2006) originating in the Horn of Africa, currently residing in Europe and actively engaging in their respective countries of origin. The Horn of Africa is one of the most volatile regions in the world; it is an area where decades of violent conflict have been characterized by state collapse and the dispersal of refugees throughout the world. This region also holds a geographic proximity with and close historical ties to Europe.

Somalis constitute one of the largest diasporas worldwide and Eritrea is often referred to as a 'diaspora-driven economy', while the Ethiopian diaspora is estimated at over two million worldwide. Certainly, the role of diaspora in

inducing violence and/or in fostering peace and human security in this region holds relevance for EU foreign and security policy. But not only that: it also cuts across other policy fields related to immigration and development policies (which mostly remain a national policy competence of the Member States) and presents new challenges for multilateral cooperation.

Arguments for and against in migration studies

A large body of literature has examined the contradictions and paradoxes of migration, analysing the negative as well as positive impacts of people's mobility (De Haas 2010). On the particular question of the role of diaspora in conflicts, two different lines of argument can be distinguished (although in practice the picture is not as clear cut). The first argues that diasporas contribute to conflict and the second sees them as agents of peace and stability in conflict-ridden homelands (Zunzer 2004; Mohamoud 2005; Kaldor 2001; Al-Ali et al. 2001).

In the first, rather traditional perspective, it is argued that the influence of diaspora groups aggravates conflict in their home countries as they either directly or indirectly support the conflict parties in terms of logistics or, in particular, finances (Collier 2000; Maimbo and Ratha 2005; Horst and Van Hear 2002). Through financial support, ideological and political interference and lobbying in the international arena or in their host countries they can accelerate and prolong conflict. Remittances and other support to warring parties from the diaspora can undermine peacebuilding efforts at the local level (Anderson 1992; Collier 2000). A related concern is the fact that migrants engaged in armed conflicts abroad may hold citizenship in an EU country, which may consequently affect diplomatic relations between the states involved (Horst 2007).

Anecdotal evidence of Ethiopian, Somali and Eritrean guerrilla organizations has pointed to the fact that diaspora activities have contributed to conflicts in the region through raising financial, ideological and political support in the international arena and their countries of origin. Indeed, it has been suggested that if a country has a large diaspora abroad, its chances of a prolonged conflict are high. A World Bank study has highlighted the correlation between the risk of renewal of war after a peace settlement and the proportion of its population residing in the United States (Collier and Hoeffler 2000: 10; see also Horst and Van Hear 2002).

In addition to economic, social and political outcomes, research also needs to take note of the link between transnationalism and religion (Leonard et al. 2005; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002). The rise of Islamic movements in Somalia began in the 1970s as part of the international Islamic revival. Consequently the influence of Islamic movements has been strongest in cities. In southern Somalia this influence culminated in the takeover of Mogadishu by the Union

of Islamic Courts in the summer of 2006, and the dramatic events half a year later as the transitional government, backed by Ethiopian troops, captured the area.

Radical mobilization among the diaspora along religious or ethnic lines also exacerbates political tensions in host societies. Most significantly in the wake of the anti-terrorism discourse after 9/11, some diaspora activists have been labelled terrorists – witness the notion of Muslim migrant extremism as 'an enemy within' (Orjuela 2006: 1). It is, however, important to note that concerns over the accountability and transparency of diaspora activities are not only relevant vis-à-vis host countries, but also, and especially, in the population living in their country of origin. Thus the actual terrorism-related charges in Europe often concern attacks or the planning of attacks outside Europe.

The other line of argument, which has emerged only recently, sees diaspora groups as having the potential to reduce conflict and points out, for instance, that they foster democratization processes or can contribute to positive economic development in their home country (Lyons 2004, 2006; Horst 2007; Orjuela 2006; Zunzer 2004; Mohamoud 2005; see also Van Hear et al. 2002; Riak Akuei 2005). There exists a solid amount of evidence – albeit very little systematic research – on the fact that diasporas are involved in processes of reconciliation, state-building and democratization, as well as community development and economic activities. In post-conflict societies, diasporas can also foster democratization processes or transfer knowledge and human, social and economic capital essential to the reconstruction of their home country.

Especially in the context of failed states and states in political transition, the role of diaspora can be important in fostering shared identities, liberal values, such as respect for human rights, and in promoting peace and development (Levitt 1998; Brinkerhoff 2006). In Somalia, where conflict has unravelled state structures, financial remittances and other transnational flows have enabled the provision of vital services, such as healthcare, education and infrastructure. A similar situation can be found in the peripheral regions of Ethiopia, such as Region Five or the Oromo regional state. The need for such qualified human resources is particularly acute in conflict zones or under conditions of political repression owing to which educated experts and professionals have left in the first place.

Diaspora educated in the West can work to reverse the forced brain drain through fostering reconciliation and international advocacy as well as personal projects aiming at enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of governments. Owing to their financial and economic potential, members of a diaspora can even exert pressure on political actors at home to revise certain undemocratic practices. This was recently the case with members of the Somali diaspora, who called upon the government of the Republic of Somaliland (the secessionist state in north-west Somalia) to release several imprisoned local journalists.

The socio-political connections of diaspora can help prevent radicalization both in their country of residence and in their country of origin. On the other hand, diasporas continue – intentionally or unintentionally – to contribute to conflict acceleration and escalation. For instance, in Somalia and Ethiopia, diaspora actors are actively supporting guerrilla movements.

This volume views these issues through case studies addressing regions within the Horn of Africa and the networks expanding from there to all other regions globally. The proposed approach is motivated by the realization that in spite of repeated references to 'the diaspora', little is known about the actual sizes, compositions and structures of migrant groups originating from the Horn of Africa, and hardly any reliable comparable data exist regarding their attitudes, expectations, modes of operation and networks. This is especially true when trying to assess any kind of diaspora intervention in conflict processes. Little knowledge has so far been generated regarding diaspora perceptions, involvement and strategies on the grassroots level, and the way in which these are perceived in the country of origin. Going beyond political discourse and the level of declared intentions, there is a need to focus on the impact and repercussions of economic, political and other transnational activities of diasporas on conflict and peace dynamics in the countries of origin.

The book

This book consists of chapters with new insights on the roles of transnational diaspora networks in the Horn of Africa and various host countries in Europe. By taking into consideration the heterogeneous character of diasporas, which often include both common ambitions and conflicting interests, the book is able to address their multidimensional impact in conflict settings. By incorporating a multidisciplinary point of view, the book seeks to take into account the intersections of peace and conflict studies, migration and diaspora studies, as well as development studies. As diaspora engagement with home countries is multifaceted, it requires a rounded approach. This results in a more profound and balanced understanding of the differences and similarities of diaspora groups' engagements in a changing context, where notions such as national borders, diverse human communities and their practices, as well as transnational policies and histories, intersect in a rich variety of analytic angles.

The book focuses on both transnational renegotiation of power practices and local population encounters, and so illuminates intersections of global and local aspirations for stability, which can lead to new political, social and livelihood opportunities. It is also particularly sensitive to ethnic or religious identifications in diasporic peace activities, analysing the rich and multivocal processes of such identifications.

Chapters Part One, 'Contextualizing the Horn of Africa and the diaspora',

provides an overview of the literature on diaspora and conflict, as well as the transnational dynamics of conflicts in the region.

In her chapter, 'Diaspora and multi-level governance for peace', Liisa Laakso uses the model of multi-level governance (MLG) to examine the ways in which private and non-governmental diaspora actors interact with governmental and multilateral agencies. In conflict-ridden states the local level can be quite functional despite the weakness of the central state. Therefore, international actors working in the field of development are eager to cooperate with this level too. By making their cooperation with diaspora and local actors institutionalized and legal, international actors efficiently bypass the level of the sovereign nation state, the key actor in the Westphalian organization of the international system. Interestingly, many donor organizations supported by or representing Western governments, for instance in Somalia, are headed by members of the diaspora. Partly this eagerness of international donors to rely on the diaspora in the implementation of development programmes stems from security reasons, partly from the necessity to ensure some kind of local ownership even when public authorities are weak or not present. In addition, Laakso discusses how these connections work in the other direction as well, as diaspora groups are directly engaging with and lobbying intergovernmental organizations. In this they have some advantage when compared to the locals as they often speak the type of language that resonates with international actors. On the other hand, diaspora members can also hold highly traditional views that are in conflict with the strategy of Western donors, or they might have a restrictive political agenda which compromises the legitimacy as representatives of the wider society.

Guenther Schlee approaches the Horn of Africa through a holistic regional approach by looking beyond territorial borders when formulating the driving social forces which have not only caused the often violent emergence of diasporas in the region, but have also shaped them through various social and economic developments. For instance, Schlee takes on the historical notion of ethnic groups rather than nation-states or the mosaic of states in his chapter, 'Regional political history and the production of diasporas'. Schlee argues that no matter how much ethnicity is discussed in certain political contexts, other examples reveal that the complete absence of ethnic differences by any cultural criteria does not prevent segmentation and conflict, as seen in the case of Somalia. Schlee discusses how measurements of cultural and ethnic difference have little value for predicting how social identities are defined and where conflicts are going to break out. Similarly, religion, and particularly current and historical relationships between Islam and Christianity in the region, must be addressed through the historical dynamics of social identifications which are not always as self-evident as they seem.

Part Two, 'Case studies from the Horn of Africa', concentrates on local-level

experiences. In their chapter 'Rebuilding Somaliland through economic and educational engagement', Markus Hoehne and Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim examine the complex case of Somaliland, which seceded from a collapsing Somalia in 1991 and still does not enjoy international recognition. Nevertheless, it has undergone an astonishing transformation from a war-torn society to a relatively peaceful and dynamic political entity. Much of its success in peace- and state-building arguably originates from the joint engagement of local and diasporic actors. In light of the absence of formal international engagement and the relative weakness of state institutions, Somaliland serves as an important case study to show the role, magnitude and nature of diaspora engagement in processes of post-conflict rebuilding. Hoehne and Ibrahim show the ways in which the rebuilding of schools and universities, as well as investment in private businesses and provision of services, contributed to stabilizing the fragile polity and provided the local population with prospects for a peaceful and promising future. Their argumentation is substantiated by the presentation of extensive case studies of two huge hotel complexes built in Hargeysa, the capital of Somaliland, and two universities, one in Hargeysa, and one in Laascaanood (in the eastern periphery of Somaliland). Diasporic engagement is shown to have played a decisive role in all four cases, in concert with local political and other dynamics.

In his chapter 'The Somali diaspora in conflict and peacebuilding: the Peace Initiative Program', Mahdi Abdile draws on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to analyse the limitations as well as opportunities of diaspora involvement in the homeland. Diaspora activities can potentially have both negative and positive effects on peace and security in the original home country. Particularly interesting here is Abdile's generational analysis of the ways in which first- and second-generation Somali diaspora members have constructed different attitudes towards homeland engagement and how they link with those left behind.

Dereje Feyissa in his chapter, 'The 2007 delegation of the Muslim diaspora to Ethiopia', challenges the dominant discourse connecting diasporas with conflict situations, a discourse which sees diasporas as bent on radicalization. In this view, sheltered by the 'comfort zones' of their host countries, but intimately connected to their country of origin, diasporas are seen as 'irresponsible' in terms of the consequences of their radical viewpoints and as holding an idealized picture of the homeland. This perspective can help us to understand the involvement of some diaspora groups in homeland conflicts, but rules out their potential in peacebuilding. By taking the example of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora and the delegation they sent to Ethiopia in 2007, Feyissa argues for a more differentiated and nuanced approach. He shows how the direct engagement of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora in socio-political processes in the homeland has enriched the wider arena of democratic politics.

Particularly important have been discursive practices embraced by the diaspora, which call for the reconstruction of the Ethiopian national identity on a more inclusive basis; the autonomy of religious organizations; and the advocacy of a more locally appropriate form of secularism.

Bahru Zewde, Gebre Yntiso and Kassahun Berhanu in their chapter, 'The Ethiopian diaspora and the Tigray Development Association', examine the contribution of diaspora to peacebuilding and development efforts in the Tigray region of Ethiopia through the Tigray Development Association (TDA). TDA commenced its operations as a diaspora humanitarian entity in the late 1980s in the United States and transformed itself into a development association in Ethiopia in the aftermath of the regime change that culminated in the May 1991 ousting of military rule. The chapter sheds light on TDA's endeavours in normalizing and stabilizing the situation in Tigray both prior to and following the 1991 regime change. The chapter shows how TDA's interventions in the (re)construction of schools, clinics and roads contributed to peacebuilding and normalization. Likewise, the provision of skills training to former refugees, ex-soldiers and the resource-poor with the aim of assisting in their rehabilitation is also documented as an illustrative peacebuilding measure.

Part Three, 'European approaches to diaspora engagement', focuses on home country involvement. The chapter 'Interaction between Somali organizations and Italian and Finnish development actors', by Petra Mezzetti, Valeria Saggiomo and Päivi Pirkkalainen, presents a cross-country comparison of relations between the Somali diaspora and institutional actors in two countries of settlement, Italy and Finland. They address the issues of how governmental and non-governmental actors in the two country contexts attempt to engage diaspora groups in development and peacebuilding, and how diaspora groups attempt to gain support from 'external actors' for their own efforts. The authors pay particular attention to the proactivity of diaspora organizations, with the aim of giving a more dynamic perspective to the political opportunity structure (POS) approach, which has been criticized for being static owing to too much focus on institutional factors. The analysis shows that while Somalis in both countries tend to respond to what is available in terms of 'opportunities', they are not passive agents, as they put forth their own strategies in engaging with institutional actors at different levels. Despite different contextual opportunities present in Italy and Finland, numerous similarities can be found. The chapter thus offers a shift in the viewpoint through which comparative research on migrants' participation and engagement has been analysed, strongly affirming that these dynamics are not exclusively guided by policies (formal and informal) in the host countries, but rather need to be assessed by looking at the existence of 'potential diaspora strategies', too. The researchers show that in both countries the migrants' level of integration is key in developing these potential strategies.

Giulia Sinatti in her chapter, 'Approaches to diaspora engagement in the Netherlands', argues that since the turn of the millennium in the Netherlands diaspora engagement has come prominently to the fore as a major policy issue, leading to important transformations in development and peacebuilding thinking and practice. The dominant migration-development debate has held migrants to be key agents in the transformation of their countries of origin. Many programmes have been set up that hinge on the ideal of migrants as partners who can complement the development industry's own efforts. In everyday practice, however, efforts to establish collaboration and exchange with diaspora groups regularly point to the migrants' perceived lack of development professionalism and their fragmented nature as significant threats. According to Sinatti these challenges are rooted in the problematic understandings of 'civil society' and 'participation' with regard to the reality of transnational migrant groups.

The chapter 'Norwegian collaboration with diasporas' by Rojan Ezzati and Cindy Horst analyses the ways in which European governmental and non-governmental actors engage with diasporas in foreign policies and practices by focusing on the Norwegian experience. The authors highlight how recent government documents in Norway have identified diasporas as important resources and stakeholders when it comes to foreign policy initiatives on humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding. However, thus far this has been implemented in practice only to a very small extent. Despite being identified as a relevant stakeholder on paper, the diaspora is not perceived as such in practice. This is because of lack of capacity, differences in organizational approaches, and the potential of bias. Ezzati and Horst argue that working through these obstacles would speed up the process of engaging with diasporas in this field.

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Contextualizing the Horn of Africa and the diaspora

1 | Diaspora and multi-level governance for peace

Liisa Laakso

Diasporas are increasingly being taken into account as legitimate stakeholders in international decision-making. 'A diasporic analysis brings new actors to the fore and challenges our accepted notions about political territory and cultural belonging' (Zack-Williams and Mohan 2002: 233). Thus arises the need to 'rethink belonging within a global context' (Axel 2002: 411). Surprisingly, however, neither mainstream international relations (IR) literature nor its opponents such as neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism, constructivism or new constitutionalism have paid much attention to diaspora. Research on Africa is a good example of this. Apart from cultural studies and the examination of identity formation, much of the literature on African diaspora has concentrated on economic aspects: labour markets, brain drain and recently the importance of remittances, skills and investments for development (see Zack-Williams and Mohan 2002). The capacity of diaspora members to support continuing warfare, to build peace or to advocate international interventions and influence public opinion has been given less attention (see Brinkerhoff 2006: 27). Thus the question, does Africa even matter in this regard?

Kevin Dunn has argued that Africa is marginal for the dominant IR theories and international politics in general. The common assumption that 'Africa does not have meaningful politics, only humanitarian disasters' has made it 'a peripheral concern for the major powers' (Dunn 2001: 1–2). There is one exception, however: theorizing on the so-called 'new wars'. Scholars of the new war literature argue that motives, resources, agencies and impacts of new wars are too complex to be grasped by the classical bipolar models or zero-sum games developed in IR within the superpower rivalry. Mark Duffield has defined the new wars as 'a form of non-territorial network war', which opposes and allies with 'transborder resource networks' (Duffield 2001: 14). According to Mary Kaldor, illegal trafficking of humans, arms, drugs and natural resources has built war logic 'into the functioning of the economy' (Kaldor 2001: 9). In this context the role of diaspora is explicitly acknowledged. Diasporas are seen as providing support for new wars in direct and indirect ways, through the misuse of remittances, money laundering, know-how and new war techniques (ibid.: 7, 85, 102–3).

As a consequence, there is a theoretical vacuum in IR as regards diaspora, which is seen only as a force supporting new wars. But diasporas can also be analysed as a force for building order and peace, although to date there have been fewer studies from this perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to clarify the latter by looking at the formal recognition of diaspora in the Horn of Africa. Somalia in particular is a crucial case for such analysis: it is an example of state fragility, prolonged conflict and most importantly weak state authority, which is the principal actor in classical IR theories. In the absence of a functioning state, the role of the diaspora can be observed in the ways in which governmental and multilateral agencies interact with it. To this end, this chapter utilizes and assesses the model of multi-level governance (MLG).

Multi-level governance

The MLG model enables one to look beyond the paradigm of the nation-state and IR. The nation-state is only one and sometimes not even a necessary grouping or level of identity and decision-making, as local, unofficial, private and regional as well as transnational levels are significant as well. Originally MLG was developed to study European integration after the Maastricht Treaty (Scharpf 1994; Hooghe and Marks 2004). In this debate its major contribution centred on the argument that integration reduces the sovereignty of states. MLG thus opposed the claim that European integration is primarily intergovernmental in character. According to the defenders of intergovernmentalism, by contrast, integration means pooling together rather than losing the sovereignty of participating states (Moravcsik 1993). Empirically the early theorists of MLG were analysing the role of the European Commission, which was being directly lobbied by the private sector and interest groups. By focusing on these complex connections between governmental and non-governmental actors in EU policy, they were able to raise important questions about state power (Piattoni 2009).

In principle, territorially inclusive levels constitute an instantly recognizable hierarchy of governance. In practice, however, this hierarchy is fallible since international, intergovernmental authority does not rule over the state. Decisions made at this level require ratification at the national level or an explicitly stipulated mandate from the state. However, more interesting than the hierarchy as such is the way in which the levels interact with or cut across one another and bypass the level of the state – for instance, in the form of direct contacts between local-level authorities or private companies and an international organization. The state level can be bypassed if it delegates the preparation or implementation of formal decisions to other levels possessing the adequate resources and skills, but also if the state level lacks such resources and skills and is weak.

Non-governmental actors – such as civil society, private companies, scientific

networks or the media – can simultaneously operate on several territorial levels of public decision-making and regulation, and with varying intensities. Diasporas, although organized along very different lines, no doubt belong to such actors. It is therefore useful to complement MLG with the model of loosely coupled systems along the conceptualization presented by Karl Weick.

In his seminal article in *Administrative Science Quarterly* in 1976, Weick analysed educational organizations and noted that they are flexible in the sense that 'coupled events are responsive, *but* [...] each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness' (Weick 1976: 3). Organizations were thus able to adapt to unexpected external changes because these caused only insulated events. Weick's notion opposed the idea of a machine-like organization, which would automatically be caught up as a whole and potentially be disturbed by changes affecting any of its parts (Strati 2000: 19). In this sense, loose couplings resonate with what is pivotal in MLG, i.e. the ways intergovernmental, regional and global levels interact with important stakeholders in an open but non-merging way. Interaction is fluid, non-hierarchical and not bureaucratic or regulated. Such interaction is characterized by tacit knowledge. According to Weick (2001: 383), 'loose coupling exists if A affects B (1) suddenly (rather than continuously), (2) occasionally (rather than constantly), (3) negligibly (rather than significantly), (4) indirectly (rather than directly), and (5) eventually (rather than immediately)'. Therefore the question is about policy-making or preparatory work for decisions rather than decision-making itself. While the latter is regulated and entails rules, mandates and accountability, all of which are known beforehand, the former requires collection of information and coordination between multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, effective control based on tight procedures and causal relationships benefits from public authority with coercive and financial resources. These are the means vested in the state in classical IR theories. But policy coordination is a more complex task, since events unfold unevenly, sporadically or unpredictably (ibid.). Effective connections and networks are more pertinent than authority. Thus we are dealing with two different organizational logics, which can exist simultaneously, complement or contradict each other.

Weick's theory further points out that potential failures in loose couplings are never destructive for the whole system, since its breakdown is avoided by an automatic sealing off of failing components. In the context of a weak, dependent or collapsed state this means that even limited coordination with loose couplings can effectively maintain the status quo and result in fewer inconsistencies among highly differentiated activities affecting it. The surprising endurance of state fragility itself can be traced to the functionality of loose couplings. In other words, a system without straightforward connections between its constituting parts provides a dynamic model of policy-making

when sovereign or legitimate political power is weak or absent. Similarly, multifaceted non-governmental actors like diasporas can remain important even if their connections in the system are continually frustrated.

Recognition of African diaspora

Governmental actors include diaspora among key stakeholders in African affairs because there is a clear motivation and functionality in this inclusion, reflecting the rationality of MLG and loose couplings. African states have created institutional arrangements in order to support or control their citizens and former citizens living abroad. These include setting up entire diaspora affairs ministries as has been done in Eritrea or South Sudan, which have specific government officials following diaspora affairs. Most importantly, in 2003 the African Union had already amended its Constitutive Act of 2000, Article 3(q), by inviting 'the African Diaspora to participate as an important component in the building of the African Union' (AU 2003: 2). The AU, in fact, considers the diaspora to be 'the sixth region of Africa' and in this sense comparable to the five geographical components of the AU: Northern, Eastern, Western, Central and Southern regions.

According to an AU report on the definition of the African diaspora, 'the role of the Diaspora in their relations with the continent is to contribute to the development of the continent and the strengthening of the African Union' (AU 2005: 4). Since then several AU declarations have called for greater participation of the diaspora, supported also by the establishment of the Africa Citizens Directorate, CIDO. That diaspora affairs are prominent in CIDO reflects the general approach of international organizations to regard them as part of civil society.

Secondly, increasing international attention is being paid to the economic importance of diaspora, including remittances and human capital. Among donors, the World Bank has effectively mainstreamed African diaspora into the discussion on international development. In 2007 it launched the African Diaspora Program (ADP), providing policy advice, monitoring and support in order to engage diaspora in development cooperation. In the Horn of Africa, the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments, for instance, have already utilized ADP. An important outcome has been the African Institute for Remittances project (AIR) under the auspices of the AU and with funding from the EU. Its other collaborators are the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The aim of AIR is to compile reliable data on remittance flows to Africa and to enhance cooperation between banks and both home and host governments of diasporas for the safety and support of private transfers and accounts (World Bank 2012). AIR is one of the so-called 'legacy projects' mentioned in the declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit, which was hosted by the AU in South Africa in 2012. The other projects include

the establishment of a volunteers' corps, an investment fund, a development marketplace for diaspora enterprises and a database of diaspora professionals. The summit also promised to '[e]ncourage and intensify the participation of the African Diaspora in conflict prevention, management and resolution as well as post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation' (AU 2012: 4).

At a subregional level in the Horn of Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has established the Regional Consultative Process on Migration (IGAD-RCP) with the support of IOM and funding from the EU's programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum (AENEAS) (IGAD 2008; IOM 2008). While the goal of IGAD is to enhance regional development, the AENEAS programme (2004–06) and its successor, the 'Migration and asylum thematic programme' (2007–13), primarily focused on the prevention of illegal migration, even though the funding came from the EU's Development Cooperation funds. The objective was 'to provide financial and technical assistance to third countries [...] to support these countries' efforts to better manage migration flows in all its aspects' (European Parliament 2004).

This relates to the third factor enhancing the role of the African diaspora, namely the pressure coming from the host societies. European recognition of the African diaspora as a partner has followed the increase in migration from Africa to Europe. For example, one EU official explained that the Spanish EU presidency (2009) was particularly interested in the African diaspora owing to the 'dramatic change' this group had brought to the previously 'uniform Catholic' Spanish society. This change leads not only to the wish to manage (i.e. restrict) migration flows, but also motivates stakeholders to take into account the opinions of these new citizen groups in Europe. Thus it is not surprising that diasporas feature among NGOs working in European-supported projects in Africa. In the Horn of Africa a good example is the think tank Greater Horn Horizon Forum (GHHF), which was initiated by diaspora and regional academics in Djibouti and supported by UNESCO, the AU, IGAD and European governments (GHHF 2010).

Interaction with diaspora

In governmental organizations diasporas easily fall between different policy sectors. For instance the EU's external relations, development, justice and internal affairs all deal with diaspora issues, but as one EU official noted, none of these sectors is doing it in a comprehensive manner. Yet it is undeniable that diasporas influence EU policies. This is particularly noteworthy as far as policy coherence in development cooperation and regulation of migration are concerned. The interviews conducted for this chapter suggest that even though diasporas do not have an immediate effect, eventually they interact with different EU Member States dealing with diaspora issues.

Contacts that are occasional and indirect rather than continuous and immediate, and influence that is negligible rather than significant, are precisely what Weick referred to with the concept of loose couplings (Weick 2001: 383). Such contacts characterize the various channels through which diasporas are engaged in policy-making. The official embassy network provides one such channel. According to an EU official, 'All these embassies organize gatherings with their nationals. We see these people.'

For the Eritrean diaspora, for instance, the embassies are easy meeting points. This diaspora was organized already for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia. Since then a large proportion of it has maintained loyal relations with the new state. Even though the number of those who were directly associated with the liberation struggle is diminishing, Eritreans living in Europe are regarded as very patriotic. And vice versa: the state has maintained an organic reliance on the diaspora. Its way of collecting income tax from the diaspora reflects this reliance. Many feel obliged to pay the tax – for instance, in order to safeguard health services for their relatives in Eritrea. Such interdependence means that it is difficult to assess the extent to which a diaspora has a distinct or independent role when working through the government of the home country.

At the same time, however, the EU Commission's attempts to encourage community-level diaspora initiatives in Eritrea have not been successful. Although many Eritreans are looking for alternative avenues to support their home country, it is difficult for them to operate outside the state owing to the regulations the government imposes on NGOs. According to an EU official, the government is monitoring closely, even infiltrating, civil society organizations. The situation is so strictly controlled that representatives of international organizations prefer to discuss things with the international staff separately when visiting NGOs in Eritrea: 'They do not talk when Eritreans are there.' As a consequence, international organizations have very limited possibilities to support development in Eritrea via the independent Eritrean diaspora.

Elsewhere in the Horn of Africa, however, independently organized diaspora groups are an important facilitator for development cooperation. These groups are actively approaching the government authorities both in their host countries and internationally. An official from the EU noted: 'we get a lot of proposals from diaspora groups: somebody wants to do something with a particular village'. The delegation or embassy seems to be a particularly popular site in which to promote small-scale projects, and probably also the most pertinent one for those diaspora members who are in the field. At this level diaspora groups also have advantages in engaging with intergovernmental organizations when compared to the locals. According to a UNDP official, 'they often speak the language that very much resonates with us. They can refer to accountability and transparency and human development, and the language

is sophisticated. So, it makes them more approachable.' On the other hand, diaspora representatives can hold traditional or political views that are in conflict with the strategy of their host countries and international donors. And indeed, they are often among the most vocal critics of the donors' policies.

Donors are also supporting diasporas to get organized. The EU's Somalia Unit, for instance, has funded several organizations initiated by the diaspora. These range from the Nairobi-based Horn Relief, which is working for peace through grassroots capacity-building in Somalia only, to Italian Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries (COSPE), which has activities on other continents, too. Similarly, the UNDP facilitates, for instance, the Qualified Expatriate Somali Technical Support – Migration for Development in Africa (QUESTS-MIDA) and the Somali Institutional Development Project (SIDP). Both include considerable diaspora participation. One of the aims of the donors is to use organized groups in order to reach the wider diaspora community. The EU, for example, has outsourced the selection of diaspora representatives to its meetings and conferences to the diaspora organizations it already knows, as these, according to one official, 'have all kinds of contacts with other groups'.

When successful, such interaction resonates with and contributes to a diaspora's social capital. Support for diaspora groups has been part of the wider work to strengthen civil society and to enhance intergovernmental dialogue with NGOs, but it has been affected by the same problems, too. In Ethiopia, for example, the EU Commission played an active role in building a civil society forum which enabled diaspora groups to participate in international cooperation. However, the 2009 Ethiopian legislation restricting the human rights and advocacy activities of NGOs receiving more than 10 per cent of their financing from abroad seriously hampered this cooperation.

At a practical level, policy and programme implementation constitutes an important and distinct phase of the interaction between diasporas and the donor community. In Somalia, for instance, the inclusion of diaspora professionals has become almost mandatory. Because donors cannot establish formal contracts with local Somali NGOs owing to the lack of a functioning legal system there, financing is channelled through intergovernmental agencies or INGOs. But in order to be eligible in the tenders, these need Somali partners. The diaspora then represents Somalis as opposed to donor country expatriates. UNDP, for instance, has committed itself to the 'the deployment of skilled Somali Diaspora' (UNDP 2007: 5). It has openly recruited 'Somali diaspora where possible' for technical assistance and as advisers (UN Country Team Somalia 2007: Appendix B.2). This policy has been justified in detail in the report 'Somalia's missing million: the Somali diaspora and its role in development', which the UNDP published in 2009 in cooperation with diaspora groups (UNDP 2009).

The eagerness of international donors to rely on diasporas in the implementation of development programmes stems partly from security reasons, e.g. the vulnerability of Westerners to kidnappings in conflict zones. But even more importantly it stems from the general principle of respecting local ownership in order to ensure the legitimacy of peacebuilding and development work. This local ownership seems to be supported if not replaced by diaspora professionals. Furthermore, in a weak state the most effective and functioning level for international programmes can be found below the central administration. Clan homelands and municipalities, for instance, work in the whole of Somalia, not only in Somaliland and Puntland (Horst 2008: 329). With the help of the diaspora, publicly supported, planned, monitored and evaluated international cooperation can be successfully carried out at that level without the approval of a unitary central state. By the same token, possible failures in this cooperation are not destructive for Somalia as a whole.

But the other side of the coin is that successes are not beneficial to the central state either. Peace and development at the local level does not directly contribute to the national project of state-building. And indeed, the multiple efforts of outsiders to influence the conflict in the country have not helped very much in this regard. Indirectly this, too, has strengthened the role of the diaspora. According to the manager of the UNDP Somalia Institutional Development Project (SIDP), 'Somalis are resistant to outsiders coming and telling them what to do'. Since the diaspora appears to be less of an outsider, and therefore more acceptable to the international players, it is potentially powerful. Consequently the power of the diaspora stems from a peculiar setting and a difficult balance. At the local level, the diaspora has a role in delivering international aid and services, because it is seen as apolitical. At the national level the diaspora can fill the political vacuum, because international agencies cannot take the lead there.

In their international advocacy work, diasporas, however, are usually openly partial. The interviews conducted for this chapter indicate that advocacy and awareness-raising are more common motivations for diaspora contacts with EU authorities in Brussels than with EU delegations in their home country. At home the possibilities for the opposition in particular to enter into discussions with foreign powers are limited. But in Brussels the situation is different. An important forum for this is the European Parliament. Public hearings there are useful venues for dissidents, political refugees or opposition groups to court sympathy. In the words of one EU official, 'Many have very sad stories to tell of the suffering of their people at home.' With regard to Ethiopia, the Oromo Liberation Front, for instance, conducts a regular dialogue with members of the European Parliament, who then put pressure on the Commission, which has to answer the enquiries of the MEPs. Diasporas focusing on human rights and political issues also approach the Commission directly. According to one

official, development cooperation is on the agenda of individuals when they want to meet him, but often for negative reasons. This means lobbying for sanctions, i.e. for cutting of development assistance to the government they oppose.

Because of politicization, donor governments and the EU prefer multilateral channels and cooperation with the UN when supporting diasporas at the national level. One example is the EC–UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI), which is funded by the EU and Switzerland but run by the UNDP with the support of other multilateral organizations such as IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UNFPA and UN Women (JMDI 2011: 15). For the UNDP this initiative has been an opportunity to engage directly with groups working with the diaspora in Ethiopia, for instance, without the need to go through the government. In the EU, in turn, it is believed that the UN, in addition to being politically neutral, provides legitimacy and wider influence for the initiative. This relates also to the possibilities of cooperation with other UN organizations, whose presence and capacities vary from country to country. In fact, at the level of managing a programme like JMDI, the UN family itself seems a good example of loose couplings.

The question of representation

While loose couplings enable flexibility in the interaction between different groups, they also preserve, or at least do not help to overcome, the differences and disputes within the groups. This is because by definition loose couplings are not hierarchical and cannot be organized under one unitary entity. Furthermore, as each event has its own identity and separateness (Weick 1976), they can be equally effectual or ineffectual irrespective of other events.

The interviews conducted for this chapter confirmed the notion that each diaspora group represents a case of its own. The main challenge for intergovernmental authorities in managing their diaspora relations, however, is not the unique character of diasporas but their internal fragmentation. First of all it is difficult to know whom the diaspora representatives are representing, or if individuals represent only themselves. Sometimes personal interests dominate diaspora activities to such an extent that it is risky for intergovernmental authorities to support them. The concern is that a small group of 'alienated intellectuals' hijacks the whole discussion on the crisis back in the home country. UNDP officials responsible for Somalia admit that they usually cooperate with individuals and that legitimacy is an issue as these might have a very restrictive political agenda. 'To make sure that we are dealing with the right people and the right institutions from our office in Nairobi and our offices inside Somalia, I think it becomes, again, much harder to do.' In Brussels one EU official noted that there are a few individuals 'you always see'. In addition to social capital, this relates to human capital of diaspora groups and individuals.

Some of the groups coming from the Horn of Africa are seen to be among the most vocal and articulate ones. Education, obviously, is an important asset in this regard. 'Somalis and Ethiopians are educated,' according to the official. At the same time, however, a large portion of a diaspora might lack capacity and is thus potentially marginalized, so needs special attention.

Secondly, the political agendas of diaspora groups differ and can even contradict each other along ethnic divisions and/or the division between government and its opposition. These can represent interests of ethnic subgroups such as Tigrayan women in Ethiopia, or wide but loose alliances around ethnic identity such as Oromo communities in Europe which include civil society groups, political parties and even forces supporting an armed struggle. For the EU, the agendas of such groups can either appear too 'narrow' or represent combinations that are 'immature' and 'difficult to interact with'. Cooperation between ethnic groups and intergovernmental bodies seems to be particularly problematic.

Supporters of opposition groups are particularly active outside their home country. An EU official noted that 'Most contacts we have with diaspora groups are with those who have left as political refugees, or who like to compete with or replace the current regime.' Many are lobbying against their home country government exclusively. However, the interviewees for this chapter also emphasized that not all opposition representatives oppose support to their home country and its government, but rather ask the international community 'to be aware of their suffering' or just to recognize them. In the latter case this opposition has no interest whatsoever in discussing development. For the EU, however, it is difficult to assume a role of providing recognition to opposition groups. On Eritrea an EU official noted: 'We do not want to jeopardize the very fragile interaction with the government.' To emphasize the distinct value of that interaction, he differentiated the European approach from that of the USA, which has openly met with the Eritrean opposition.

The case of Eritrea is further complicated by the fact that 'there are new groups: new political refugees as well as economic migrants'. Independence has given birth to diasporas that might share old connections but whose approach to their home country is not inherited from the liberation movement. Thus a former mayor can be a representative of the opposition in exile while preserving the earlier accumulated contacts with foreign powers. The situation in fragile countries, in general, is very volatile and changes over time, affecting the status of individuals in the diaspora.

The political role of the diaspora is raising expectations, among EU officials, of its members becoming ideological eye-openers: 'They would be potentially powerful messengers with regard to their countries of origin.' On the other hand, this ideological power, if not channelled into constructive cooperation, can also make diasporas impatient. According to an AU adviser, in 2010 the

organization was aware of 352 Somali websites, manned by the diaspora and 'propagating' for or against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was supported by the Western governments, the UN and the AU. Some have even turned to violence.

For the international community the dilemma is obvious. In the words of the UNDP Country Director:

> I don't think that at this stage we have an answer to what it is we would like to do with the diaspora. We know that they are an essential ingredient to any better development inside Somalia, but how to mobilize them based on the toolkit, the rules and procedures and goals of UNDP, I think that is something that we need to find an answer to first ... But also the negative side, why have some diaspora youth become suicide bombers when they presumably have good opportunities in other countries?

The Special Representative for Somalia for the UN secretary-general, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, in his letter to the members of the Somali diaspora, referred to the December 2009 suicide bombing in the Benadir University of Mogadishu by noting that it was 'funded by some of your Diaspora colleagues':

> It was particularly troubling that the man responsible for so much carnage was a Somali living in Denmark. And he was not the first to return to Somalia, after being given sanctuary abroad, to spill the blood of his countrymen and women. The suicide bomber in Bossasso in 2008 was a Somali-American from Minnesota. And we have since seen the attempted assault carried out last week in Aarhus, Denmark by a Somali living in the country. (UNPOS 2010)

Al-Shabaab has actively recruited Somalis living in the West to come to Somalia and join the global jihad (see, for example, Memri 2008). Another example is Hizbul Islam, founded by a Swedish-Somali, Ali Yassin Mohamed, which has recruited fighters among Somali youth in the Rinkeby suburb of Stockholm, for instance (YLE 2010). Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Australian and US Somalis have been prosecuted and many more nationals accused of planning or participating in attacks targeting the TFG.

Conclusions

The growth of diasporas and their gradual inclusion in international co-operation during the last ten years represents one of the most important transformations in peacebuilding efforts in the Horn of Africa. These factors are also exemplary of the general tendency to strengthen global governance outside the structures of a sovereign state. Today civil society, private actors and local communities are legitimate constituents of global governance, responding to problems that are not limited to the state level only. Therefore civil society is also an important partner for the donor community focusing

on peace, security and development. As the discussion above shows, in this cooperation diasporas are, quite correctly, located in civil society.

It seems clear that state fragility has boosted the role of diasporas in the Horn of Africa beyond what is usually expected from civil society in its triangular cooperation with donors and recipient governments. Indeed, the diasporas have substituted for the latter at least to some extent. On the one hand, this new role is functional and stems from the diasporas' skills and access to the societies in question. On the other hand, the motivation for this strengthened role is ideological, given that local ownership of the internationally supported peace and development projects and processes is a necessity for their legitimization. It is this character in the involvement of diasporas which makes them so critical for IR. The internal heterogeneity of diasporas increases their theoretical significance even further.

While it is clear that the internal dynamics and interests of diasporas distinguish it from other civil society groups working for peace, any given diaspora group is far from being monolithic. And although a diaspora is able to speak the 'language' of donors, in the context of a fragile state and contested state authority, it is inevitably part of the conflict. And indeed, intergovernmental actors are very well aware of the fact that a diaspora does not consist of individuals who share common interests. Because it is in the best interests of groups or even individuals within a diaspora to maximize their influence in political developments, there is competition and antagonism between them. This competition also involves utilization of opportunities to cooperate with international agencies.

State fragility means that there are no clear rules on how to handle such competition. At the same time, it is obligatory for international agencies to implement policies that are in line with the values of the governments funding them. In the case of the EU and the UN, these include poverty eradication, promotion of human rights and social equality, for instance. Therefore, in the final analysis, the ultimate responsibility for the content of cooperation lies with the international agencies. The multiplicity of interaction events with diasporas and loose couplings between them make such cooperation a laboratory for policy coherence that has been highlighted in international development work in particular. While loose couplings mean that occasional failures are never destructive for the whole system, coupled events might still frustrate each other if their goals are contradictory.

As a consequence, a diaspora's political agenda is promoted by international cooperation only to the extent that it is concomitant with the objectives defined by foreign governments. The end result might be the emergence of a 'limited central state' that does not pose a threat to Western powers even if it is ruled by 'illiberal' political forces (see Piiparinen 2010). What is then suppressed is not conflicting or suspicious political objectives as such – in a context of a

fragile state these can flourish or hold out in any case – but the promotion of a self-organizing political space of competing political programmes. Irrespective of the rhetoric of state-building, international cooperation can be carried out without the need to support or even postulate the existence of a state. Instead of the state, it is the local level and local governance which appear pivotal. In other words, a diaspora can substitute for the central government only by bypassing it.

Cooperation with diasporas in terms of MLG and loose couplings is not only a response to state fragility but also a matter of control over a fragile state, even if the intergovernmental organizations are unaware of it. This then creates an obvious dilemma for an intergovernmental system and a diaspora's role in it. Advocacy for and discussion of political solutions for building the central state are limited in diaspora contacts taking place outside the home countries, while the fragility of the very same state is normalized and reproduced in the field in concrete project cooperation with diasporas. Cooperation with diasporas is thus restricted to peacebuilding and development rather than state-building.

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2 | Regional political history and the production of diasporas

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Introduction

This chapter adopts a regional perspective.[1] It describes a political history which comprises conflicts within states and between states, mostly taking the form of forces within a state receiving support from a neighbouring state (and sometimes a state farther afield). These conflicts, in addition to economic factors, play a great role in the emergence of diaspora populations from the countries of the Horn in the global North. To unravel this history, it would be inadequate to proceed in the usual form of geographical overviews, country by country, like a travel guide. Rather, it is better to analyse border situations and conflict configurations in clusters of states. After some general introductory remarks, this chapter will therefore be divided into two such clusters, one having its focus more to the west, the other more to the east, namely Sudan/Ethiopia/Eritrea and Ethiopia/Eritrea/Somalia/Kenya. Unsurprisingly, Ethiopia and Eritrea, because of their central location in the region, will have to figure in both sections. Djibouti will be mentioned in a variety of contexts, but will not be a focus of this chapter.

From a macroscopic geographical perspective, the area under study is on and around the watershed between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans. The Nile flows into the Mediterranean Sea, a bay of the Atlantic, and the River Juba into the Indian Ocean. In more humid eras, the River Awash was part of the Indian Ocean system and the River Omo of the Atlantic system via the Nile. Now neither of them have outlets to the sea: the Omo flows into Lake Turkana; the Awash dries up in Djibouti. A look at river basins is useful for understanding human geography. Water flows often parallel the movements of people and goods. Traffic went along the rivers as far as they were navigable and farther up, in the Ethiopian highlands, along the plateaux and ridges separating them.

Until 1991, the provincial boundaries of Ethiopia took these 'givens' into account. They were designed to include people in reach of sub-centres, and for these sub-centres to be reached from Addis Ababa at the centre. Some of these boundaries go back to the realms of the conquerors, to the generals of Emperor Menelik at the turn of the twentieth century. Their spheres of

control followed the lines of traffic. In the 1990s, administrative boundaries were redrawn 'to conform to lines of supposed cultural difference' (Donham 2002: 6). This had, for example, the consequence that the Yem people of the former Kafa province now have to travel via Addis Ababa to reach Awasa, the capital of their new regional state, the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (Popp 2001). The New Beni-Shangul-Gumuz State on the Sudanese border straddles the Blue Nile. For officers from the capital, Assosa, to reach Metekel in the Gumuz area on the other side of the Nile (formerly Gojjam), it is necessary to go via the bridge at Neqemte: a trip of 1,250 kilometres (Young 1999: 342). Neqemte is just as close to Addis as it is to Metekel. For this reason (and possibly other reasons) delegations from the two parts of Beni Shangul/Gumuz like to hold their joint meetings in Addis Ababa.[2]

The major division, the watershed between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans, found its political equivalent in the first half of the twentieth century in the British and French spheres of economic interest. The French built the railway from Addis Ababa to their colony Djibouti. This railway follows the Awash Valley and directs trade to the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, via the Gulf of Aden. The British were then in control of Sudan. They had an enclave in Gambela on Ethiopian soil and tried to direct as much trade as possible from western Ethiopia via the Baro, the Sobat and the White Nile to Khartoum. A much smaller proportion of the trade with Sudan went along the Blue Nile (Bahru 1976).

Exports from western Ethiopia comprised coffee, gold and, off the controlled routes, well into the twentieth century, also slaves (Triulzi 1981). International companies struggled over platinum mining licences in the Jimma area: the 'white gold' (Cerulli 1933: 73–9). In Sudan the waterways were important, as were the roads across the desert.

West of the Ethiopian highlands, the savannah and Sahel belt, the northern part of sub-Saharan Africa, stretches all the way to Senegal. In pre-colonial times, this belt was characterized by kingdoms with spheres of power rather than bounded territories. Moving away from the centre (and sometimes the centre itself moved), royal power faded or petered out. Kingdoms did not really border each other; there were gaps. In the gaps we find self-regulating nomadic or agropastoral groups.[3] The Christian empire of Ethiopia, and the princely states into which it fragmented, can from a wider perspective be seen as the easternmost instances of similar forms of pre-colonial statehood forming a chain across Africa. In the context of the Horn, however, only three of these concern us: Dar Fur, Dar Funj and Ethiopia.

The geographical givens mentioned at the beginning – namely the position of the Horn on the watershed between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic – informed the way in which it was cut up by the colonialists. As we have

seen, British interests in Ethiopia gravitated westwards. They wanted to direct trade towards the Nile and Egypt, the Atlantic connection. The French, on the other hand, having lost the race to the Sudan in the famous Fashoda incident (1898), were exclusively interested in the catchment of their port, Djibouti, and wanted trade to flow east. In a climate of competition and politicking between the European powers, the railway connecting Addis Ababa to Djibouti was built from 1887 to 1917. The British, however, being the colonial masters of India, also had interests on the Indian Ocean side of the watershed. Since the construction of the Suez Canal (completed in 1869) the Red Sea had become their primary channel of access to India. In order to provision their naval post in Aden with meat, they established a protectorate in what was to become Somaliland.

One colonial conquest justified the next: Egypt, which developed into a British semi-colony, was important because of the route to India, via the Suez Canal. Another reason for its importance was that it replaced the USA as a provider of cotton when the American Civil War broke out. Aden and Somaliland provided services along the route to India. As Egypt depended on the Nile, the headwaters of the Nile needed to be controlled, hence the interest in the Sudan and Uganda. Kenya's role in the game was access to Uganda. White settlement and colonial control followed the inland progress of the Uganda railway from Mombasa.

The modern states often maintain the boundaries of the colonial states which preceded them. Sometimes older colonial boundaries even re-emerge as independent states disintegrate. Eritrea, for example, became independent in 1991 (formalized by a referendum in 1993), after having been ruled as a part of Ethiopia. Somaliland, which had formed a union with the former Italian trust territory Somalia in 1960, reasserted its separate statehood again in 1991. In the discourses legitimizing these new political units, cultural elements which can be traced to former colonial powers are sometimes given positive value. This stands in sharp contrast with the preceding period of decolonization in which the former colonial powers were depicted exclusively as oppressors.

Elsewhere, new political units are based on 'ethnicity', which is defined by conflicting criteria in different hierarchies, often with 'language' being high up on the list (Schlee 2001). The interior organization of Ethiopia as a 'federation'[4] is a model case for this.[5] As the ethno-nationally defined states share boundaries and overlap in their ethnic composition with states based on quite different criteria of identification, ideological conflicts with territorial implications seem hard to avoid. Ethiopia and Eritrea are one example, Somaliland and Puntland, a regional state within Somalia, are another. While Somaliland insists on its colonial boundaries and derives part of its identity from the British colonial experience, Puntland identifies itself along clan lines and aims at being co-extensional with the territories inhabited by members of the Harti clan

family which extend into the Sool and Sanag regions of Somaliland (Hoehne 2006; Schlee 2008: 117).

No matter how much ethnicity is discussed in certain political contexts, other examples also show that the complete absence of ethnic differences by any cultural criteria does not prevent segmentation and conflict. The best example for this is Somalia, which, owing to its cultural homogeneity, has often been called the only true nation-state of Africa (though there is an element of simplification in this description, because it neglects minorities in the south of the country). The more powerful among the warring factions (in the formation of which clanship continues to play an important role) are, however, culturally nearly identical with each other. Clanship does not imply cultural difference.

Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea

A short summary of the history of Sudan (Schlee and Watson 2009), derived from sources such as De Waal (1997), Holt and Daly (2000) and Johnson (2003), reveals astonishing levels of instability and political factionalism. A constant theme is the tension and conflict between north and south, core and periphery, and the different levels of investment and entitlement between them. The core, with its centralized kingdoms, centres of colonial power and theocratic state, has continued to dominate the more acephalous periphery, which served mainly in earlier years as a source of slaves and ivory. The governments of the core have been characterized by interpersonal political rivalries that have played out in support of different factions in the periphery or in support of 'tribal militias' which have been encouraged to wage war. Instability, violence and famine in the periphery have fed back into further factional struggles at the core. Competition for oil has now fed into these cycles of violence and instability, as has the impact of international alliances and resource flows, which have also changed dramatically as a result of the fallout from 11 September 2001.

The northern part of the Sudan, which is perceived as Arab, can trace its history to two earlier political entities, namely the sultanate of Dar Fur and the Funj kingdom. The rise of the Funj kingdom was accompanied by its conversion to Islam, as a result of the influence of Arab immigrants from the north. The Funj kingdom was occupied by Egyptian forces in 1821. Egyptian control over the large territories of the Sudan became increasingly tenuous, and a series of revolts took place.

Resistance against Egypt culminated in the establishment of the Mahdist (or Ansar) state (1881–98). It controlled and administered large swathes of present-day Sudan, extending even into what is now western Ethiopia. The Mahdist state was a theocracy founded by Muhammed Ahmad ᶜAbdallah, heralded as the 'Expected Mahdi'. The Mahdists instigated a system of taxation of their

own, and continued to wage war against other groups in an attempt to bring all under their holy suzerainty. They killed Emperor Yohannes of Ethiopia in a battle in 1889. The Mahdist period ended with the Sudan being occupied again, nominally for Egypt, but by a largely British force. The Sudan was then an Anglo-Egyptian 'condominium' (1898–1956), with Egypt clearly being the junior partner.

The period that followed independence in 1956 was characterized by uneasy political coalitions that fell victim to military coups. All the regimes were dominated by northerners. In 1963, a southern guerrilla movement emerged called Anyanya, which became a rallying point for southern frustrations, and had numerous highly visible and symbolic military successes (Johnson 2009; Hutchinson 2009).

In 1969, Jaafar Nimeiri came to power in a bloodless coup. Over the next sixteen years Nimeiri aligned himself with factions from many different sides of the political spectrum. Starting out as a socialist, he later formed a close alliance with Hasan al Turabi, and, in 1983, Nimeiri announced that the principles of sharia law would be enshrined in the penal code. This 'Islamization' of the state has been a constant cause of tension and conflict with the more Christian south. At the same time, Nimeiri was becoming closer to the USA, which saw Sudan as an important ally in the Cold War. In the 1980s, Sudan became the largest recipient of foreign aid in sub-Saharan Africa.

Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985. Following a short period under a transitional government, a coalition government was formed with Sadiq al Siddiq (also known as Sadiq al-Mahdi, a great-grandson of the Mahdi) as prime minister. The new government began to arm tribal militias to counter southern rebels, a military strategy that sadly was to become more familiar in the regimes that followed. Tribal militias in western Sudan, armed by the government, made devastating attacks on the peoples of Bahr el Ghazal and Equatoria (Holt and Daly 2000).

A coup in 1989 brought ʿUmar Hasan Ahmad Al Bashir to power, and began a regime supported by the National Islamic Front (NIF) and the Muslim Brotherhood. The regime has been accused of unprecedented repression of its people and exercise of state power. Up until the mid-1990s, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) gained territory and strength, but then certain developments occurred that weakened its position: in 1991, the Derg government in Ethiopia, led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, was overthrown, and the SPLA lost one of its main sources of support and arms. Conflict continued throughout the 1990s, and the Bashir government has retained power, despite many problems. When the Bashir government supported Iraq in its invasion of Kuwait, however, it suffered a decline in one of its most valuable economic resources, the remittances from Sudanese workers in the Gulf States. To the west, Darfurian rebels have been active since the early 2000s. The government has been accused

of supporting another tribal militia, the *janjawiid*, and encouraging them to rout the rebels. Darfur residents have fled to refugee camps and across the border into Chad, where their presence has caused political instability. The African Union has sent troops to act as peacekeepers, but their numbers and resources are inadequate.

The escalation of the Darfur conflict roughly coincided with the coming about of peace with the south. In 2005 the 'Comprehensive Peace Agreement' between the southern Sudanese forces and the Khartoum government was reached in Naivasha, Kenya. It provided that after six years of power sharing there would be a referendum to be held in the south to decide whether that part of the country would separate or remain part of Sudan. The referendum was duly held after this period in January 2011 and resulted in separation. The ceremonial foundation of the new state, no longer 'southern Sudan' but 'South Sudan', took place in July of that year.

Many who have followed the media reports about the Darfur conflict were led to believe that it was basically about 'Arab Muslims' fighting 'Black Africans'. As has been argued (Schlee and Watson 2009: 9–15), these categories have been transferred from the rhetoric about the southern Sudan to the Darfur conflict. Alex de Waal (2005) and other authors have shown why it was adopted as useful by many local and international actors. And indeed, Islamism and Islamophobia also play a role in the Horn of Africa in general. The Darfur conflict with its international ramifications is just one of many examples.

Also of significance are the definitions by which areas and peoples are included in the concept of the Horn of Africa. For example, in December 1993 I had the privilege of attending a conference on the Horn of Africa at the University of Khartoum. Many papers, especially by our Sudanese friends and colleagues, actually aimed at demonstrating that the host country itself, the Sudan, also belonged to the Horn of Africa (*qarn al Ifriqiyya*). One geographer spoke of the geographical unity which should be reflected in closer political integration. The Horn of Africa, we learned, formed a unit of the Ethiopian highlands and the surrounding lowlands. Historians and archaeologists dwelt on old links connecting various parts of the Horn of Africa with each other and with the centres of the Islamic world. Possibly the earliest forms of the Arabic script were found along the Nile rather than on the Arab peninsula. The first *hijra* of followers of the Prophet from Mecca to the court of the Negus of Ethiopia was the topic of several papers: the presence of Islam in the Horn of Africa pre-dates the conquest of Mecca and even the Medinese period (see Dereje, this volume, on the importance of this memory of the first *hijra* to Ethiopian Muslims).

But of course there are also historical connections, even much more obvious and more frequently used ones, which link the Sudan to Egypt down the Nile or to West Africa across the savannahs. Why were the links to the

eastern neighbours stressed to construct a Horn of Africa which includes the Sudan? The headlines about the Horn of Africa had been persistently negative for decades. So why should anyone identify with the Horn of Africa if he or she is not obliged to do so?

There are several possible explanations for this apparent paradox. The Sudan desperately needed to overcome its international isolation, which had started with the Islamist coup of 1989 and had been further aggravated by its support for Iraq in the second Gulf War. Its only major allies worldwide were Iran and China. The USA later, in November 1997, even resorted to proclaiming a total boycott against the Sudan (paradoxically exempting Osama bin Laden's gum arabic business; see Watson and Schlee 2009: 14).

The rivalry with newly independent Eritrea was also developing. For decades, the Sudan had been a country of refuge and transit to the global North for Eritreans. Also politically the Eritrean liberation movement, which fought Ethiopia, a country which supported and offered bases to the SPLA, was a natural ally of the Sudan. But with Eritrean independence, its pronouncedly secular orientation, and the marginalization of Islamic forces and Muslim groups within the country, relations turned sour.

Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Kenya

Not only with regard to the question of whether or not the Sudan belongs to the Horn, but also in other facets of identity in the Horn, we can observe religious affiliation being defined and accentuated in different ways in different configurations and periods, just like nationality and ethnicity.

Political ideology can select what it needs from a wide range of cultural features and historical circumstances, some of which are more 'real' in the sense of acceptability to critical scholarship, others less so. The great variation in this selection of cultural features and historical facts for the definition of a common identity, even in a relatively narrow geographical setting, is well illustrated by a glance at Ethiopia and its neighbours, Eritrea and Somalia.

By referendum in April 1993, Eritrea formally gained its independence from Ethiopia, which it had factually enjoyed already since the fall of the Mengistu regime in May 1991 (Africa Confidential 1991). The dominant voice in Eritrea, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), described the new entity as secular and modernist, in sharp contrast to what 'Africa' stands for in their eyes.[6] The ethnicity factor, as well as the religious affiliations, Islam and Christianity, were present in the political power play, but given no role in the official self-image. The constituting difference which marked off Eritrea as a separate entity was its colonial fate as an Italian colony; in addition, communality was and continues to be appealed to by pointing to the decades of struggle for independence from Ethiopia.

Since the demise of the Mengistu regime in 1991, the remainder of Ethiopia

has been restructured along quite different principles. Regions are shaped to fit what are perceived as ethnic boundaries. In the rhetoric which accompanies the often violent struggles about where exactly to draw the new boundaries, reference is made to linguistic classifications by European scholars, classifications of which the people concerned are not aware and to which communal feelings have never before been attached, e.g. 'Cushites' (Schlee and Shongolo 1995). The largest of these units is Oromia, which, owing to its multiple religious and genealogical affiliations, puts a high stress on linguistic unity and the potential of the Oromo language as a medium for written communication (e.g. Mekuria 1993; Tilahun 1993; Zitelmann 1991). As there are numerous groups of Oromo speakers who have not (or have not always) perceived themselves as Oromo (or some earlier names of that entity or its constituent parts), but claim shared genealogies with non-Oromo groups, e.g. the Somalis, the top position of language in the list of criteria of ethnicity is not unchallenged. There are Oromo speakers who regard their linguistic affiliation as secondary and attribute prime importance to their Somali genealogy and Islam as their religion. This has led to a counter-reaction among Oromo in certain areas who now stress their 'traditional' system,[7] associated with the *gada* (generation set), as a part of their collective identity. This makes life for Oromo Muslims in such places difficult (Schlee and Shongolo 1995).

That Oromo speakers formerly belonging to many different provinces were now combined into one state, 'Oromia', was generally welcomed by many Oromo and affected alliances in local conflicts. Former 'traditional' enemies, Guji, Arsi and Boran, combined forces against non-Oromo in border conflicts between the new ethnic states. Before, there had been alliances between some Oromo and non-Oromo, such as Gedeo and Sidama, against other Oromo. Now, however, things started to fall in line with the government's ethnic and linguistic classifications (Tadesse 2009).

Later, lines of fission between different Oromo groups re-emerged. Some Oromo speakers of Somaloid and Somali origin, such as Gabre and Garre, started to campaign for territorial rights of their own, and in the referendums which were held in various locations to determine the course of the boundary between Oromia and the Somali Regional State, they sided with whoever offered them the better deal (Fekadu 2009; Dejene 2012). Later, when the Boran felt they had been neglected by the Oromia government and the federal government in these territorial struggles against Somalis and Somaloids, a separate Boran identity (as opposed to Boran being thought of as a sub-identity of Oromo) re-emerged. The Boran started to claim that their situation had been better before, when they were not 'Oromo' but just 'Boran' (Alemayehu 2012a).

Somalia – apart from its unsatisfied claims on Somali territories outside it – was once celebrated for its cultural homogeneity, and deemed the only true nation-state in Africa, while the rest of the continent was perceived as being

ridden by 'tribalism' which resulted from the incongruence of ethnic units with states. Cultural similarity has never prevented Somalis from fighting each other, however. On the contrary, their shared preferences for water and grazing resources led to competition for these resources, which was expressed violently by those who could afford to do so. A wider internally peaceful territorial integration of Somalis was achieved by colonial powers and later maintained through assistance to central governments by rival superpowers, which flooded the Horn with arms. Now that these centripetal forces no longer exist, the old centrifugal forces have re-established the normal state of disunity among the Somali. A number of things, however, are different from the pre-colonial pastoral past: the stakes are higher because of enormous fortunes generated by illicit economic activities, and the level of armament is higher as well. There are also intricate links between what happens in Somalia and the ups and downs in the relationship between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Immediately after the independence of Eritrea in 1991, there seems to have been a phase of euphoria in the relationship between the new country and Ethiopia, rather than the bitterness which might have been expected after thirty years of war. The ruling elite of both were personally acquainted and indeed, in some of their multiple struggles, had fought side by side against the Mengistu regime.

In 1998 a contested border area, an issue involving old maps and a few square kilometres, escalated into a full-scale war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In the course of this conflict the Ethiopian government completed the shift to the centralist and unionist form of government, invoking 3,000 years of (Semitic, northern Ethiopian) history and abandoning its earlier ethnic and federalist rhetorical emphasis.[8] Starting as the Tigrean People's Liberation Front, a regionalist movement, in 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) suddenly found itself in possession of the capital. They embarked on a dual course: on the one hand, they created a new administrative order based on ethnic units, or the perception of such ethnic units, and adopted a constitution which gave these units the right to secede; on the other hand, they tolerated only parties which supported the central government. All real opposition was violently suppressed. There were mass imprisonments of OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) supporters or suspected supporters. Thus the regionalist ideology was not implemented. The actual politics of the government were centralist. Volker Janssen (1991) has described this centralism as a transcontinuity of Ethiopian politics, i.e. as a feature which survives revolutionary change (cf. Heyer 1997; Schlee 2002a). In the course of the renewed war with Eritrea, the discourse of the EPRDF also now switched to 'unity' and its centralism came out from behind the screen of 'diversity' rhetoric.

The new situation demanded that one now had to be Ethiopian *or* Eritrean. Hitherto that had not been the case to such a degree. There are numerous

identities cross-cutting the divide between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Tigrinya is spoken in both countries and the Afar and numerous other ethnic groups straddle the boundary. In addition, there are large urban populations who adhered to modernist world-views and for whom the importance of ethnicity had been declining for generations. Now there was official harassment, extortions and expulsions. 'Ethiopians' were expelled from Eritrea and 'Eritreans' from Ethiopia.

Another line of fission was between the Ethiopian government and parts of the Oromo movement. Owing to intimidation and arrests of candidates for elections, the OLF was prevented from pursuing its aims within democratic institutions and resumed fighting. In the Blue Nile area of the Sudan, around Sennar, where I undertook field research in 1996 and 1998, many Ethiopian refugees from the Mengistu regime had left after the fall of that regime in 1991 and gone back to Ethiopia, mostly in organized transports. By the late 1990s the area had started to fill again with defeated OLF fighters from Wollega, mostly single males who worked and lived in shelters on the banana plantations by the river. There were signs of mistreatment of prisoners by Ethiopian forces.

Also in the south the OLF did not manage to keep any areas under their control. They had already had to withdraw into the Moyale District of Kenya (then still a part of the Marsabit District) in 1991.[9] From there for the first time they launched an attack into Ethiopia on 16 January 1999. The Ethiopians under attack killed four OLF fighters and then pursued the remainder on to Kenyan territory. Such incidents led to complaints by Ethiopian authorities about attacks by Kenyans or from Kenyan soil and by Kenyan authorities about border violations by Ethiopian forces. Ethiopian authorities down to the district commissioner, Moyale, had so far ignored or denied the presence of OLF on the Kenyan side of the border (Schlee 2003: 343–66).

A little later in this chapter, we will come across the OLF again, in a place where few people would expect it: Somalia. Somalia, as it appears on the map today, has existed only since 1960. Or, to be more precise, this construction existed from 1960 until it broke up towards the end of the 1980s, when ever-larger parts of the region came under the control of competing militias. 'Somali' was of course the name of a people long before the states where Somalis live today (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya) and their colonial forerunners took shape. The language of the Somalis belongs to the lowland branch of the East Cushitic languages, as do the languages bordering to the west: Afar, Saho, Oromo and Rendille. The internal dialect differentiation is strong, and even more pronounced in the south than the north, which seems to indicate that these people have had a longer history in the south.[10]

As an ethnic category, 'Somali' is not clearly delineated. Certain groups have increasingly come to see themselves as Somali in the course of Islamization. There are also transitional linguistic and cultural areas between Oromo and

Somalis in which groups may define themselves more as one or the other depending on what happens to be politically opportune.[11] The first attempts to colonize Somali territories were made from 1884 onwards, when the European countries divided Africa up among themselves at the Berlin Conference. In 1885 France took Djibouti, and in 1887 the Ethiopian emperor Menelik captured the Muslim city of Harer in the east of the country, driving a wedge deep into Somali-speaking territories. In the same year, Ethiopia concluded a border agreement with the British. Already at this point, then, the British must have felt entitled to dispose of Somali territories.

Italy completed its takeover of Italian Somalia only in the 1920s; the territory finally took on the form it was to retain in 1925, when Jubaland, formerly part of British East Africa, was ceded to the Italians. The British, having had unpleasant experiences with the Aulihan Somalis at Serenli in 1916 (Schlee 1989: 44), were undoubtedly happy to comply with the Italians' desire to expand their territories in this area. Since one of the arenas of the Second World War was the Horn of Africa, the development of colonies was interrupted at this period. After the war, the Italians regained their lost colony in the form of a UN mandate. From the British-controlled north, however, the Somali Youth League (SYL) articulated ever more pressing demands for independence; and since the British and Italian Somali territories became independent in 1960, with their unification into a single state ensuing a few days later, it can be said that in effect the colonial period lasted barely a generation.[12] Although almost all the inhabitants of Somalia were Somalis, by no means did all Somalis live in Somalia. Right from the start there were demands for the annexation of the Somali territories in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, and in the 1960s a guerrilla movement in the north of Kenya, the so-called Shifta, fought with support from Somalia for the annexation of north and east Kenya.

Perhaps 1977 can be regarded as the peak of the Somali state's power. By this point democracy had long given way to a dictatorship which was supported by a clan alliance whose core consisted of only a minority population group. Nevertheless, Somalia had never been closer to achieving its military objectives. The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), also militarily supported by Somalia, had brought large areas of east Ethiopia, the Haud and the Ogadeen, under its control. In 1978, though, things changed. Ethiopia regained its eastern territories, while in Somalia refugee camps filled up. The USA had been supporting Ethiopia for decades, whereas Somalia had been relying mainly on the Soviet Union for the preceding ten years. The year 1977 brought a change of alliances, with the Soviet Union henceforth supporting Ethiopia, while the USA half-heartedly turned to Somalia.

When Somali irredentism rebounded on Somalia in the Ogadeen war, there was a massive flood of refugees. Owing to the refugees, the country's dependence on the international community rose, and foreign aid also provided licit

and illicit income to many local Somalis. At the same time the development of internal resources, in particular the pastoral economy, was increasingly neglected.

Under Siad Barre, clans were officially abolished; and indeed, it was forbidden to ask anyone what clan they belonged to. As the right clan composition had remained an important feature of the power base of government,[13] the interdict on speaking about clans amounted to making any discussion of this power base and any questioning of its legitimacy illegal. Whereas earlier Somali governments had co-opted elements of various clans to widen their power base, Siad Barre's government was known as 'MOD': the 'M' stood for his clan, Marehan, the 'O' for the Ogadeen, the president's mother's clan, and the 'D' for Dulbahante, the clan of his son-in-law, who was head of state security.[14] All three of these clans are of the Darood clan family. As the Barre regime went into decline, ever larger parts of the Ogadeen and Dulbahante began to pull out, and eventually Barre was left with his own clan, Marehan, as his only power base. On the other hand, at this final stage, the Marehan were almost entirely militarized or otherwise incorporated into the state.

This break of large parts of the population with the Somali state in the 1980s began in the north, where the second-largest of the Somali clan families, the Isaaq, had long felt excluded from power. The city of Hargeysa was bombarded, wells were poisoned, and millions of landmines were planted in north Somalia (Africa Watch 1990). As Mohamed Siad Barre's power dwindled, the armed opposition to him grew, until finally in January 1991 he was forced to flee Mogadishu. While the exiles' organizations were still awaiting consultation, Ali Mahdi promptly declared himself interim president. The north reacted in May 1991 by declaring the independence of 'Somaliland' within the borders of the former British colony. In the south of the country, those forces denied their share of power by Ali Mahdi took up arms against him. In September 1991 the UN announced that it was concluding its activities in Somalia, although it remained active in the northern Republic of Somaliland (Eikenberg and Körner 1993: 34–45). The reason for the helpers' withdrawal was the civil war unleashed when Ali Mahdi proclaimed himself president. This self-proclamation was contested by the other movements which had ousted Siad Barre. Within a short time, famine had broken out as a result of the war.

The USA, presumably motivated among other considerations by the desire to improve its image in the Islamic world in the wake of the Gulf War by appearing in an Islamic country in the role of helper, not enemy, felt obliged to intervene in the name of the United Nations. On 19 December 1992, US troops landed in Mogadishu. A while later, on camera, the corpses of Americans were maltreated by an angry mob in the streets of Mogadishu. As a result, the USA left the country again, the last of their troops on 25 March 1993.[15] Looking back, one has to see the UNOSOM operation as a failure that cost

billions of dollars, and incurred even greater costs in human and political terms. After UNOSOM, the Somali factions were again left alone to fight out their differences. Elsewhere (Schlee 2002a) I have explained the patterns of alliances between warlords, which had to follow the clan logic to be plausible to their followers.

Justifications for the rule of some people over others are at the core of political philosophy, constitutional law, theories about early statehood, and many other bodies of knowledge. These justifications range from the right of conquest, which legitimizes the demand for the submission of the conquered and the appropriation of the loot by the strongest, to the concept of 'civil service', an idea that appears to suggest that the rulers actually serve the ruled. The ideas of civil service or rule in the name and interests of the people being served and warlordism are about as different from each other as ideologies of rule can be. A warlord does not dream of serving the common good or acting in the interests of the people. Warlordism is an economy of violence (Elwert 1997; Schlee 2008) based on predation. Industrial plants are appropriated and sold as scrap metal to China, the health of the Somali people and their livestock is undermined by selling the right to dump toxic waste to foreign firms, farmlands and the farmers to whom they belong are appropriated and transformed into an agriculture of servitude, the bottlenecks of traffic (ports, airports, bridges) are appropriated in order to extort money from travellers and traders. The warlords do share, but only with those who fight for them or with those whom they want to prevent from fighting against them. To say that they provide a modicum of security would also be cynical.

Ethiopia and Eritrea are also a factor in Somali politics. In 1999, after trying to ignore the presence of OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) on Kenyan soil for a long time, Kenyan government forces cracked down on some OLF camps and confiscated some arms. The confiscation of these meagre supplies by no means depleted the resources of OLF. A little later, OLF was reported to be moving down through Somalia to the coast in well-armed convoys of vehicles. They were on their way to the area controlled by a new ally, Hussein Aidid,[16] the son of General Farah Aidid, the chief antagonist of Ali Mahdi in the early 1990s. Hussein Aidid was believed to be receiving help from Eritrea to support his struggle against the RRA, the Rahanweyn Resistance Army, which was supported by the Ethiopian government. In addition to OLF, at that time Hussein Aidid also supported Al-Itihad al-Islamiyya, a movement which fought the Ethiopian government in the Somali region of Ethiopia.[17]

The countries of north-east and East Africa have a long tradition of supporting dissident movements against their neighbours. With peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea the options open to players of this game had become somewhat reduced in number, but with the outbreak of renewed hostilities between the two countries the room for regrouping into new configurations

had widened again. One could find a new ally in one of these countries if one supported it against its own dissidents or if one gave support to the dissidents of the other.

According to the Kenyan press (the *Daily Nation*, 11 June 1999) the OLF forces had been 'sent' into Somalia by Eritrea, and there can be no doubt that at that time it was in Eritrea's interests to open a second front in Somalia. At the time of the arrival of the OLF forces, Ethiopian forces had penetrated into Somalia as far as Dinsoor (ibid.). In the end, Aidid was defeated by the Ethiopians and did what he deemed wise in such a situation: he joined them. He fixed a deadline for the OLF to leave, and set up his headquarters in Addis Ababa. As will be explained in more detail below, in the 14th Somalia Peace Process, held in Kenya in 2002–04, in which the Ethiopians exerted some heavy influence, Aidid was among the winners and became a minister in the Transitional Federal Government which was set up there.

In the context of a study on the diaspora, we not only have to examine the warlike events which triggered its emergence, but also other social and economic developments which shaped it. For that we have to go back again from the 1990s to the 1970s. After the country suffered a severe drought in 1974, the Somali government developed programmes aimed at introducing other forms of production outside the nomadic herding sector. There was sedentarization on land administered by agricultural development projects, and fishing towns were established on the coast, where former pastoralists were taught to fish and given boats and equipment. After some time, a large proportion of the men returned to the nomadic sector, while the women and children frequently remained behind in the newly established settlements so as to have continued access to services such as schools and healthcare.[18] This pattern of families splitting up geographically on work-related grounds was extended with the onset of male migration to the Gulf States. Today, with the internationalization of the refugee problem, the pattern can be discerned on a global scale: in many cases, the men will be working in the Gulf while their families are living on social security in Sweden or Canada[19] (Schlee 2002a, Schlee and Schlee 2012).

Not all nomads who became fishermen in the 1970s later went back into the nomadic sector or went as labour migrants to the Gulf countries. Some remained as fishermen in Somalia. What they experienced later was the over-fishing of the coastal waters by foreign trawlers. Neither the Somali government nor the warlords who came to replace it in the stateless period defended their interests. We cannot of course explain the piracy of the early 2000s with resort to this sad story of Somali fishery. The fishermen were just crews or parts of crews, while other aspects of Somali piracy include big business connections to the Gulf States, the role of 'mediating' law firms in the global North, and a whole money-laundering industry of which a construction and investment boom in Kenya is an important indicator.

As mentioned above, from 2002 to 2004 a new internationally sponsored peace process took place in Kenya. It consisted of two parallel processes. In one, power sharing between the warlords who had been invited according to their notoriety took place in the 'Leaders' Committee'. In addition, there were 'technical committees' on various aspects of how the country should be run, from constitutional arrangements to questions of property restitution and disarmament. Foreign experts, of which the present author was one, were attached to these committees as 'resource persons'.

One of the main concerns expressed in my reports about the peace conference at Eldoret and Nairobi (summarized in Schlee 2006a) was that the technical committees, including the one on property restitution, with which the author was associated, but more importantly the one on constitutional issues, had very little to do with the 'power sharing' between the warlords which took place at the same time in the Leaders' Committee. They shared powers which had not even been defined. This nourished the suspicion that henceforth they would also care very little about technicalities and legal niceties. Certainly those who had profited from forceful land reallocation would not have been interested in reversing these processes. Reno (2008: 149) writes on the same issue: 'The unwillingness of these groups [strongmen, settler elite] to countenance the return of property, including land, has become a major obstacle to the conclusion of negotiations and the return of a transitional government from Kenya.'

In 2002, at the beginning of the 14th Somalia Peace Process, the expert opinion was that peace could be achieved by reintroducing statehood in the form of a fully fledged multifunctional modern nation-state in Somalia. There was less scepticism concerning whether this was the right way than whether the international community would be willing to pay the price. Some said it would cost a billion euros to finance the peace process up to the point where a functioning state and economy would produce enough revenue to take over. As neither the financial means nor the manpower needed were provided and subsequent attempts by members of the international community to assist state-building were half-hearted, the historical experiment which would have shown whether state-building would lead to peace was never carried out in Somalia. The new 'government' became just one of many warring parties and completely lost all credibility when of all nations the arch-enemy Ethiopia was called upon to assist and invaded the country. That even then foreign intervention did not succeed in establishing government authority was the ultimate humiliation, adding military defeat to the moral one. That something had gone wrong with the formation of the TFG was evident to many people by 2003, not least to the TFG itself, which for a long time did not dare go back into Somalia. The expectation of being hated and rejected was a realistic self-assessment.

The result of intervention by American planes and Ethiopian ground forces since December 2006 was that the Nairobi-'elected' president Abdullahi Yusuf had to give up and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed became the 'president of Somalia' in the TFG framework. He was one of the leaders of the Islamic Courts in Mogadishu who had to flee the invasion forces in 2006. So what was the effect of that war? It has led to the rise of a more radical opposition in contrast to whom Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed appears 'moderate' and who depict him as a traitor because of his collusion with the TFG. It did not take Somalia experts a long time to notice that, if compared to their own aims, the 2006/07 interventions by the Ethiopians and Americans had an overall negative effect. Samatar (2007) and Barnes and Hassan (2007), none of whom is suspected of al-Qaeda leanings and none of whom had much sympathy with the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) before the intervention, talk of a declining security situation after the invention and describe the earlier UIC rule as retrospectively perceived as a 'golden age' by Somali (Barnes and Hassan 2007: 151, 157).

While they were in power in Mogadishu, and in other places they controlled at other times, the popularity of the UIC was limited by the rigid positions they had with regard to a number of things Somali tend to like. Like other governments before them, they tried to interdict the use of qat. While their measure against pornography was widely accepted, their inclusion of Bollywood films in this category was not shared by audiences. In 2006, there were fights between UIC militias and armed cinema guards, won by the latter (ICG 2006: 11). Mostly, however, the Islamic Court militias were compared favourably with other (warlord) militias, because they were more disciplined and 'don't rape' (ICG 2005: 20).

As Reno (2008) has stressed, trying to build up forms of regulation and statehood from below, using sub-state groups as a building block, comes at a price. These groups may have different ideas about gender or human rights to the interveners. We should not romanticize customary law. It may be power sensitive and lead to results which may appear cynical (Schlee 2006a; Schlee and Turner 2008). What can be concluded from the comparison of stateless periods or regions in Somalia with times and places where statehood was a bone of contention is merely that the absence of the state was often the lesser of two evils. What is often forgotten in descriptions about the stateless state of affairs is the absence of drama in everyday life. People make arrangements with each other and a kind of normalcy develops (Ciabarri 2010). Indicators of health, nutrition and other measures of the quality of life can be higher than in a situation where one is exposed to a predatory state which does not deliver anything for what it takes, or there are violent fights over the state as a resource (Leeson 2007). In the long run, statelessness, however, does not appear to be a solution which appeals to many Somali (Schlee 2013a). The

reason for this is simply that in a world of nation-states it is very difficult not to belong to one. People want travel documents, they need a recognized jurisdiction to be creditworthy and to be able to engage in other than illegal or informal kinds of business, and they want to extend these activities beyond Somalia and Somali networks. Most Somali would prefer to be ordinary citizens of an ordinary state.

So far, there is no basis for any group or coalition of rulers to be acceptable to the majority of the population in all of what used to be Somalia. The Mogadishu parliament has elected a new prime minister at the time of the final revisions to this chapter (December 2013) who is supported by a well-wishing international community. But his government is not in control of the whole country. Kenyan troops moved into what used to be Jubaland (see above) to hold the Al-Shabaab militia at bay in October 2011. They are in alliance with the Mogadishu government, but by their very presence betray its impotence. In the semi-independent entity Puntland there have just been contested elections, and Somaliland is long gone. Not much credibility is given to the wishes to reunite with it. By way of conclusion, we sadly have to extend the same finding to other countries of the region.

The Sudan split into two 'nations' in 2011. Both products of this fission continue to suffer from internal violence and the continued lack of integration which might lead to fission into yet smaller units or de facto statelessness. Recently (Schlee 2013b) I have discussed the absence of a uniform citizenship with identical entitlements in the Sudan (which now stands for the north, which has kept the old name of the country, while the southern part has renamed itself 'South Sudan'). After South Sudan, the Sudan appears to be peeling off the next layer of periphery, the south of the north, so to say – South Kordofan and the Blue Nile State, not to speak of Darfur – while keeping a precarious hold (by a peace agreement with an armed movement which has been waiting for seven years for its implementation) on the Red Sea State. Even the recognized government of that state (federal state/province) acts a bit like the government of an independent nation-state, receiving the Eritrean president on a state visit.

Just recently a full-scale civil war has broken out in South Sudan, between different parts of the government which have not been able to share the cake and have split along ethnic lines (Dinka versus Nuer). This is rivalry between two dominant groups, the winners of the civil war. The integration of the periphery of the country, of all the groups which feel represented neither by Dinka nor by Nuer and have no reason to feel represented by them, has receded into the background, although in many ways it seems to be the more important problem. What has happened to the sovereignty of the new state two years after its birth? Different units of its army are fighting each other. And then there are foreign troops. Apart from UN peacekeepers (in insufficient

numbers) there are Ugandan and Kenyan troops. In whose interests do they interfere?

What has been said above about warlords, namely that they do not act for the 'common good', can also be applied to many African governments. At least, one has to ask what defines the word 'common' for them. With whom do they share the state revenue? Whom do they employ? Who benefits from their policies? Whom do they include in the cost/benefit calculations which inform their decisions, and which group of people reciprocate this inclusion by identifying with the government? In many countries politics seems to be about how to let power holders benefit at the expense of those not in power. In a democracy this amounts to 51 per cent being able to exploit the other 49 per cent, unless there is a culture of 'common good', minority protection and inclusion of the whole nation, which are weak or absent in the case of many of the younger (and some older) 'nation'-states. In a less democratic system much smaller groups and alliances of power holders, if strategically placed in the economy, the army and the bureaucracy, can control much larger segments of the population, even the vast majority, without delivering any benefits of statehood to them. As long as this state of affairs lasts, the Horn of Africa will continue to be a refugee-producing region and the disasporas it generates will contribute in one way or another to the politics in their motherlands (or is it stepmotherlands?). It is these interactions between individual and collective actors in the diaspora and their homelands which are the topic of the present volume, and I hope that this historical chapter has given some useful background information to these interactions.

Notes

1 This chapter makes liberal use of my earlier publications, all of which are included in the bibliography. New text has been added; old texts have been shortened or refocused. History in the sense of past facts does not change, but things become more or less relevant in the course of time and updates have to be made. I am very meticulous when it comes to citing others to whom I owe an intellectual debt, but I have found it tedious to cite my own earlier works in the same way. Apart from updates, what is new about this chapter is the way the materials have been combined to provide a regional perspective.

2 Guenther Schlee's notes about a conversation in Beni Shangul, Ethiopian Diary 2001/02, 24 November 2001, MPI for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, www.

eth.mpg.de/subsites/schlee_tagebuch/index.html.

3 See Diallo (2008) on the 'Fulbe of the gaps'.

4 This is the official designation. In fact, the central government holds more strings than one would expect them to hold in a federation.

5 See Schlee (2011) on the many parallels which have developed in the organization of ethnic territoriality between Ethiopia and Kenya.

6 Thomas Dassel, personal communication, 1992.

7 In contexts where modern institutions such as the presidency or the army are given old names derived from their equivalents in the *gada* system, 'traditional' is better written in inverted commas. The concept 'religion' in Oromo

is borrowed and expressed by Arabic loan words (Schlee 1994; Schlee and Shongolo 2012: 163).

8 Dereje Feyissa, personal communication.

9 The following paragraphs are partly based on materials collected by Abdullahi Shongolo.

10 See Lamberti (1983) on Somali dialects, Dyen (1956) on the relationship between language distribution patterns and the history of the spread of people.

11 Schlee and Shongolo (1995); Schlee (1994); Fekadu (2009).

12 That the colonial states did not last long does not mean that the Somali had no experience with statehood as such. Just to their west there were sultanates like the one of Harrar and the Ethiopian empire. Djama (1997a: 403ff.) is right in underlining that it would be a simplification to describe the Somali society as a non-state lineage system.

13 It is evident that this taboo to speak about clans – which here even takes the form of an official interdiction – is an indicator of the importance of these clans in terms of power. It is therefore strange to see anthropologists obeying this taboo, even when they are ostensibly analysing these very power games. Anna Simons (as Djama 1997b has noticed) never gives the names of clans in her case histories.

14 Lewis (1981: 16). The Dulbahante son-in-law was Mohamed Seleban Abdallah. More will be said about another son-in-law of Siad Barre's below.

15 For a chronology, see Ruf (1994: 165). Ruf discusses legal aspects of the UN intervention.

16 Source: BBC Radio.

17 This movement later received some attention in the international media. In the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001, it was suspected to be linked to Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organization.

18 Lewis (1981: 31); Farah Mohamed and Touati (1991: 100).

19 The situation in the countries of asylum is not simply characterized by a transfer of old models to new situations. For example, radical changes in family relationships may be exacerbated by official practices. Government authorities count children with the mother and perceive fathers as peripatetic and unstable, and have therefore chosen to channel financial assistance through the women and even to register children under the name of their mother's father as the family name. However realistic these assessments might be, they may lead to these children being regarded as fatherless if they return to Somalia. These practices contribute to the instability of Somali marriages (Schlee and Schlee 2010, 2012). By marriage a Somali woman does not change her clan affiliation. Patrilineal descent applies to children of both genders, married and unmarried alike. Therefore to avenge a tort against a woman is primarily the responsibility of her brothers and not her husband. The double set of links of wives in exogamous marriages – by descent to one clan and by marriage to another – predestines them for mediating roles. This task of Somali women is claimed in even stronger terms in exile under the influence of Western feminism (Sonja Heyer, report about the Seventh International Congress of Somali Studies, York University, Toronto, 8–11 July 1999, for the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/S).

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Case studies from the Horn of Africa

3 | Rebuilding Somaliland through economic and educational engagement

Markus Virgil Hoehne and Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim

Introduction[1]

In 1991, north-western Somalia, the former British protectorate of Somaliland, seceded unilaterally from the collapsing Somalia. Since then, the people of Somaliland have successfully established a peaceful and relatively stable state and community. They have managed a process of reconciliation, demobilized the local militias, restored law and order, and held six rounds of peaceful elections (until November 2012). Much of the urban infrastructure and basic social services destroyed during the war in northern Somalia (1988–91) have been re-established and were even much advanced, compared to the situation before 1991. Peace and stability allowed livestock export and other economic activities to resume, and thousands of refugees came back from neighbouring countries (Bradbury 1997, 2008; WSP 2005; Terlinden and Ibrahim 2008; Hoehne 2011a; Renders 2012).

However, despite being the most stable polity within the territory of the former Somali Republic, Somaliland has not been recognized internationally as a state, and thus has not received the kind of international support many other post-conflict countries have enjoyed. In the early 1990s, few international organizations were willing to support internal reconciliation, establish security through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, or promote democratization and development. Instead, peacebuilding and moderate development have been achieved by the locals themselves, supported in part by members of the Somaliland diaspora[2] who sent remittances, undertook business and social investment, and helped to establish basic services (Kent et al. 2004; MacGregor et al. 2008; Lindley 2010). The case of Somaliland illustrates the growing importance and influence of transnational political, economic and social engagement of non-state actors in peace- and state-building.[3] It also highlights the need for increased research on the role and potential contribution of non-state actors, such as transnational diasporas, in overcoming conflict. Such research is relatively recent (Lyons 2004; Zunzer 2004; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006; Orjuela 2006); until recently, diaspora actors had been seen as instigating rather than mitigating conflict and violence (Anderson 1992: 12–13; Kaldor 2001: 7–9; Demmers 2002, 2007; Collier and Hoeffler 2004: 575). The discussion

about the Somaliland diaspora unfolds against the backdrop of the absence of formal bilateral or multilateral engagement with (unrecognized) Somaliland and the relative weakness of its state institutions.[4]

This chapter looks at investments of the diaspora in the economic and educational sector in Somaliland. We argue that economic and educational developments lay at the heart of the ongoing 'second phase' of more sustainable peacebuilding in Somaliland. The first phase of basic peacebuilding comprised ceasefire and reconciliation agreements between various patrilineal descent groups (e.g. clans and lineages) in various regions of Somaliland. This phase started in 1991, with key actors being local traditional authorities as well as military commanders, businessmen and intellectuals. The second phase of more sustainable peacebuilding implied activities that aimed at giving people a stake and a future in the emerging polity of Somaliland. It had already partly begun in 1991 but intensified markedly from the late 1990s onward. Diaspora actors took the lead in this phase.

This chapter introduces two sets of case studies. On the economic side, it first highlights the case of two hotels, the Maansoor Hotel and the Ambassador Hotel, both of which constituted major economic investments by diasporic actors in Somaliland. Beyond the immediate investments, these two case studies clearly show the larger structural impact of trusting private (diaspora) capital in a fragile post-conflict setting. We argue that both hotels were much more than just economic investments. They contributed substantially to the transformation of whole neighbourhoods and gave people a stake in Somaliland. This paved the way towards peacebuilding in the capital Hargeysa, which had a signal effect for much of the country. In terms of education, we focus on the rebuilding of the educational sector from scratch after years of civil war and the complete destruction of the educational infrastructure. We argue, first, that schooling provided young people with an occupation beyond joining militias and armed gangs, which had contributed to insecurity in Somaliland in the early 1990s. Secondly, after having rehabilitated the basis for education, universities that were funded and supported by the diaspora helped to give young people further orientation and promised chances on the job market. The case studies of two privately founded universities, the International Horn University (IHU) in Hargeysa and Nugaal University in Lasanod (located in the eastern periphery of Somaliland), illustrate the visions of the diaspora actors, who were significantly involved, and the implementation of these visions with regard to peace and development in their home communities.

On a generic level, both sets of case studies concern mainly trust-building activities. Trust is essential for building peace after violent conflict (Kelman 2005: 640; Bar-Siman-Tov 2004: 71). Sztompka (2001: 15913) argued that we remain in the condition of uncertainty regarding the future (re)actions of others, and yet mostly cannot refrain from acting in order to satisfy our needs and

goals. Therefore, 'trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others' (ibid.). The diaspora investments in Somaliland in many regards constituted advancement in trust and helped to generate more trust among the local population. This encouraged further investment which steadily increased people's interests in safeguarding what had been invested and thus contributed to keeping the peace.

A short note on Somaliland's peacebuilding processes[5]

Basic peacebuilding Somaliland in 1991 was a scene of overwhelming material devastation. Most of the inhabitants had fled to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Djibouti or were internally displaced. All major peace initiatives in Somaliland took place between 1991 and 1997, in the form of inter-clan conferences and meetings at the local and national level (Somali sing.: *shir beeleed*). One study has identified about thirty-nine such conferences and meetings (APD and Interpeace 2008: 13). These peace efforts focused on the cessation of hostilities, restoring social relations and reconciliation among different clans, and establishing basic state institutions.

With the breakdown of all formal structures in the country due to the civil war, the responsibility for peacemaking fell upon the traditional leaders of the various clans (SCPD and WSP 1999: 19). Their conflict settlement and peacemaking skills and mechanisms became critical for the success of these conferences and meetings (Hoehne 2007). All of these peace initiatives shared a number of key characteristics: 'they were funded largely or wholly by Somaliland communities themselves, including those in the diaspora; they involved the voluntary participation of the key figures from each of the clans affected; and decisions were taken by broad consensus amongst delegates' (APD and Interpeace 2008: 13).

In this early phase of basic peacebuilding, diaspora actors played a subordinate role, which does not mean that there was no diasporic influence; but it was limited and mainly comprised of some financial support to local peace initiatives. It is worth noting that in general diasporas do not come into existence immediately with flight or migration. A diasporic consciousness (Vertovec 1997) develops only gradually, based on experiences during flight/migration and settlement in a new social, economic and political context abroad, which often throws up new challenges such as racism or social exclusion. The formation of an active diaspora that also has some economic and other capital for engagement back home takes time (Sökefeld 2006: 267–8; Wiberg 2007: 41).[6] One can argue that the Somalis who fled Somalia between 1988 and 1991 had not yet developed enough diasporic consciousness and capital to seriously engage. There had been older Somali diasporas, particularly from the north-west, which had settled in the Arab Peninsula, e.g. as oil workers in the 1970s (Gundel 2002: 264). But much of their financial resources had

been used to support the Somali National Movement (SNM), which was the guerrilla movement that in early 1991 freed the north-west from the army of the dictatorial regime (Reno 2003: 24).[7] Moreover, if diaspora actors still engaged, they frequently did what they had done before and supported armed militias. Large-scale violent conflicts erupted in Burao in 1992 and in Hargeysa between 1993 and 1995, when the SNM fractured and different clans within the Isaaq clan family that dominated in Somaliland fought for power and resources. Diaspora actors provided support for their respective clan militias and therefore contributed to the fighting. Some even came home from abroad to provide leadership and physical assistance to the war effort on the ground. Simultaneously, other diaspora actors and returnees helped to deal with the humanitarian and social side of the conflict. After this conflict was settled in 1997, Somaliland became more peaceful. Clan militias were dismantled and integrated into the national army or given a chance to reintegrate into civilian life.

Sustainable peacebuilding Only slowly did some more persistent diaspora influence materialize that contributed substantially to peacebuilding. The Somaliland Peace Committee, for instance, which was founded and supported by members of the diaspora, sought to mediate the conflict in Hargeysa between 1993 and 1995 (Bryden and Farah 1996). Diaspora actors also helped their close relatives in the region to return to the towns and villages from which they had fled owing to fighting in the late 1980s and to rebuild their lives (SCPD and WSP 1999: 78). But while these contributions helped to downscale immediate tensions in Somaliland and to enhance family survival, they did not as yet deal with the structural weaknesses of Somaliland. The economy was extremely weak and most people lived in poverty. The few available services were concentrated in the larger urban settlements and were privatized, which meant one had to pay to access them. The extremely moderate state budget, which in the 1990s did not exceed US$20 million per year, was consumed by the costs of administration and the security forces (Bradbury 2008: 236–8).

During our interviews in 2008 and 2009, it turned out that for many respondents sustainable peace (in Somali: *nabad waarto*) was related to economic issues, particularly the high unemployment due to the absence of viable economic development, and to dramatic economic and power imbalances between the centre and the periphery, or between groups closer to the ruling elite and those farther away. The managing director of Telesom, a leading provider of mobile communication, mentioned that 'sustainable peace has to do with the country's socio-economic and political conditions. [...] First people must [be able to] make their daily living and gain employment. It is also important that people have access to education' (interview with Abdikarim Mohamed Id, managing director of Telesom, Hargeysa, March 2009). While these long-

standing peacebuilding challenges continue to exist even after more than two decades of de facto independence, there have been a number of important investments of diaspora actors that arguably have helped to alleviate these problems.

Economic investments and peacebuilding This section focuses on two huge hotel complexes built in Hargeysa, the capital of Somaliland, between 1994 and 2002. We first outline the investments and the obstacles the investors faced, before discussing the impact of these hotel investments on Somaliland's post-conflict peacebuilding process from both the local and diasporic perspectives.

THE CASE OF THE MAANSOOR HOTEL In 1991, Hargeysa was utterly devastated, with only 10 per cent of the city's structures still intact and less than 1 per cent of its pre-war population still living there (SCPD and WSP 1999: 47). Two decades later, by contrast, it has been rebuilt and is a rapidly growing city of about half a million people.[8] The construction of the Maansoor Hotel complex in northern Hargeysa, which occupies an area of approximately 48,000 square metres, is a powerful symbol of this rebuilding and expansion. The construction of the Maansoor Hotel took place in various phases between 1991 and 1996. The founder and owner of the hotel is Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi, now a retired petroleum engineer. He started his schooling in Hargeysa and then continued his education across the Red Sea in the then British colony of Aden, Yemen. There he earned a scholarship from British Petroleum (BP) to go to London for postgraduate studies, where he got his engineering degree. After graduating he worked for BP in Aden and then moved to Kuwait in 1967 to work for them, where he stayed until his retirement in 2006.

Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi was inspired to establish a hotel in Hargeysa through listening to the BBC Somali service, the main source of information for Somalis worldwide since the collapse of the Barre regime: 'I heard on the radio that there were people who came from Djibouti by airplane in the morning and then returned back to Djibouti the same evening. Then I said to myself this is a place where there is a real need and decided to deal with this particular need. I did not do it to earn money; I just did it to deal with this need' (interview with Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi, Hargeysa, March 2009). Once he had made up his mind, the challenge of realizing his idea was daunting. Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi could not communicate directly with Hargeysa. There were no direct lines from Kuwait there, so he had to communicate through Djibouti, which was not easy. Conveying his idea to his relatives on the ground took almost two months; and making them understand the size and type of land he was interested in took another two months. After the land was secured in early 1992, the blueprint of the site was sent to a Filipino architect based in Kuwait and planning for construction began. When construction actually

commenced in May 1994, the process faced serious challenges. One constraint was the very limited availability of construction materials and equipment, as there were no major construction material stores in Hargeysa. Then, in the middle of construction, the allocated funds ran out: 'When the construction was under way and the foundation was done, I was told that the money that I had put aside [for the construction] was not enough. I was not a businessman; I worked on a salary basis. Fortunately I was still working and could send some savings to them each month' (ibid.).

In this way, hotel construction proceeded in stages, even during the civil war in Hargeysa between 1994 and 1995. They managed to build twelve rooms roofed with corrugated iron sheets and one dining hall, and on 30 August 1996, the hotel officially opened for business. Hargeysa was just emerging from violent conflict and business was slow. Most potential customers were expatriates who went to guest houses run by international NGOs. Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi had to make competitive offers to attract them (ibid.). Since its opening, the hotel has slowly expanded, mainly financed by its own earnings. Twelve more rooms were added and as the construction phase of the hotel in Hargeysa was coming to an end, expansion to other cities began. In 2014, a Maansoor Hotel is operational in Berbera and another one is under construction in Burao.

The relationship between the construction of the Maansoor Hotel in Hargeysa and sustainable peace in Somaliland is complex. The hotel was conceived and constructed in a period of lawlessness and civil war. In such a situation one would normally avoid long-term business engagements in the civilian sector. Most Somaliland diaspora actors were funding the warring factions in the early 1990s, or provided small sums to relatives just to help their survival. The hotel became operational when the conflict was coming to an end. That in the local perspective a connection between the Maansoor Hotel and non-violent conflict transformation existed is evident from the names that were proposed for the hotel. In an unusual move, a public competition to name the new facility was held before the hotel's completion. This invoked a feeling of public ownership of the hotel as something built 'for us'. According to the owner, about six hundred contestants put forward various names. The proposed names overwhelmingly linked the establishment of the hotel to the realization of peace and development. Some of the finalists were *Nageeye* ('settle down'), *Reersoor* ('people feeder') and *Hiiliye* ('supporter, advocate or champion')*.* Eventually the selection committee chose *Maansoor* ('mind feeder') (ibid.).

Clearly, economic investments in war-torn societies have implications beyond contributing to a local market. With regard to Somalia as a whole, Menkhaus (2009: 196) stressed that large and visible investments by the diaspora 'are important not only for the jobs they create but also for the sense

of confidence they build locally that wealthy diaspora members believe in the future of the area enough to make a major fixed investment there'. The establishment of the Maansoor Hotel in Hargeysa also had further economic and political implications. For example, the value of land in the vicinity of the hotel increased dramatically. The price of a plot[9] in the hotel area in 1991 was US$500 when the site was bought for the hotel. Once the hotel was built and became operational, the area became prime real estate; as of 2014, a plot costs around US$45,000. Secondly, Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi's project encouraged other people in the diaspora to invest in high-value residential buildings in the area. This physical transformation has had a far-reaching impact on many in Hargeysa regardless of clan or regional affiliation. It provided people with a collective sense of hope in the absence of tangible help from the international community. A young man described this shared sentiment: 'By building the Maansoor Hotel [early in the 1990s], Mr Hashi encouraged many people to invest. Furthermore, the Maansoor served as a place to reconcile those in conflict' (interview with youth focus group, Hargeysa, March 2009). It became a space for developing social capital and networking between Somalilanders of all clans, international and local NGOs and external guests. It also turned into a hub for exchanging ideas on development, conflict settlement and other issues at meetings and conferences. Since around 2000 the hotel has been a regular venue for large conferences, party conventions and private and public celebrations. In retrospect it becomes clear that the hotel investment by Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi created a moderate but visible option for a peaceful and economically prosperous future in a situation when Hargeysa was in ruins and political leaders were recklessly competing for power and instigating new fighting in the process (see next section).

THE CASE OF THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL The conflict in Hargeysa between 1993 and 1995 saw the government fighting against oppositional militias. Geographically and in terms of clan, it posed the northern part of the city, which was predominantly inhabited by Habar Awal and some other clans, including Habar Je'lo (which were all with the government), against the southern part of the city, where Idagale, Habar Yonis and Arab resided. Idagale and Habar Yonis belonged together as a group called Garahjis. The latter controlled the airport, which was in their sector, but otherwise felt under-represented in the country's politics and economy. The conflict was largely a power struggle within the Isaaq clan family. But it also involved unionists who preferred to undo Somaliland's secession and return to Somalia, going against separatists who saw the independence of Somaliland as sacrosanct (Bradbury 2008: 115–22; Hoehne 2011a: 315–16). This conflict was finally settled at a conference in Hargeysa at the end of 1996 and early 1997, which marked the end of large-scale fighting in central Somaliland.[10] The opposition was accommodated politically

in the parliament and at the ministerial level of government, and attempts were made to address public sector employment disparities, although this proved difficult as it involved removing people who were already employed. One highly experienced MP argued: 'In terms of politics, the opposition might have been accommodated but in terms of employment there were no meaningful accommodations' (interview with Abdiqadir Ismail Jirde, Hargeysa, March 2009).

People started to rebuild the southern part of the town, where the Idagale and the Habar Yonis mostly resided, and make new investments. However, in this part of Hargeysa the infrastructure and economy remained weak, unlike in the north, where most government buildings were located and where business was booming. This included the Maansoor Hotel mentioned above, which became a 'magnet' for new investments in the far north of Hargeysa. This situation changed in 1999 with a multimillion-dollar hotel investment in the southern part of the city. This modern hotel complex was the brainchild of Khader Ali Hussein, a member of the diaspora who had lived in Britain for many years. By clan he was Isaaq/Idagale. He had grown up in Mogadishu, where his family had been in the catering business, and had had a small company serving expatriates before the state collapse in 1991. After flight and settlement in the UK, Khader stayed involved in the hospitality industry. His strong background in this sector influenced his decision to invest: 'When I came to the country [Somaliland] I realized it was growing and this sector which I was interested in was at a starting point, pioneered by people like Abdiqadir Hashi Elmi [the owner of Maansoor Hotel], and I felt it needed to be strengthened' (interview with Khader Ali Hussein, Hargeysa, April 2009). Mr Khader added: 'First I realized the high unemployment rate in the country, so creating employment for locals was one motivation. My intention was never to make any money. Secondly, I believed that creating this kind of facility promoted the status of the country and would be an added value' (ibid.). Several factors influenced his choice of location:

> The place where the hotel stands was not developed and was far away from the city [in 1999]. However, I recognized the benefits associated with a hotel located near the airport. [...] People were quite surprised but I had the vision that the city would expand. There were economic disparities in many places in the city, so naturally this side [the south] needed to have some development. [...] Security was a major issue [...]. I did not see any threat but it required some courage to make such an investment. (Ibid.)

In total, Mr Khader invested about US$2 million in the hotel. He remembers: 'Ninety per cent of the people raised concerns and were discouraging me, saying this place is empty and you will not get anything out of it' (ibid.). Many were indeed angry with him and urged him to spend the money in a more sensible way.

Construction of the Ambassador Hotel began in 2000 and was completed

within two years. It was built by a local company at a time when Somaliland's service sector was experiencing rapid growth owing to the prospects of peace, the subsequent return of many from the diaspora, and an influx of remittances from members of the diaspora abroad. Simultaneously, livestock exports to Saudi Arabia, which had been affected by conflict, also resumed. The availability of acceptable local services including the growing telecommunication sector combined with the owner's wealth facilitated the rapid construction of the hotel (things had been quite different when the Maansoor Hotel was under construction).

On 26 June 2002, the new hotel, which was on top of a hill overlooking the city of Hargeysa from the south side, was opened. This date coincided with the commemoration of the forty-second anniversary of Somaliland's independence from the British. The new facility was inaugurated by Dahir Rayale Kahin, then president of Somaliland, and other foreign dignitaries, including the British ambassador to Ethiopia at that time, which was an indication of the importance of this endeavour for Somaliland's development.

The main contribution of the Ambassador Hotel to peacebuilding was that it 'balanced' the city. It gave the members of the Idagale and the Habar Yonis clans in southern Hargeysa, which had been marginalized and felt disempowered at the beginning of Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal's government (1993–2002), a stake in Hargeysa and Somaliland.

This effect was not reached just through the construction of one hotel. But as in the case of the Maansoor Hotel in the north, the establishment of the Ambassador Hotel promoted the physical transformation of the southern side of the city. Besides expensive residential homes, new facilities include hotels, guest houses, supermarkets, private medical services, power supplies, and now even tarmac roads are being built in that neighbourhood – things that did not exist before 1999. Most of these investments were undertaken by local and diaspora entrepreneurs following in the footsteps of Khader Ali Hussein. In the wake of this construction boom, the value of land on the south side also increased dramatically. The airport area is, in 2014, among the city's most expensive real estate (after having been barren throughout the 1990s). Many see this as a much-appreciated and fair redistribution of wealth. That this is not just an 'accident' but the result of an economic and political vision being implemented by a diaspora actor and his local aides can be understood from the reactions to the hotel once it was completed. At the opening ceremony in 2002, one of the most prominent elders of Hargeysa, Haji Abdi Waraabe, reflected on the impact of the Ambassador Hotel: 'Now the Maansoor Hotel on the North side of Hargeysa, which was the only international hotel in Somaliland, has found a companion. If you load a camel and it is overloaded on one side, it leads to imbalance. [...] So this hotel [Ambassador] will bring about balance that is good for Hargeysa' (Jamhuuriya 2002).[11]

The Ambassador Hotel also created new cultural and political life on the south side of the capital. It attracted the attention of expatriates and the city's elite, and it became a venue for luxury overnight stays, marriage celebrations and conferences. International agencies made concerted efforts to divide their activities equally between the the Maansoor and the Ambassador. Owing to its proximity to the airport and for security reasons, foreign diplomats preferred to stay in the Ambassador Hotel. When Jendayi Frazer, then the US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, came for a brief visit to Somaliland in March 2008, she opted to meet the president and other officials there. After three concerted terrorist attacks in Hargeysa in October 2008, which had been conducted by militant Islamists operating mainly in southern Somalia but who targeted Somaliland as a friend of the 'apostates' (the USA, the UK, Ethiopia), several UN organizations moved their offices to the Ambassador Hotel and its surroundings.

By triggering these economic and political developments, the hotel went a long way towards transforming a conflict-ridden zone at the periphery of the city into a booming area whose residents are fully part of the newly emerging state of Somaliland.

Investments in education and peacebuilding This section looks at the engagement of the diaspora in higher education in Somaliland, and at the relations between the foundation of private universities by diaspora actors and peacebuilding. When Somaliland was declared independent in 1991, education had to start from scratch:

> [...] up to 15% of the schools had their walls demolished and timbers looted; 75% were without roofs and nearly 80% without doors, windows, fixtures, etc. The few schools still reasonably intact were taken over by squatters and displaced persons. Effectively, there were no schools for Somaliland children to attend in the aftermath of the war. (Morah 2000: 309)

Slowly Koran schools and secular schools were rebuilt.[12] Local educational committees tried to pool available resources and coordinate education in their villages and towns (Samatar 2001: 647). These initiatives were overshadowed by episodes of renewed civil war in the early 1990s. Male teenagers were recruited again for war; others had refused to demobilize and were still armed. Only after the conclusion of the peace conference in Hargeysa in 1997 was a more thorough demobilization accomplished. Tellingly, the slogan for the demobilization campaign was *qoriga dhig, qaalinka qaad* (put down the gun, take up the pen). The first university of Somaliland, Amuud University, was opened near the town of Boroma in the Awdal region in 1998. It had been established through the joint efforts of locals and the diaspora community. 'Their intention had been to find an outlet for the many children in the region

who had no real prospect of productive employment other than joining the roaming militias' (ibid.: 648). Hargeysa University followed in 2000. Again, this project had been decisively pushed forward by diaspora actors (MacGregor et al. 2008). The foundation of the universities of Amuud and Hargeysa was significant beyond the educational sector in Somaliland. The investments showed that the civil war was over and it was time to orientate towards the future. Many more universities followed in various parts of the country, all of which involved diaspora support. Nimo-Ilhan (forthcoming) found that 'in Hargeysa alone, a city of [an] estimated 725,000 people, 14 universities are competing aggressively to attract young people. For Somaliland as whole, 23 universities were registered with the higher education commission as of March 2013.' The following two case studies introduce recently established universities and shed light on the motivations of the founders and outline the peacebuilding potential of institutions of higher learning.

THE CASE OF THE INTERNATIONAL HORN UNIVERSITY The International Horn University (IHU)[13] is located in the far west of Hargeysa. It stems from the initiative of four diaspora Somalis, three of whom had resided in Finland and one in Pakistan from the 1990s to the early 2000s. The diaspora experience had strongly influenced the mind-set of the founders and also found its expression in their investment in the educational sector back home. All of them had received additional education abroad, became deeply involved in their new countries of residence and offered community services. Particularly Sheikh Almis and Ali, two of those in Finland, engaged in inter-religious dialogue and cooperated with Finnish government institutions to tackle problems of the Somali diaspora in Finland related to xenophobia, cultural differences, religious extremism and social exclusion.

The idea to engage at home, in Somalia, developed in the early 2000s. Sheikh Almis' assessment of their engagement was informed by religious and psychological considerations:

> We [the founders] had the same idea why Somalia had collapsed. We knew that the reason for the state collapse was that the 'Somali person' had collapsed. His values, his convictions, his religion had collapsed. [The Somali person] became a living shadow. He is alive but lost the heritage of the ancestors. The people became uprooted. They had nothing more to believe in; they became like animals. Allah had already stated in the Koran that sometimes people just become like animals; they eat only. The first step for rebuilding Somalia is to rebuild the [Somali] person. The person was empty; something had to be filled in. The most important thing to fill the void is education. We have to start here. (Interview with Sheikh Almis, Hargeysa, 7 December 2008)

The first initiative started in Hargeysa in 2004. The men opened a college

downtown, but it did not work well and was closed after just over a year. They started again in 2006 with a new concept. They opened IHU with about one hundred students. In 2009, around three hundred students were enrolled in the university, roughly 40 per cent of them women. The university offered three BA courses: economy and management, computer science/IT and sharia and law. Each course took four years. These 'majors' were complemented by some 'minors' in Arabic and sociology that were compulsory for the students of the first two years. The first students graduated in the summer of 2010. The academic year was divided into two semesters of five months each. The semester fees were between US$150 and US$250, depending on the subject (with sharia and law being cheapest). Applicants had to pass an admission exam. Every year, IHU awarded free places to the best newcomers, with ten students in 2008 and forty in 2009 receiving this award. Most of the students at IHU came from Somaliland, but there were also twenty students from outside the country. Nim'o, the university's accountant, mentioned that negotiations were under way with an Islamic organization in an Arabic country about creating scholarships for students from southern Somalia, Puntland and Djibouti. While most students stayed with their families in Hargeysa, the university offered rooms for students (and lecturers) from farther away (interview with Nim'o, Hargeysa, 17 December 2008). By early 2013 the number of students at IHU had again increased dramatically (up to one thousand students were enrolled, according to one of the heads of the university) and the IHU offered an MA in development studies in cooperation with a university in Malaysia.

The IHU also included a research centre called 'Centre for Research and Community Development'. According to Muse, one of the founders who had studied in Pakistan, this centre engaged in various projects related to peace and conflict research in Somaliland. Its staff consisted of senior university personnel. Occasionally, students participated as assistants. In its approach to practical conflict settlement, the centre supported the participation of religious authorities.[14] Muse stressed that religious leaders have a great influence on the local society, as most Somalis regularly attend Friday prayers and listen to sermons. The centre cooperated with religious leaders and engaged them in discussions, or practical projects, related to peace. In early 2009, for example, the centre cooperated in helping to solve an ongoing conflict over land between two groups residing in western Somaliland. In this project, the research centre at IHU cooperated with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), an international NGO with various (often peace-related) programmes in Somaliland. Another project, jointly conducted by the IHU and DRC, which had important implications for political and social stability in Somaliland, focused on dialogue between religious leaders and representatives of international NGOs in the country:

We called upon the two sides to come together and to discuss some difficult topics. The reason is the frequent misunderstandings and conflicts between representatives of the international NGOs and local religious leaders. The former think that the Somali sheikhs are spreading the wrong ideas and hindering development; the latter perceive some NGO projects as unacceptable interferences in Somali cultural and religious affairs. The hot topics concerned the role of women, family affairs, but also medical issues such as vaccination campaigns [against polio] that were rejected by religious leaders, e.g. in Burao [located in central Somaliland]. The sheikhs told the people that they would become infertile if vaccinated. (Interview with Muse Muhumed Diriye, Hargeysa, 17 May 2009)

University courses included occasional lectures by external guests. During a sociology course, for instance, a representative of a minority group in Somaliland was invited to lecture on discrimination. He presented his view of social relations and hierarchies in the local society and subsequently engaged in a discussion with the students, all of whom belonged to a majority clan. An interesting extra-university event was the 'Night of the Camel Poetry' at the Maansoor Hotel in Hargeysa, which was attended by around two hundred students from IHU and other young people. At this event, well-known poets performed their art and together with the students celebrated the beauty of Somali culture.

We argue that the peacebuilding potential of the university was threefold. First, the IHU, like any other university in Somaliland, sought to provide the young generation with an education that could pave the way to an economically successful life after graduation. This was certainly the hope of most students interviewed. They stressed that unemployment was the biggest problem for youth (group interview with students, Hargeysa, 5 April 2009). Secondly, the particular form of education offered at IHU was related to a vision of attitude change on the part of the Somali population in general. The university founders wished to use education to form a new generation of culturally and religiously well-oriented human beings who would contribute to rebuilding a prosperous society. Their students should, in the eyes of the founders, distinguish themselves from the pre-state-collapse generation, who had brought destruction to the country and the people. Muse stressed that 'the university tries as much as possible to contribute to the development of society' (interview with Muse Muhumed Diriye, Hargeysa, 17 May 2009). Ali added that 'only an educated person who has self-confidence can stand alone. [...] If the generation that grows up now is taught something and understands things, it can happen that they break with the past [which was characterized by clanism and civil war]' (interview with Ali Omar Bosir, Hargeysa, 18 December 2008). This vision was reflected in university life and in extra-university activities such as cultural

and religious events to which the university students contributed. Thirdly, the most tangible contributions to sustainable peacebuilding of the IHC were the research projects in which it was involved and the public discussions it initiated. In particular, the dialogue between local religious leaders and representatives of the international NGO community was widely reported in the local media. Such dialogue provided participants with a chance to avoid future misunderstandings and tensions. The event was also covered in the local media and there was a chance that this transferred aspects of basic values such as tolerance to the wider society in Hargeysa.

THE CASE OF NUGAAL UNIVERSITY Nugaal University is located in Lasanod, the capital of the Sool region in the east of Somaliland, near the border with Puntland. The region is unstable owing to conflict between Somaliland and Puntland over the border area. Moreover, many locals, who predominantly belong to the Dulbahante clan, are not in favour of Somaliland's secession. This caused frequent tensions between people in Sool and the Somaliland administration. The region had been effectively without government until 2004, when Puntland forces occupied Lasanod and established some weak administration. In October 2007, the Somaliland army moved in on Lasanod and the Puntland forces left. Since then Lasanod has been under the control of Hargeysa, but the situation in town is rather tense (Hoehne 2011a: 328–30). Many locals who were against Somaliland had left. Some even took up arms and established a force with the aim of 'liberating' the Dulbahante areas from Somaliland occupation. Those who remained had to cope with insecurity, marginalization and even the 'punishment' of hardliners in the diaspora who belonged to the Dulbahante clan but refused to support the locals in Lasanod as long as they cooperated with the Somaliland administration. Providing higher education under these circumstances proved particularly challenging.

The idea of setting up a university in Lasanod developed against the backdrop of what was already going on in the other regions of Somaliland and Puntland. Diaspora and local actors pooled their resources and in 2004 the university was founded. The first two years of the university, however, were overshadowed by crisis. Internal rifts between the first chancellor and some staff led to its closure. Some of the furniture and equipment donated by the diaspora was looted. The Puntland administration in Lasanod did not interfere. The university started up again in early 2007, with a new team, and from then on developed well. Abdirisak Lafole, the new chancellor of the university, who had fled Somalia in 1991 and worked and studied abroad (in Kenya, Uganda, the USA and the UK), explained his motivation to engage in education in his home area:

When I lived outside of Somalia I saw how other countries developed. I felt that people in Somalia should also have such life chances. This compelled

me to transfer some of the things I learned abroad to home. One of the important things I had realized abroad was that people in Kenya and Uganda coexist peacefully, despite their ethnic differences. Also in the USA, Europeans, Africans, Hispanics and so forth live and work together without much trouble. In my home country, people fight each other – people who speak the same language, have the same religion, are of the same skin colour, and have the same culture. I want to teach them about the peace and unity I saw abroad. I would like to confer the idea of the English slogan: united we stand, divided we fall. [...] I wish to contribute to the peacefulness and unity of my people. Working for the university was something I could do, instead of staying abroad in Minnesota and just watching what is happening in Somalia. I believe that education can bring a change. (Interview with Abdirisak Lafole, Hargeysa, 10 February 2009)

Abdinasir Abushaybe, the vice-chancellor of Nugaal University, had never left Somalia. He had studied in Mogadishu and came to Lasanod in the north when the civil war broke out in the south in 1991. He saw that young people, particularly young men, without education would be at risk of 'tak[ing] up guns and kill[ing] each other. In this way the civil war will never stop' (interview with Abdinasir Abushaybe, Hargeysa, 10 February 2009). Abdinasir became a schoolteacher. But he soon realized that secondary school graduates need a follow-up opportunity. He added: 'Without this opportunity, the students would throw their lives away; they would try to migrate illegally [which is extremely risky]. Yet if the students have a chance to achieve something here, they will stay' (ibid.).

In 2009, Nugaal University had around one hundred students, about 10 per cent of whom were female. It offered BAs in business administration and IT. The university had a small computer lab and the library was under construction. It also organized short courses in English and computer training. The regular BA courses ran for four years and the first graduations happened in September 2009. The fee per semester for each course was around US$120 (US$20 per month). It was striking that quite a few older people, men and women, were among the students. They had concluded their previous education before the state collapse and now embarked on a kind of second education (interviews with Ise Ibrahim Muse, Lasanod, 15 April 2009; Abdinasir Abushaybe, Lasanod, 15 April 2009).

The peacebuilding potential of Nugaal University was related to, first, giving local students a chance to focus on developing their own potential and qualifying for a well-paid job. This was quite similar to the situation in Hargeysa, the capital. But the difference between IHU and Nugaal University was that the former was established in the peaceful and relatively prosperous centre of Somaliland, whereas Nugaal University offered higher education in

a peripheral and conflict-ridden region. Secondly, the university leadership related actively to the government in Hargeysa and secured support for a new building. It received land in downtown Lasanod and financial support for the construction. The new building was finished in 2013 and can accommodate up to five hundred students. This constituted a small but important step towards integrating Lasanod more firmly into the overall peaceful context of Somaliland. Thirdly, Abdirisak and Abdinasir also tirelessly tried to attract additional funding for the university and sought to engage in cooperation projects with other universities and international NGOs. A first successful cooperation happened in early 2013, when a small group of students from Nugaal University and two other 'eastern' universities participated in a research project on security and justice in Somaliland, funded by the Department for International Development (DfID). The students from Nugaal University undertook short-term empirical research on conflict dynamics and access to justice in several districts in the Sool region, which were the hot spots of the conflict between Somaliland and Puntland and between local militias and the Somaliland army. This was a very first small step towards building a local 'research force' that has access to conflict hot spots and possesses the necessary academic and practical qualifications to analyse local problems. If more local students from conflict areas, such as Lasanod and surroundings, are in the future able to get research training and be involved in research projects concerning peace and conflict dynamics, this could in the medium term contribute to peacebuilding through preventive conflict analysis. Still, the remaining problems, such as lack of job opportunities and the strong opposition of many Dulbahante traditional leaders and politicians to Somaliland, limit the potential for sustainable peacebuilding in the Sool region (group interview with students of Nugaal University, Lasanod, 14 April 2009).

Challenges to diaspora investments and sustainable peace in Somaliland

Both the local interview partners and those with a diasporic background agreed that there were serious remaining challenges to substantial investment and, often in connection with that, to sustainable peacebuilding in Somaliland. Generally, there are threats to the existing peace in Somaliland from within and from without. Between 2007 and 2010, the government of President Dahir Rayale Kahin intimidated journalists, sidelined the lower chamber of parliament, which was dominated by the opposition, curtailed freedom of expression and association and seriously delayed the presidential elections (Hoehne 2011a: 330–3). External challenges to the peace in Somaliland emanated from militant extremists whose movement, Al-Shabaab, mainly operated in southern Somalia. They several times threatened Somaliand, which they saw as governed by an 'apostate regime'. In October 2008, several concerted suicide bombings hit

Hargeysa, killing around thirty people and wounding many more. Another challenge to peace is the political dynamic in the eastern region of the country, where on the one hand Somaliland and Puntland confront each other, and on the other autonomous armed movements, such as the Khaatumo State of Somalia (2012–13), are seeking independence from both Somaliland and Puntland. Other challenges to diasporic investments in Somaliland included the lack of formal financial institutions and human resources and poor infrastructure, plus a general lack of coordination and planning on the side of the government. A Department for Diaspora Affairs has been established as part of the Foreign Office in Hargeysa in 2013. Its task is to provide information and guidelines for returnees and diaspora engagement. However, it will certainly take a while until this department works effectively, and even then it will hardly be in a position to coordinate all diaspora investments in Somaliland, owing to the decentralized nature of transnational engagement.

Financial institutions The expansion of transnational economic engagements was constrained by the absence of commercial banks and credit institutions. Investors found it difficult to obtain capital, or to establish lines of credit for business development or survival in difficult times. So they had to rely on ad hoc sources acquired from the diaspora and local funds to initiate new ventures, expand old businesses or stay in business during hard times. Insurance services were also unavailable within Somaliland, an obstacle that hampered larger investments. Huge unprotected risks could result in heavy losses. Diasporic investors sought to alleviate these problems by making agreements with local traditional and other authorities. Nonetheless, the security achieved under such agreements was limited. Somaliland's lack of international recognition complicates the matter further and is partly responsible for the lack of legal security for investors.

Human resources Lack of skilled human resources was a widespread concern among investors in Somaliland. This concerned everyone investing in Somaliland, including those building the hotels as well as the universities mentioned above. The Somali civil war had cost the lives of many, including the educated elite. Most of those who did not die fled abroad. The managing director of Telesom stressed that owing to the lack of appropriate personnel 'you have to start everything from scratch, beginning with personnel training' (interview with Abdikarim Mohamed Eid, Hargeysa, March 2009). For certain investments, skilled professionals had to be brought into the country, leading to costs such as airline and visa fees, and a competitive salary, which certainly increased the costs for the investor. The heads of IHU and Nugaal University, for instance, were constantly on the search for skilled lecturers. Some of those hired were from the Somali diaspora in Europe and North America. Others were Somalis

or non-Somalis from the Horn (e.g. Kenya and Uganda). In compliance with national legislation, the employment of foreign experts had to follow a certain process that aimed at ensuring that the required skills were not available locally, which took time (interview with Anonymous, Hargeysa, April 2009).

Infrastructure Most of Somaliland's physical infrastructure, which is essential for investments to thrive, was already below standard, before 1991. Since then it had not been seriously upgraded. The existing roads, ports and airports are generally in poor shape, which complicated transport, imports and exports. Another problem was the unavailability of reliable and sufficient power or energy supplies. Most of the major enterprises and companies use their own power supplies and smaller ones relied on privately owned diesel generators. Therefore, in many cases diaspora investors are forced to provide the infrastructure for their investments. This produces considerable additional costs. Moreover, diaspora investments in almost every sector (education, healthcare, the economy) leave the government of Somaliland in the 'comfortable' position of remaining dormant and 'outsourcing' essential development tasks to private diaspora actors.

Lack of government coordination, legislation and planning At a general level, the minister of state for foreign affairs was officially responsible for the diaspora. Until recently, the director-general (DG) of this ministry dealt with the issue. During an interview in 2009 he stressed that the Somaliland government welcomed the investment of diaspora members, as they were perceived as assets because of their education and/or financial resources. However, the government had no concrete policy towards the diaspora and diaspora investments (interview with Awil Mohamed Farah, Hargeysa, 8 April 2009). In October 2013, a Department for Diaspora Affairs was established in this ministry, as mentioned above. However, it remains to be seen how effective this new department will be.

Also, more specific government policies, regulatory instruments and laws were widely perceived to be non-existent, weak or non-applicable by those investing in the economy and the educational sector. Laws on regulating investment and education were formulated, with the first Education Act in force since 2007, but on the way to being reformed in 2014, and the Investment Law passed by the House of Representatives but blocked by the House of Elders on the ground that the law was written in English. In January 2014, the Investment Law was still pending. Owing to this, investment policy had not yet been formalized. Such a business climate could be risky for potential investors. One local researcher explained: 'The existing laws are not sufficient to arbitrate business conflicts to secure one's investment. Many people who invested money [as a partnership] find that their partners walk away with the

money and the government can't do anything about it so it turns into a clan affair [and potentially a serious conflict]' (interview with Mohamed Osman Fadal, Hargeysa, April 2009).

Official spending on education in Somaliland is minimal, but it has improved significantly over recent years. While in 2006 the government spent only US$1.37 million on education, the budget approved by the parliament for 2012 was US$8.8 million. In general, the government allocates around 6 per cent of total government expenditure to education. The six or so main universities of the country received annual grants of US$14,000–20,000 from the government, which covered only a small portion of their costs. The Ministry of Education observed in its 'Education Sector Strategic Plan 2007–2011', developed in 2006/07: 'Other constraints include limited capacity, quality of staff and curricula, and the low competitiveness of graduates in the current job market. [...] Courses are developed based on academic courses outside of Somaliland rather than from identified labour market needs' (Ministry of Education 2007: 15).

The general lack of regulation on the part of the government extended to legal protection for real estate. Potential investors faced difficulties acquiring land in a clear-cut manner. There was no comprehensive land tenure and the tenure in effect was ambiguous. This chaotic legal environment made investors face all kind of complications from local people who live by the motto *Ku qabso ku qadi mayside* (meaning: Make a claim and you won't go away empty handed). Such people would claim parts of the land owned by others in order to get paid off to drop their claim (SCPD and WSP 1999). This, for instance, happened to Nugaal University. Somebody disputed its claim to own the land it had received in downtown Lasanod from the government of Somaliland, and a 'legal' solution had to be found that involved the payment of money to the claimant (interview with Abdinasir Abushaybe, Hargeysa, March 2013).

Given the weakness of government institutions and their susceptibility to clan influence, investors who limited their dealings to formal structures without the knowledge of their clan elders quickly found themselves in trouble. It was crucial for diaspora actors to involve the elders, as well as other opinion makers in their descent group, in their projects to facilitate investment; otherwise the clan or lineage authorities could create serious trouble. One diasporic entrepreneur explained that, given the power of clans and clan leaders, 'you have to explain [to the elders] every step you are taking and why you are taking it to remove suspicions and doubts' (interview with Hassan Ahmed Hussein, Hargeysa, April 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the role of the Somaliland diaspora in sustainable peacebuilding. It has concentrated on investments in the economy and

the educational sector that, we argue, played a role in triggering structural transformations that contributed to sustainable peacebuilding in Somaliland. The diaspora's economic engagement, particularly huge private investments such as those necessary for the construction of the Maansoor and the Ambassador Hotel, had implications beyond the immediate influx of resources. They helped to promote a perception of peace and normality for locals and members of the diaspora. This encouraged further investments that eventually led to the transformation of whole neighbourhoods from peripheral outskirts to booming centres. This happened in the neighbourhoods of both hotels discussed above.

Economic transformation not only enhanced people's chances of making a (decent) living; it also gave them a stake in the polity as a whole. This stake, which also included pride in one's own and one's group's achievements, was valuable for strengthening peace in Somaliland. One woman remarked: 'When one makes an investment naturally one will protect it. An investor will work hard to sustain peace' (interview with Amina Farah Arhse, Hargeysa, March 2009). This point was underlined by Khader Ali Hussein, the owner of the Ambassador Hotel, when he mentioned how he engaged in the settlement of a conflict across the Somaliland–Ethiopia border (not far south of Hargeysa), which had erupted in 2007 between two rival sub-clans of his own clan and directly threatened stability and peace in southern Hargeysa. Khader argued: 'This conflict concerned me personally. It was like my own cloth burning me. It was an internal conflict between my people so I had to act. I was able to contribute and we succeeded with the help of Allah. I was not the only one involved; there were many others who contributed' (interview with Khader Ali Hussein, Hargeysa, April 2009). An elder of the clan mentioned that the hotel owner had invested thousands of US dollars to support a peaceful conflict settlement (interview with Muse Ali Farur, Hargeysa, December 2008). This shows that those diaspora actors who invested substantially in Somaliland were certainly driven by economic motivations. But they also had a vested interest in the country's peaceful development.

The same motivations were also central for those who invested in the educational sector. Universities were institutions that required financial investment and were supposed to 'make money' once established. But they were also institutions that could contribute to 'social development' and the raising of a 'new generation' that valued cooperation and unity over selfishness and division, as the founders of IHU and Nugaal University emphasized. Like the structural transformations triggered by substantial economic investments, the provision of education on a university level changed the social and economic setting. It gave disoriented youth who had gone through the devastations of the civil war some orientation and, through university education, gave those who wished to study a chance to qualify for a well-paid job. It also signalled

to whole communities that the time of fighting was over and new (intellectual) offers were available that could help to upgrade one's own and one's community's living conditions. In the longer run, new problems arose owing to the lack of qualified jobs for the many university graduates. Sometimes educated local youth and educated diaspora were even in competition with each other over the same jobs.

In general, the examples of diasporic investment in Somaliland discussed in this chapter highlight the phenomenon of *dis deegaankaaga* (Somali for 'build your own community/neighbourhood'). This has become the dominant pattern since the collapse of the Somali government in 1991. One civil society activist explained: 'Previously, all Somalis had invested in Mogadishu and when the civil war broke out all of that was lost. This was a wake-up call for all Somalis. So since 1991 it has become customary for Somalis to invest in their own communities' (interview with Harun Yousuf, Hargeysa, March 2009).

The diasporic investments we have discussed, like almost all other investments in Somaliland (and Somalia), were mainly geared towards the clan areas (Somali: *deegaan*) of the investors. Many people in Somaliland see this phenomenon as something that is positive for peacebuilding and the stability of the country, because it entails some balancing and fairness with regard to the distribution of resources.

This phenomenon of *dis deegaankaaga*, however, shows the limitations of sustainable peacebuilding by diaspora actors. It also points to the continued weakness of the Somaliland government. Clan homeland development may balance economic and political imbalances dating from the past, when most resources were flowing into the centres in the south, particularly Mogadishu and surroundings (until 1991) to some degree. But it also reinforces clan-mindedness and undermines the tackling of 'national issues' or thinking about a 'common good' (in addition to what is good for 'my group of origin'). This is where the government will have to take the lead in coordinating, planning and legally protecting and guiding diasporic investment. This is exactly what the government of Somaliland has, as of now (2014), not done very effectively.[15] Therefore, diasporic investments to develop Somaliland and, at least as a side effect, stabilize peace remain somewhat arbitrary and have not yet realized their full potential.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on the field research of both authors in Somaliland in 2008 and 2009, with Ibrahim concentrating on the economy and Hoehne on education. Some joint key questions were developed and both researchers met several times in the field to discuss preliminary results. Interviews with individuals or groups followed a semi-structured questionnaire. Besides interviews and participant observation, we used relevant secondary sources including local newspaper archives. The main challenge, of course, when arguing about the linkages between diasporic investments and peacebuilding in Somaliland,

was 'measuring' the impact of such engagement. A long-term perspective over several years (ideally starting from before the investments happened) would have been beneficial to the assessment of the (possible) structural transformations triggered by these investments. However, our research was conducted for only a few months and only long after the investments had already happened. To deal with this problem, we asked our interview partners for their personal (historical) accounts and perceptions of how diasporic investments, if at all, contributed to peace and created conditions that mitigated an outbreak of violence. Newspaper archives and other secondary sources helped to provide a better idea of the situation back when the investments happened. Finally, Ibrahim and Hoehne could both draw on their own experiences and observations as a long-term resident of, or frequent visitor to, Somaliland, respectively. This helped to verify statements and to assess what really changed through diasporic investment.

2 As discussed below, the diaspora has not always played a positive role in Somaliland's rebuilding process. At various times throughout the 1990s and also recently, between 2008 and 2012, certain clannish-minded diaspora actors provided funds and other support for 'their' clan militias and supported fighting in some areas of Somaliland.

3 The literature on transnationalism in general was much advanced by the foundational text of Glick-Schiller et al. (1992).

4 To be sure, there has been international engagement with Somaliland short of recognition since about 2003. Nonetheless, this engagement cannot substitute for official interstate relations or foreign private investments in recognized states.

5 For more detail, see Terlinden and Ibrahim (2008); APD and Interpeace (2008).

6 Clearly, not all migrants became part of an active diaspora that is interested in developments back home.

Schlee and Schlee (2012: 6) have recently emphasized that particularly some of the younger Somalis in Europe preferred to identify themselves exclusively as 'Finns', 'Germans' or 'Brits' and would therefore actually stop being diaspora in the sense of longing for an (imaginary) 'home'.

7 The Somali name for the diaspora is *qurbajoog*. For most people in Somaliland the term implies those from the region living outside Somaliland. However, in terms of considerations and perception, returnees from the Western countries are known as *qurbajoog*, whereas those from other countries in the Middle East and Africa are described by the countries they came from. As long as one maintains his/her relationship with the host country or has a Western passport he/she is considered *qurbajoog*, often regardless of the number of years one has already been back in Somaliland. The word *qurbajoog* has been widely used since the late 1990s, reflecting the growing influence and engagement of the diaspora in Somaliland.

8 No reliable demographic data are available in Somaliland, so any population figures are rough estimates by the authors.

9 The official size of a plot is 80 x 60 metres, but in reality plots can vary between 24 x 24 metres and 80 x 80 metres.

10 Since 2004, there have been new violent conflicts in eastern Somaliland, but this is not the topic of this chapter.

11 Translation from Somali by Mohamed Hassan Ibrahim.

12 For a historical background to education in Somalia (including the northwest) up to 1991, see Hoehne (2011b: 85–9).

13 In Somali it is called *Jamacadda Geeska*.

14 Usually, traditional authorities are the main actors in conflict settlement. Religious authorities are present but are mostly responsible for offering blessings and reminding the negotiating parties about good moral conduct, whereas the concrete negotiations are led by elders.

15 This point was made some years back by Lindley (2008: 409).

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4 | The Somali diaspora in conflict and peace-building: the Peace Initiative Programme

Mahdi Abdile

Introduction

Data collection for this chapter began at a time when the role of the Somali diaspora was being intensely debated both within and outside Somalia. In these debates the potential contribution of the Somali diaspora was being presented in two forms. On the one hand, it was seen as a potential contributor to the ongoing conflict in Somalia, as a spoiler and a destabilization factor in both the region and the world. A great concern is the flow of Somali diaspora remittances sent annually to the country of origin and the lack of oversight and the absence of a credible monitoring mechanism for diaspora money both at the sending and receiving ends; without such monitoring, remittances sent by Somalis living abroad can be used and manipulated by warlords, clan militias, pirates and terrorists. In these debates, the increasing radicalization of some sections of the Somali diaspora, especially youth, is also seen as a negative contribution of the Somali diaspora. On the other hand, the Somali diaspora's role in peacebuilding, development and reconstruction efforts in the country of origin is well documented (see, for example, Pirkkalainen and Abdile 2009; Hoehne et al. 2011).[1]

There has been intense debate surrounding the origin and changing use of the term diaspora in the past decade or so. Finding a universally acceptable definition of the concept and who should be included in such a definition is among the issues intensely debated by scholars. The word diaspora is said to originate 'from the Greek words *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over) [...] signifying expansion through outward migration and settlement' (Cohen 2001: 3642). Based on the Bible (Deuteronomy 28:25), the concept was historically reserved for explaining the Jews' experience as a forcibly scattered people, but the term is now more associated '[...] with the suffering and forcible displacement of groups with similar experience "to the ancient Jews"' (ibid.: 3642) who now live far from their homelands (Lehmann 1998). The term is also employed as a metaphor to signify a global condition of mobility, in which migrants are frequently seen as being at the core (Schulz and Hammer 2003).

William Safran (1991: 83–4) defines diaspora as a group or groups that meet the following characteristics: '[communities] dispersed from a specific original

"centre" to two or more "peripheral", or foreign, regions [...] [who] regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return'. However, Cohen's (1997) analysis of diaspora suggests a departure from the traditional notion of victimhood that often accompanies 'diaspora'. Cohen seems to differentiate 'traditional' causes of diasporic communities symbolized by wars and 'modern' causes such as drought and hunger. He argues that being 'dragged off in manacles [...] being expelled, or being coerced to leave by force of arms are qualitatively different phenomena than the forces of overpopulation, land hunger, poverty, or unsympathetic political regimes' (ibid.: 26–7).

Drawing on Safran's list of diaspora characteristics, Cohen (ibid.) expands the diaspora concept to include nine common features:

1 Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2 alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3 a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4 an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5 the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation;
6 a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7 a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8 a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9 the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.

This list is comprehensive, but as I shall demonstrate, when discussing the experience of the current Somali diaspora it is difficult if not impossible for these criteria to capture the experiences of diasporas worldwide. The case of the Somali diaspora is emblematic of the complex issues which diasporas generate. When discussing the Somali diasporic experience (see Pirkkalainen and Abdile 2009), the majority of recent studies tend to focus more on the new threats it poses and less on its possible positive contributions to the homeland.

The first challenge when studying the Somali diaspora is to define who should be included. Although the Somali diaspora itself is commonly associated with the large-scale dispersion following the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, Somali migration pre-dates this period.[2] Unfortunately, there is rather

little information on Somali migration pre-dating the colonial era (and to some extent, the post-colonial period). The lack of such historical data on group movements within and outside the modern nation's borders limits the analytical scope of research. Available data on the Somali diaspora are very recent and tend to put more emphasis on issues of Somalis in the West or those in refugee camps in neighbouring countries (e.g. the studies featured in Farah et al. 2007). For instance, few data are available on the large Somali communities in the Middle East, Asia and India and their history. The lack of such current and historical data leads scholars to make certain distortions, for instance by emphasizing negatives such as the disasters driving Somalis to seek asylum abroad and the threat of radical Islamism.

The arrival of Somalis in the West in the 1970s and 1990s, and in light of the fact that children born in the diaspora constitute a growing component, generational differences seem to be emerging. The assumption made in this chapter is that there are two core constituents or groups within the Somali diaspora in the West. The first group is led by the colonial-era seamen who settled in British port cities such as Cardiff, London and Liverpool. This group includes the economic migrants of the 1970s who went to the Middle East, and those forced abroad by the civil war. In this study, I refer to this group as the first generation. The second group comprises those born in the diaspora, or those born in Somalia but who relocated abroad with their families as toddlers or teens. I will refer to this group and their children as the second generation. The importance of this division to this study will be highlighted in later sections but two points are worth mentioning here: first, there are variations in the ways the two groups are perceived as engaging with the home country; and secondly, they differ in their desire to help and contribute to the home country or their ancestral homeland.

In order to better understand the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland and explore the attitudes towards and perceptions of diaspora engagement, this chapter examines the views of a number of relevant actors, including diaspora returnees, local administrative staff, and religious and traditional leaders who were working with the staff of the Finn Church Aid (FCA) peacebuilding programme known as Peace Initiative Programme (PIP).[3] Regarding the roles and contribution of the Somali diaspora in their country of origin, the chapter begins with the assumption that the diaspora has a peacebuilding role to play but can also be a spoiler. Thus, this chapter seeks to understand what roles the Somali diaspora plays in peacebuilding and conflicts, the reasons explaining their choice to intervene or not to intervene in peacebuilding activities and/or to support other development work in Somalia. Finally, it asks: what is the nature of their involvement when they do intervene? In order to answer these questions, two types of case studies were selected. The first case study involves a peacebuilding programme initiated and

implemented by Somalis in the diaspora. The second comprises two examples of returnee engagement that aggravated longstanding inter-clan conflicts.

Political, economic and social restrictions in the home country on diaspora involvement

Although Somali national and regional governments have for the past twenty years encouraged diaspora involvement, the diaspora's ability to freely interact with the homeland is subject to some government restrictions that limit diaspora involvement. Data collected indicate that – with the exception of Somaliland – initially the diaspora did not receive an enthusiastic reception in national or regional political processes and until recently was sidelined or given a lukewarm reception in the many peace processes. There were several reasons why members of the diaspora were excluded or excluded themselves, at least at the beginning of the 1990s. First, in the 1990s the political elite, who served under Siad Barre or were long-term opposition figures, such as Abdullahi Yusuf and Somaliland's first president, Mohamed Egal, or warlords such as General Aidid, were quite dominant and drew almost exclusively the attention of both their clans and the international community. Secondly, most of the Somali diaspora were quite new in their host countries, and thus their main preoccupation was to establish themselves in exile. Additionally, many did not have travel documents or enough money to pay for participation in the usually protracted Somali peace conferences. Furthermore, in the 1990s the status of the Somali diaspora was quite different from today: they were at first seen as individuals who would send money home and not as actors who could set agendas for peace and the political processes. Thirdly, with the exception of Somaliland, in the 1990s Somalia's political environment was dominated by warlords and clan militias who controlled most of Somalia, and most members of the Somali diaspora did not want to associate themselves with the brutal warlords and clan militia rule. Fourthly, there were no incentives for the meaningful political participation of the diaspora. Somali diaspora holding non-Somali passports even have to pay the same fee for their entry and exit visas as non-Somalis. Even those who did find reasons to participate in the political process found themselves struggling against government practices and policies which restricted their participation.

On the private level, Somalis returning from the diaspora to their country of origin appear to be well received by their communities. They are seen as people who can contribute positively to the development of these communities. On the public level, however, there are a number of challenges faced by the diaspora returnees. There is competition between the older political elite and the members of the diaspora who aspire to enter politics. The old political elite is quite fearful of being made redundant by the experienced and educated diaspora, who might have access to money and connections both outside and

inside the country. For example, during the fieldwork I was told a story involving the former Somaliland president, Mohamed Egal, and two of his political rivals. According to the story, in 1997 the former was afraid of losing the presidency to two politically influential diaspora returnees, Saleban Mohamud Adan and Abdillahi Omar (the latter is the father of the well-known Somali journalist Raghe Abdillahi Omar). The president therefore introduced a number of conditions that restricted and eventually disqualified the diaspora candidates from participating in the presidential election. At the time, the Somaliland constitution was in the process of being formalized and the country was governed under a National Charter, which had been enacted in the 1993 Borama conference. Both Mr Saleban and Mr Omar came from highly respected and influential families, and both of them posed a political threat to President Egal.

At the time, there were no specific rules or conditions in the National Charter about the procedure for electing the president, and the *Guurti* (the House of Elders) was the main body responsible for overseeing the election. According to some informants, in order to ensure his control over the electoral process President Egal nominated members to the Electoral Commission with the understanding that in return they would come up with certain rules and conditions on the eligibility of presidential candidates. These rules and conditions were later incorporated into the National Constitution. Thus, Article 82 of the Constitution (the conditions for eligibility for election as president or vice-president) states that 'to be elected as President or Vice-President, [the candidates] must be a citizen of Somaliland by birth, and, notwithstanding residence as a refugee in another country, must not hold any other citizenship'. Additionally, the rules stipulate that candidates '[...] must be apprised of the realities of the country, having been resident in the country for a period of at least two years before the date when the election is scheduled to take place'.

Both these conditions automatically disqualified Mr Omar from running for presidency, as he had a British passport and had just returned from the diaspora. These conditions were included in the National Constitution and remain valid. Similar restrictions could also be found in the Constitution of the Transitional Federal Government, although there have been diaspora members in the TFG. Moreover, although the above-mentioned restrictions still exist, participation of the diaspora in the political, economic and social sphere seems to be improving overall.

Linking the host country and the home country

Somalis in the diaspora interact in various ways with their home country. The first-generation Somalis feel compelled to get involved in their country of origin, but their engagement is usually biased and often directed towards their own clan areas or regions. In times of war, contributing to one's clan to maintain its dominant status, or to help offset the balance of power in favour

of one's own clan against previously dominant clans, is seen as a Somali's duty. Well-established connections to the homeland are required to maintain one's position. For many first-generation Somalis the homeland linkage is the most critical determinant of their identity, and this leads them to maintain strong ties with Somalia. For instance, first-generation Somalis are unlikely to miss the BBC Somali Service news and commentaries, and if they do miss a broadcast they will go around and enquire '*BBC maanta maxaay sheegtay?*' or 'What did the BBC say today?'

The BBC Somali Service has been one of the key information channels that connect the Somali diaspora to the homeland. With a wide and diverse audience, the BBC Somali Service is also a potential channel for peacebuilding, which is a common concern for most Somalis. Several other key issues help the first-generation Somali diaspora to remain connected to their home country. The difficulties in adapting to the host countries – such as cultural barriers, high unemployment, fear that their descendants will lose their Somali culture and identity, and the frustrations and despair associated with their state of social exclusion – have encouraged first-generation diaspora to preserve close connection with their country of origin (Danso 2001: 3). One interview participant underscored this point:

> I think many among the older Somalis feel responsible for the fact that their children have adopted so many non-Somali ways and feel it is their duty to try to keep the Somali culture strong [...] and ensure the connection to the homeland is constant and strong. However, the pressure on young people to stay true to their Somali roots can seem like a cultural tug-of-war and this can have a huge negative impact on the life of young Somalis living outside Somalia.[4]

Besides the issues mentioned above, the first generation's close connections to the homelands serves several other purposes. First, their regular contacts with clan members and friends keep them up to date with what is happening in the country of origin. This allows them to remain politically relevant in the home country. Secondly, such contacts allow them to act as go-betweens for clan elders and political leaders inside the home country and among the members of the diaspora – and this ensures that they continue to be a focal point in the networks spanning the diaspora and leaders in Somalia. Thirdly, their connections both in the diaspora and inside Somalia have generated interest in the donor communities.

Differing attitudes towards homeland engagement among first- and second-generation diaspora

It can be argued that the first-generation Somalis are more politically involved than the second generation. Yet their involvement cannot be characterized as solely positive or negative, as it depends very much on the circum-

stances in which the engagement occurs. One issue that clearly emerges is that most first-generation Somali diaspora members consider it obligatory to assist their clans during conflicts with other clans. As one interviewee pointed out:

> When I receive a call for help from my clan elders and they tell me there has been a fight between our clan and another clan and they need assistance, I feel it's obligatory for me to answer that call. I am far from the fighting while other clan members are putting their lives on the line for me, so the least I can do is to help financially so that they can buy food.[5]

However, the first generation is quick to question assistance that transcends clan issues. A Finnish diaspora member noted that:

> If I raise money for, let's say, drought appeal in Mogadishu, I don't know if the money will be used by clan militias or not and because I am not 100 per cent sure where the money will go, I would rather send it to my family or relatives. That way I am sure the money will be well spent; besides, there is a need everywhere, so it doesn't matter where you send the money to.[6]

The second generation's interventions in Somalia are more targeted and less tied to clans. The members of the second generation who took part in the interviews emphasize the collective needs and suffering of the Somali people. They do not feel it is necessary to blindly support their clans and consider it to be better for them to find solutions to the inter-clan conflicts rather than support a particular clan. Apart from helping and contributing to the collective welfare of the Somali people, they often also have personal motives for participation. The chance to gain work experience can be a reason for return: 'I just graduated from university and I thought Somalia was the ideal place for me because I could do two things at the same time. Firstly, I wanted to help my people who have gone through great suffering and secondly, I wanted to gain work experience.'[7]

Whereas clan identity and politics are the entry points for the first generation, second-generation involvement seems to combine the desire to help the home country with personal interests, such as career development. However, this doesn't mean that clan identity does not matter for the second generation, or that they are apolitical. The majority of the second-generation Somalis interviewed were educated, ambitious and wanted to establish a stable foundation for themselves. The connection to their parents' homeland exists, but it is often attenuated or very remote. For the second generation, their parents' birthplace or homeland is somewhat imaginary, and home is associated with a variety of places. While the first generation is happy to consider themselves as part and parcel of the Somali diaspora, most second-generation diaspora members find the concept of diaspora delimits their experience and makes them aliens in the eyes of the host community. One of the interviewees protested by pointing out

that 'there is something foreign and negative about the concept of diaspora. When you label someone as diaspora you are telling him or her that you are foreigner and that you don't belong to the host country. It makes you feel you are different and an outsider.'[8]

Many of the young Somalis I interviewed think of themselves as British Somalis or Somali-Swedes or simply British or Swedish – and not Somalis in the diaspora. Samatar, a thirty-five-year-old Somali-American, complained that the concept of diaspora reminded him of the pictures of women and children fleeing from conflicts and people in refugee camps in Africa. 'I don't have these experiences,' he said.[9] These young people are identifying themselves with roots that are not defined by one particular place or experience but by multiple homelands. Nasra, a twenty-five-year-old woman from the UK, argued that 'in terms of ethnicity I see myself as Somali but having grown up in the UK, culturally and in terms of nationality, I view myself as being a mixture of British and Somali'.[10]

Such contrasts between the first and second generation help us understand the different motives at work, and why some members of the Somali diaspora may or may not intervene in the politics of their country of origin. Generally speaking, Somali diaspora contributions to the home country come in the form of direct or indirect assistance. These include a commitment to send remittances to families and relatives, and support for humanitarian and peacebuilding projects.

The negative role of diaspora

In the absence of a strong government, coupled with a large Somali diaspora abroad and insurgent movements which exert a significant attraction for certain individuals, it is not surprising that current debates on the role of the Somali diaspora centre on whether their contribution to the homeland is positive or negative. As Mohamed, a lifetime member of the Somali National Movement (SNM) and one of my oldest informants, explained, Somali diaspora have previously played a crucial supporting role for the insurgent movement:

> I spent 28 years in [UAE] before I came back to Somaliland [...] I was a lifetime member of the Somali National Movement [SNM]. The UAE tolerated our activities and as a result, we had many activities supporting the SNM. For fifteen years, I was a political chairman for the Somaliland diaspora in the UAE. We collected money, organized political meetings and arms for the SNM [...] we had regular contacts with SNM commanders in the field, who used to update us on the political situation. SNM was very much dependent on the diaspora [...] SNM and the diaspora were like car and petrol. For a car to move it needs petrol, for SNM to do anything they needed the diaspora.[11]

Diaspora support for insurgencies and opposition movements can come in

many forms: arms and money, as well as political support through fund-raising, publicity and propaganda. When asked about the main support the Somali diaspora seemed to be providing, Hersi, a diaspora man from the UAE, took the SNM as an example and explained:

> When SNM entered the country on 27 May and 31 May 1988, we decided that the best way we can take part in the struggle was through financial contributions. Men and women from all over the world used to contribute [...] some even contributing their entire monthly salary at times. There were some who used to get about US$7,000 per month and contributed their whole salaries. We used to send medicine, cars and medical equipment. As chairman, I remember when the contribution was US$1 million in one month. Our role was to collect contributions and send the money or what we bought to the homeland.[12]

Such support can help insurgent movements and opposition groups to better recruit and fund their activities. For example, the Somali diaspora has played a role in helping the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), Hisbul-Islam and Al-Shabaab with financial assistance and fighters, and members continue to act as political representatives. These groups' ability to appeal to members of the Somali diaspora and their representations may have helped them raise their profile, give them diplomatic advantage, improve their recruiting base, and make them operationally more effective.

However, as the suicide bombings targeting the AMISOM peacekeepers in Mogadishu, said to be carried out by diaspora individuals from Minnesota, and the arrests and conviction of Australian and Danish nationals of Somali origin in Australia and Denmark, indicate, Western policy-makers view the potential for recruiting members of Somali diaspora into groups such as Al-Shabaab as a major security problem. In addition to the Western nations' concerns, regional governments in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia have also expressed concerns regarding the threats emanating from Al-Shabaab. It has been argued that Al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups could not have sustained their current level of hostility without outside support, and that the diaspora's involvement is also fuelling the power struggle between the government and opposition groups.

Jama, a Somali from Finland who supports one of the insurgent groups in Somalia, offered a glimpse into the opportunistic stance of some diaspora groups:

> During the Asmara meeting when ARS was formed, and also during the current Djibouti negotiations, we met regularly, presented our point of views to the ARS negotiating team. Our aim was to show them that while we support them, we wanted to be consulted and our ideas and perspectives be conveyed to the mediators [...] During the Asmara negotiations, they listened to us but

in Djibouti, we felt they have betrayed and abandoned us [...] that is why we are not supporting Sheikh Sharif's government. Our ideas are now closer to Hisbul-Islam. We will not raise money or lobby for the Sharif government any more and we will oppose them.[13]

The Somali diaspora have the skills and experience to positively contribute to their country of origin. Among them are highly skilled professionals who could contribute to humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts with a primary focus on conflict resolution, health and education; and through the formation of non-profit organizations throughout Somalia. They also have the necessary contacts in their countries of residence to fund-raise and lobby for the home country, to organize public and private events in support of regional and national governments, and to help publicize humanitarian and human rights problems in the home country.

The two case studies The Somali diaspora's engagement is not always positive, however, and their involvement has both intended and unintended consequences. During a period of fifteen months between December 2008 and April 2010, I followed two diaspora intervention programmes that have led to conflicts. The two brief examples below illustrate the negative roles played by the Somali diaspora returnees, and how they can directly aggravate existing frictions. Both examples indicate the complexities of Somali conflicts and the blending of tribalism and personal rivalries and the role of natural resources (notably water and grazing land) in the Somali conflict.

While conducting a conflict-mapping study in eastern Somaliland in early 2009, a friend of mine who works for the Peace Initiative Programme (PIP) brought to my attention two conflicts that were taking place in the region. Both cases involved members of the Somali diaspora. As we shall see below, the direct contribution of one of the returnees to an already tense and volatile situation was clearly intended to expand his clan's territory. The other case illustrates the unintended consequences of a well-intended project. The two conflicts were also interesting because the PIP programme has taken both cases as part of their conflict resolution intervention. Both those fuelling the two conflicts and those trying to resolve them are members of the Somali diaspora, and this makes for a good case study which demonstrates both the negative and the positive involvement of the Somali diaspora in homeland affairs. The two conflicts involve two Somali returnees: a Dulbahante man from the UK, and a Sa'ad Yonis man from the United States. Both of them were part of the diaspora for decades, and during their absence the country has changed dramatically.

THE GALGAL CASE In early 2004 the Dulbahante man sent money to Somali-

land and asked his relatives to build a house and a borehole in his home town of Galgal in eastern Somaliland. Galgal is an expanse of dry land with a few wells that is inhabited by the Dulbahante, a sub-clan of the Darood Harti clan, and the Habar Je'lo, who are a sub-clan of the Isaaq clan. It should be mentioned here that the Harti, the dominant clan of Puntland, and the Isaq, the main clan of Somaliland, are party to a long-running border dispute. Many of the disputes in Galgal arise over the ownership of settlements and water sources, and Galgal is the site of many past conflicts between these two clans. One of the most famous battles between the two clans took place in 1952 over the ownership of a well. Thirteen people were killed and many more wounded. Since then, the Dulbahante have always sought to establish their authority and claim Galgal as theirs; the Habar Je'lo clan favours co-ownership of the area. After the 1952 fighting, the British colonial administration passed a decree banning the construction of any buildings or wells in Galgal. The ruling also stipulated that the existing wells were to be shared between the two clans. After independence the Somali government continued to enforce the colonial administration's decision. No incidents were reported for fifty-six years, until the decision by the Dulbahante man to build the house reignited the hostility, pitting his clan against the Habar Je'lo. The Habar Je'lo saw this as a Dulbahante attempt to reinforce their historical claim to the town.

Tradition dictates that the first clan to dig a well or construct a house in a location has the right to claim ownership of the area, but in Galgal the Dulbahante and Habar Je'lo are unable to agree on who owns the existing wells and who were the first to settle Galgal. Anticipating a hostile reaction to the house construction project, the Dulbahante brought in their militias to secure the site and to ensure successful completion of the project.

The Habar Je'lo responded by launching an attack to prevent construction, but their efforts proved unsuccessful. Having failed to prevent construction, a local man from the Habar Je'lo clan began to work on a well not far from where the Dulbahante man was building his house. Successful completion of the well would have automatically strengthened the Habar Je'lo's historical position that the town belongs not only to the Dulbahante but the Habar Je'lo as well. Today, who owns Galgal and its surrounding areas remains a contentious issue.

THE OOG CASE While the stand-off between the Dulbahante and Habar Je'lo militias continued in Galgal, a similar conflict was developing in Oog, a town located between Burao and Lasanod in the Sool region inhabited jointly by the Sa'ad Yonis sub-clan of the Habar Yonis and a Habar Je'lo sub-clan, the Mohamed Abokor. In the course of establishing an agricultural project in Oog, a Sa'ad Yonis man from the United States unknowingly fenced off an area of disputed grazing land outside Oog. Given the lack of food in Somaliland,

one might consider an agricultural project like this to be a blessing and not a source of clan antagonism. But water and grazing landownership remain a major source of conflict between and within clans; if such conflicts are not resolved quickly they can easily degenerate into a circle of revenge killings.

Construction of wells and dams, and establishment of farms – especially in disputed grazing lands – require careful negotiations and consensus on the part of all clans that inhabit the area. It is unclear whether or not the diaspora man from the United States knew that the area he surveyed and identified was in fact a disputed clan border. What is known is that in 2008 the man returned to Oog with excavators and a plan to establish a farming business, and that without consulting the locals, he proceeded to fence a large area with the intention of establishing a maize and sorghum farm. The Mohamed Abokor naturally objected to the initiative and immediately mobilized their militia and threatened to prevent him from going ahead with the project. They argued that the farm is situated in a disputed area between the two clans and is a grazing land shared by both clans. Over the decades, the site has been a centre of numerous claims and counter-claims by both clans over the control of the grazing land areas. Constant disputes and competition characterize the relationship between the clans, and the control of Oog and its surrounding areas continues to be a source of tension and conflict. However, local people – and especially the Sa'ad Yonis – argue that the man just wanted to produce food for his people, and that he was unaware of the deep-seated rivalry and competition between the two clans. Yet the man was originally from the area and was able to build several houses for himself in Oog before he returned. This is an indication that he could not have been totally ignorant of the existing clan tensions and disputes. Although well intentioned, the project revived the deep and bitter hatred between the two sub-clans and became a new flashpoint reactivating the simmering hostility between two clans who share a long border. The clans are also traditional political rivals, each supporting one of Somaliland's two main political parties, UDUB and Kulmiye. This is in addition to the fact that for many decades fencing grasslands for commercial or personal use has been a problem in the Oog area, and local pastoralists have long resisted such commercialization for fear of losing pasturelands. The tension between the two clans is high and the Sa'ad Yonis man from the USA is reportedly lobbying the Somaliland government to issue a farming licence in an attempt to legalize his claim over the disputed land.

In the case of Galgal, the returnee from the diaspora knowingly inflamed the situation on the ground, but intervention by the PIP helped defuse the conflict. In the Oog example, the returnee clearly remained cognizant of basic opportunities to invest in his home area, but his 'local knowledge' of the dynamics on the ground had atrophied during his years in exile.

The positive role of diaspora

The role of diasporas as peacemakers is less publicized in current debates. As the case studies show, the Somali diaspora has a potential role in contributing to peacebuilding, conflict resolution and good governance, strengthening local capacities for peacebuilding, supporting mediation between warring communities, and lobbying the international community to help resolve the violent conflict in their country of origin. When debating the links between diaspora and conflicts, the focus tends to be on providing funds for insurgent and opposition groups, political support through publicity, and lobbying for militants and insurgent groups, and recruitment for the latter (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 3). As the Galgal and Oog cases demonstrate, the Somali diaspora's involvement can be destructive, while at the same time its potential for positive involvement remains largely untapped. Unfortunately, the absence of unified and organized corps of Somalis in the diaspora, combined with a lack of resources and the political will to engage the conflicting parties, makes tapping the Somali diaspora's potential a major challenge. However, the PIP case study below shows that systematic engagement of highly skilled diaspora in peacebuilding activities can be successful.

The Peace Initiatives Programme The PIP is one of the few diaspora-initiated peacebuilding programmes in Somalia; its core mission is to respond effectively to inter-clan conflicts through collaboration with religious, traditional and regional leaders by using direct and indirect methods of conflict resolution. The programme started in 2007 as a pilot project. In 2009 the PIP started working on eight inter-clan conflicts (five in Somaliland and three in Puntland), two of which have already been successfully mediated.

The programme starts by identifying and selecting ongoing conflicts where it can engage. The work begins with analysis of the conflict and the issues, and contact with the parties involved. This is followed by organizing separate meetings with the conflicting parties designed to ease tensions and mistrust between them. The peace workers then help set up a mediating and facilitating group composed of religious and traditional leaders acceptable to the warring parties. The facilitators and mediators usually come from the opposing parties. The PIP then invites the leaders of the warring parties to a joint workshop dealing with methods of conflict resolution, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Such seminars and workshops allow the leaders of the conflicting parties to informally network; participants sleep in the same hotel, where they eat and pray together. At times, when the causes of the conflicts are complex and the parties do not want to share the same space, PIP staff and religious and traditional leaders recruited by the PIP meet the warring parties separately. Most of the diaspora members working with the programme have no formal training in peacebuilding techniques, but they do have the all-important

capacity to develop practical techniques based on their local knowledge and the use of religious and Somali customary law (*Xeer*) to solve conflicts.

THE PIP ENGAGEMENT IN GALGAL AND OOG In early 2009, PIP started a conflict-mapping initiative and concluded that both Dulbahante and Habar Je'lo, along with Mohamed Abokor and Sa'ad Yonis, were raising money to strengthen their respective claims to ownership of Galgal and the disputed grazing land which was to be turned into a maize and sorghum farm in Oog. Explained Salim, a PIP staff member:

> It's clear that both Dulbahante and Habar Je'lo in Galgal and Mohamed Abokor and Sa'ad Yonis in Oog are arming their own militias and collecting money from clan members in the diaspora. It is a pity that members of our Somali diaspora community are collecting money from fellow clan members in the diaspora for the continuation of conflict in Galgal. This is unfortunate because those who are contributing to this conflict have themselves fled overseas because of the conflict, where they continue waging war from their comfort zone.[14]

As a result of the conflict mapping, the PIP decided to mediate in the Galgal and Oog conflicts. The PIP team began to bring together a mediating team composed of religious and clan elders and local administration officials from the two opposing clans. In Galgal, the Dulbahante clan submitted a proposal urging the Habar Je'lo clan to cede ownership of Galgal to the Dulbahante clan. The Habar Jel'o elders rejected the proposal. However, with the help of the PIP, clan elders and religious leaders, the parties have agreed to demilitarize Galgal and Oog and to stop any construction until a final agreement is reached.

While the Somali diaspora does have the capacity to make a significant contribution to rebuilding the war-torn country, the two case studies clearly demonstrate that the potential impact of individuals and groups is contingent and depends upon their awareness of traditional social protocols and local politics. Additionally, the PIP case shows that organized interventions have to partner with traditional leaders to be effective. For Somalis, a proper grasp of their society's group dynamics will remain the key prerequisite for participation in grassroots affairs for the foreseeable future.

This also highlights the role of the Somali diaspora members as agents of change in their communities. In the case of PIP, their influence and the potential impact of their peacebuilding role seems to derive from their societal knowledge, which also conditions how returnees are perceived within their communities. For the most part, the domestic opinion of the Somali diaspora is positive; this imbues the Somali diaspora with the legitimacy critical to engaging in peacebuilding. Unlike non-Somali experts whose presence is

considered temporary, members of the Somali diaspora are members of their communities who have a stake in their daily struggles. Such ready acceptance is also due to the fact that the majority of Somalis outside the country have lost loved ones, or know of someone who has been killed, raped or has witnessed atrocities in the civil war. This gives them the moral authority to speak against the continuation of the conflict: as one member of the Somali diaspora observed, they have the experience, skills and the commitment to 'turn the tide of conflict and mistrust between conflicting communities upside down'.[15]

The past twenty years have witnessed intractable conflict, humanitarian crises and human rights abuses. The cyclical violence and unrelenting tension make Somalia a difficult place in which to work. Members of the diaspora under study have left their comfort zones in Europe to help restore peace in their communities with full knowledge that they risk their lives. If their motivation for working in Somalia varies, their commitment to helping to find a durable solution to the violence and the continuing humanitarian crises has enabled them to transcend the risks to their personal safety.

Challenges to diaspora involvement

The diaspora's ability to engage in their original homeland is subject to several limitations. Interviewees reiterated that security was a major challenge faced by the diaspora. Even in relatively peaceful areas such as Somaliland and Puntland, there are restrictions on expatriates' (such as those concerning the PIP team) movements within main towns such as Hargeysa and Bosaso; the restrictions are even tougher when travelling outside main towns, where security guards are needed. Those diaspora working for international organizations (IOs) in Somaliland and Puntland especially have to follow strict security guidelines. In Somaliland there is a strict requirement that at least one security car with an armed Special Protection Unit (SPU) car has to accompany diaspora expatriates visiting programme areas. In Puntland two SPU cars are required. Since the number plate of IO cars is different (red), there are fears that diaspora members working for IOs can be an easy target. Some international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Somaliland and Puntland also require that the organization's and sometimes also the donor's logos must be placed on their cars. Such high visibility increases the risk of becoming a target, and the PIP team – whose programme area is situated far from the main population centres – has reported two security-related cases.

The other main risk relates to working in certain sectors. Peacebuilding, advocacy and human-rights-related work are at greater risk of being targeted than livelihood programmes:

> When you are implementing human rights, advocacy or peacebuilding programmes, people tend to question your motives. It's even more complex

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when you are mediating inter-clan conflicts […] and the picture becomes even messier if the root causes of the conflict you are trying to mediate are many, such as the Oog conflict, where in addition to inter-clan rivalries there is a political dimension. If you want to be successful in your mediation, you have to behave neutrally to all parties involved.[16]

Although some restrictions exist, it can be argued that the situation has changed and the region is more conducive to diaspora engagement than before. Since the strongmen that served under Siad Barre or in the opposition, and the warlords who dominated much of South Central Somalia, have either passed away or lost influence, educated and experienced diaspora members seem to be gaining ground. Local and international attitudes are slowly changing and diasporas are today represented on all levels of government, in the opposition and in the civil service.

Another embedded challenge derives from the fact that the Somalis continue to be deeply divided along clan lines. The wounds of Somalia's inter-clan conflict are still fresh, and the bitter memories are still standing in the way of the Somali diaspora's wish to unite and speak with one voice. This problem is aggravated by the fact that a sizeable number of Somalis in the diaspora have personally experienced the civil war and thus retain memories of clan atrocities, making it difficult for them to trust other clans. Suspicion, hatred and rivalries between clan members in Somalia continue to affect Somalis in the diaspora in a manner making it difficult for them to plant the seeds of any viable diaspora networks or institutions. As a result, there are few lobbies or pressure groups that can effectively organize, address and work on behalf of peace either in the host or the home country. The Somalis have yet to form effective diaspora pressure groups along the lines of the Irish-American, Jewish, Armenian and other diaspora communities' lobbies that empower activists to mobilize and increase the voice of the respective diasporas. Therefore, if they are to play a more positive role in the conflict in Somalia, the Somali diaspora needs to find ways and means to overcome their divisions, mobilize their potential, and unite their voices (see also Hopkins 2006: 368).

A large section of the Somali population benefits from remittances from the diaspora, estimated to be US$1 billion annually (Pérouse de Montclos 2003). Despite the huge sum of remittances, the financial contribution of the diaspora is not complemented by unified lobbying and publicity efforts, which could potentially be so important for influencing their leaders in the home country and the policy-makers in host countries.

The negative perceptions associated with diaspora are another central issue. Raqia, a diaspora member from the USA, highlighted the difficulties facing diaspora in adjusting and blending with the mainstream:

[…] the irony is that the Somalis here started to criticize my weak Somali

connection. I said to myself: why are they criticizing me while people here are killing each other? They all have this romanticized notion of Somalia, even my dad wanted to come back for a long time [...] When I went back to the States, I was very frustrated and angry about the situation and things that I witnessed and I wanted to do something. I started reading about the war. When I was growing up, we use to talk about clans, politics and the war in Somalia at home but I never understood it. Coming here three years ago was a culture shock [...] I do not have any other way to describe it. But the culture shock is now behind me, and I have come to see what I can do to help. I have some relatives and extended family members here and I have been supporting them, sending them money since I met them three years ago. But while sending a few hundred dollars every month really helps individual families, I wanted to do more. I am a nurse and with my skills I can reach and help more people. That is why I am here.[17]

Raqia's story is similar to the stories of other young Somalis who have come back to their homeland to learn more about their culture and identities while also contributing something. Some returned after a long stay in the diaspora; for others it was their first time there. For those who chose to return, fitting in has not been easy. In an online interview Salma Ali, a twenty-two-year-old woman from Cardiff, recalled her experience when she returned to Somaliland after sixteen years in the UK: 'People immediately see you're different. They think we walk too fast [...] no matter how much we try to dress traditionally; they can tell we're from abroad. You can't blend in, so you get teased but not in a nasty way [...] we get called the "in-betweens".'[18]

Another interviewee added: 'Being a Somali of the diaspora is a bit like being displaced, you do not really feel as though you truly belong anywhere. You are not quite accepted fully by the host country: even if you're born there you would still be viewed as a foreigner. Similarly, you are also not fully accepted by Somalis back home.'[19]

Combined, all these factors limit the power of the Somali diaspora to actively engage in peacebuilding efforts. Despite these limitations, the diaspora's ability to influence political leaders in their homeland remains strong. Terrence Lyons (2004: 10–12) has argued that diasporas possess enormous resources and ability to greatly influence political leaders in their home countries:

Exiles often have greater access to the media and the time, resources, and freedom to articulate and circulate a political agenda than actors in the conflicted homeland. The cost of refusing to accept a compromise is often low (if the diaspora members are well-established in the host countries) and the rewards from demonstrating steadfast commitment to the cause are high (both in personal/psychological terms but also as a mechanism of social mobilization) [...] If a diaspora group shifts its support from the most militant leaders and

organisations engaged in the homeland conflict towards a position that supports the leaders and movements seeking peace, then an important factor that makes conflicts more difficult to resolve can be reduced [...] Diasporas have the potential to be a source of ideas and support for peace making as well as forces making conflicts more protracted.

A case in point is the Somali diaspora and its relation with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The diaspora overwhelmingly supported the ICU – prior to the disagreement between Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's government and sections of the Somali diaspora on the implementation of the 2008 Djibouti agreement. This disagreement deepened when the government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government of Kenya regarding the demarcation of sea borders between the two countries. The Somali diaspora argued that the Somali government had betrayed its mandate by giving away land to Kenya. Already suspicious of the Djibouti agreement, some of the Somali diaspora have since characterized the deal with Kenya as an illegitimate land transfer. One should also be mindful, however, of treating diasporas as a uniform group. This means that diasporas bring diverse political views and strategies of engagement to the politics of their homelands.

Conclusions

Members of the Somali diaspora can make and have made significant contributions to developments in their home country. As the Galgal and Oog cases illustrate, diaspora can play a negative role. Their involvement can trigger new conflicts or reignite old tensions. But they can also play a positive role, as portrayed by the constructive engagement of the PIP staff. The PIP involvement shows not only that there is a willingness on the part of the diaspora to engage in peacebuilding activities, but that they also have the expertise (in both local and international knowledge) to manage and resolve conflicts. The systematic involvement of PIP, not as an individual effort but as an organized group of professionals from the diaspora, could indicate a working model for future diaspora engagement in peacebuilding. Nevertheless, diaspora's peacebuilding activities are restricted by a number of issues. Lack of security was considered to be the main challenge faced by the diaspora. Somalia's civil war has divided the country into clan enclaves and owing to the continuing clan rivalries and hostilities it is difficult to establish or solidify diaspora engagement in areas outside the main cities, such as Hargeysa, Bosaso and Burao. The situation has been even more difficult in the South Central region, which has been inaccessible. Additionally, the lack of credible incentives to attract diaspora participation, coupled with political restrictions such as the requirement that the spouse of a potential presidential candidate must be a Muslim and the candidate must have resided

in the country for at least two years, have clearly been intended to limit diaspora engagement in politics.

Safran's (1991) typology of diaspora characteristics, as later expanded by Cohen (1997), reflects the experience of most first-generation Somali diaspora as people who are dispersed around the world in search of safety from the chaos and insecurity that exist in their original homeland, whose collective memory of their original homeland is strong, who desire to one day return, and are committed to the homeland's development, security and the safety of those they left behind. However, for many second-generation Somali diaspora, the connection to their parents' homeland exists but is remote, somehow imaginary, and home is both in the host country as well as the homeland; the second generation do not necessarily see themselves as dispersed or homesick. Such a generational gap can be viewed as differing priorities and visions between first- and second-generation Somali diaspora who seek to influence homeland politics in different ways. Some of the tentative conclusions offered here show that the first-generation diaspora feel a sense of loss and isolation, feel threatened by the cultural values of the host countries, and remain dedicated to an eventual return to the home country. For the second-generation diaspora, things are not as simple or straightforward. They describe themselves as having diverse roots and hybrid identities. Almost all those interviewed reported a combined sense of loyalties to their parents' homeland and to their homes in Britain, Canada, the USA and Finland, making their sense of loyalty more complex and their stance on the issues straddling their multinational birthright more complicated and nuanced. Therefore, the social bases of identity construction will continue to be a factor both at home and abroad. At one time, observers had good reason to expect that Somalis in the diaspora would be the critical actors and the best basis for transcending the nation's clan fragmentation. As the analysis presented here indicates, however, this hypothesis cannot be taken for granted. For the Somalis in the diaspora who have successfully adjusted to conditions in their new homes or have grown up accepting the benefits of their dual identity, this remains a realistic objective. But the same cannot be said for others, whose experiences make them sympathetic to the radical Islamist interpretation of Somali nationalism.

Notes

1 The data for this chapter were collected with interviews conducted in Somaliland and Puntland in 2009 and 2010. During the fieldwork, I held four focus group discussions of four to seven people each with the diaspora returnees who were working in different sectors.

I then complemented the focus group discussions with forty (fourteen women and twenty-six men) follow-up interviews with key informants. All names have been changed in order to protect the security and privacy of the interviewees. All interview participants were current or

former members of the Somali diaspora. About 70 per cent of the informants held European, North American or Australian passports. The background of the participants varied in terms of gender, age, education and profession.

2 In this chapter the term Somali diaspora refers to the estimated 1–2 million Somalis who were either born in Somalia or born to Somali families following the civil war and the subsequent fall of the Somali government in the 1990s and who have left the country. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis found themselves in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries (the near-diaspora), while others have found residence as far away as the Middle East, Europe, North America, Australia and beyond; to academics, the latter are known as the distance diaspora.

3 At the time of the data collection for this chapter, twenty staff members, including six expatriates, were working for the PIP programme. The PIP is funded by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and aims to help resolve and prevent inter-clan conflicts in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia with some ad hoc activities in Mogadishu.

4 Mohamed, a Somali father of six from Sweden, interviewed November 2009.

5 Bashir, a diaspora member from Norway, interviewed June 2009.

6 Abdi, a diaspora member from Finland, interviewed November 2009.

7 Mohamud, a diaspora member from Australia, interviewed November 2009.

8 Essa, a diaspora member from Sweden, interviewed December 2009.

9 Samatar, a diaspora member from America, interviewed July 2009.

10 Nasra, a diaspora member from the UK, interviewed February 2010.

11 Mohamed, a former diaspora member from the UAE, interviewed September 2009.

12 Hersi, a diaspora member from the UAE, interviewed September 2009.

13 Jama, a former diaspora member from Finland, interviewed July 2009. ARS

is the abbreviation for the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia, an Islamist organization.

14 Salim, interviewed October 2009.

15 Abdul, interviewed November 2009.

16 Osman, a PIP staff member from Finland, interviewed January 2010.

17 Raqia, a diaspora member from the USA, interviewed February and March 2010.

18 Salma's interview was not among the interviews I conducted. It is a separate interview conducted by Abbie Wightwick for WalesOnline in 2009.

19 Ismail, a Canadian diaspora member, interviewed June 2009.

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5 | The 2007 delegation of the Muslim diaspora to Ethiopia

Dereje Feyissa

Introduction

There are three major religious groups in Ethiopia: the followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), Muslims and Protestants (evangelical Christians). According to the 2007 census the EOC constitute 42 per cent, Muslims 34 per cent and Protestants 18 per cent of the country's population. In addition, all three religious communities have a strong presence in the diaspora. In fact, Ethiopia has one of the largest diaspora populations in the world. Although the government is unable to provide exact figures, some scholars estimate that about two million Ethiopians live abroad (GTZ 2009).

This chapter focuses on the transnational politics of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora in Europe and North America. Muslims, despite being one of the oldest religious communities and the second-largest religious group in Ethiopia, have historically had a low level of political participation and have experienced a high degree of social discrimination by the country's dominant Christian elite. Although political reforms since the 1974 revolution have redressed the issue of religious inequality to some extent, much remains to be done before the Ethiopian national identity is reconstituted on a more inclusive basis. This chapter addresses the relationship between the Muslim Ethiopian diaspora in North America and Europe, and their ability to affect constructive change for Muslims back in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Muslim diaspora has been actively involved in homeland affairs. According to a survey by the World Bank, Ethiopia receives US$3.2 billion in remittances annually. This diaspora makes up the opposition parties' vocal constituency and their main source of finance. In recent years, the Ethiopian government has also sought to create its own diaspora constituency. It has initiated a series of laws and directives to politically mobilize the diaspora in its favour, and to tap into its financial resources for development purposes. Towards that end, in 2002 the government established the General Directorate in Charge of Ethiopian Expatriate Affairs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later renamed the Diaspora Engagement Affairs General Directorate. According to the Directorate, 'the mission is working closely with [the] Ethiopian diaspora and facilitating their activities in Ethiopia. Its aim is to

ensure that diaspora issues are considered in the nation-building process' (MOFA 2011: 6). As part of the incentive package to further entice the diaspora to 'constructively' engage in homeland affairs, the Ethiopian government has also issued a 'yellow card' (Ethiopian origin ID card) for foreign nationals of Ethiopian origin, which entitles them to various rights and privileges by lifting legal restrictions imposed upon them when they lost their Ethiopian nationality (ibid.: 20).

The religious mobilization of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora in Europe and North America is related to the rise of tensions between religious groups and the Ethiopian government, particularly with regard to the contested nature of Ethiopia's secularism. Various scholars have noted the steadily increasing role of religion and interfaith conflicts in defining the terms of political debate in Ethiopia, which has hitherto been dominated by ethnicity. Medhane (2003: 1), for instance, writes that 'Religious institutions and inter-religious relations will, in the coming decades, gradually and perhaps inescapably become a thorny issue of national political life and a fundamental source of conflict. [As a result], the fault lines between religions will be the battle lines of the future in Ethiopia.'

This interfaith tension, which had been simmering in the wake of the regime change in 1991, escalated into open confrontation in 2006, and has since then continued in various isolated incidents. Likewise, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front's (EPRDF, the ruling political coalition in Ethiopia) secularism was brought to the fore in the summer of 2011 when the government openly cooperated with the Lebanese-based transnational Islamic organization known as Ahbash in order to promote what it considers *nebaru islimina* (native Islam), hailed for its 'moderation' and greater religious tolerance.

The various Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organizations were brought together under two umbrella organizations, Badr-Ethiopia and the Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe (NEME), respectively, for North America and Europe. These diaspora organizations have articulated what they call the disadvantaged position of Muslims in Ethiopia, and they use what I term a 'rights-based' language to address these inequalities. Badr, established in 2000, in fact prioritizes improving the social and economic status of Ethiopian Muslims in Ethiopia, so that they can fully participate in the affairs of their country. Though based in the USA, Badr has also served as an umbrella organization for Ethiopian Muslims outside North America. In fact, Ethiopian Muslims in Europe have actively participated in Badr's activities, including its annual conventions. Established in 2004, NEME was conceived in response to the growth of Ethiopian Muslim communities in Europe and their organizational needs. NEME is registered in Stockholm, Sweden, as a non-governmental, non-profit organization with a mission 'to create an effective and sustainable

network that enables Ethiopian Muslims to come together and coordinates their activities with the view to contributing their share to the betterment of their society and their country'. According to NEME's mission statement, 'it works with other organized communities, institutions and individuals for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Ethiopia as long as they respect the rights, culture, belief and general identity of Ethiopian Muslims as Muslims and Ethiopians'. Badr and NEME have sought to reach out to the Ethiopian Muslim population and the country's political leadership through various mechanisms.

The homeland scene: religious groups and the Ethiopian state

Orthodox Christianity in Ethiopia dates back to the fourth century, when King Ezana of the Axumite kingdom was converted to Christianity in AD 334. Orthodox Christianity remained the official state religion in Ethiopia until the 1974 revolution. The Orthodox Church does not constitute a purely religious phenomenon in the country, but plays an integral role in all aspects of national life; it is, for instance, visible in many of the country's national symbols and the core bases of political legitimacy. Although the EOC largely lost its political leverage over the Ethiopian state along with its economic privileges after the 1974 revolution, it is nevertheless still the largest religious group and constitutes the majority of the political elite. This dominant status is, however, currently contested by both Muslims and evangelical Christians. The EOC is apprehensive of the rapid growth of Islam and evangelical Christianity, which has generated a siege mentality.

Despite the strong identification of Ethiopia with Orthodox Christianity, Islam in Ethiopia is also as old as Islam itself. The history of Islam in Ethiopia dates back to AD 615, when the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (the *Sahaba*) came to Axum fleeing religious persecution by the ruling elite in Mecca (Trimingham 1965 [1952]; Erlich 1994). Muslim sultanates were established in Ethiopia as early as the ninth century. During the medieval period, in the south-eastern part of Ethiopia, there were various Islamic principalities, which were gradually brought under the Christian kingdom. This historical longevity and large numerical size, however, starkly contrast with the socio-political marginalization of Muslims within the Ethiopian polity, where they were regarded as second-class citizens at best and 'foreigners' at worst. Muslims in northern Ethiopia were not allowed, for instance, to own land and they were therefore forced to take up commerce and craftsmanship to make a living. Some Ethiopian Christian emperors also sought to build a nation through political centralization and religious homogenization. These emperors, in fact, 'attempted to formally proscribe the practice of Islamic religion, endeavoring to enforce mass conversion to Christianity to enhance national unity' (Abbink 1998: 115).

The socio-political reforms brought by the 1974 revolution and the end of the Christian monarchy partly redressed the marginalization of Muslims within Ethiopian society. Church and state parted company and Ethiopia has officially been a secular state ever since. The religious reform of the military regime that replaced the Christian monarchy (the Derg), however, did not redefine the parameters of national identity. Ethiopian historiography was left untouched with its 'unbroken' three-thousand-year-history paradigm – a historiography which is populated by Christian heroes and marginalizes the Islamic heritage of the country. The regime change in 1991 brought yet another opportunity to amend the issue of religious inequality. EPRDF came to power as a champion of minority rights, though its attitude towards Muslims has changed over time. The 1995 Constitution generously provides for religious rights through the separation of state and religion, providing freedom of religion and freedom of association – these have also encouraged the emergence of a confident and assertive Ethiopian Muslim community. Taking advantage of the freedom of movement, Ethiopian Muslims are now better connected with the wider Islamic world through *haj* and *umrah*, which were previously very restricted, as well as other forms of travel to Muslim countries (Carmichael 1996). Freedom of association has meant that Islam in Ethiopia, for the first time, has a legal organizational expression, represented by the Ethiopian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, widely known as the Mejlis. Religious equality has been expressed in the construction of many mosques, though in some areas this has provoked strong Christian resistance and conflicts (Østebo 2008). Liberalization of the press has also meant the emergence of vibrant Islamic publishing houses.

Since the regime change of 1991, there has indeed been an Islamic revival in Ethiopia, accompanied by a modest liberal opening. Nevertheless, there are still enduring constraints which Ethiopian Muslims face as a community in the 'post-imperial' and 'post-socialist' Ethiopia. One of these enduring constraints is the securitization of Islam by the members of the dominant Christian population and the EPRDF in the context of the rise of political Islam on a global scale and in the Horn of Africa in particular. The EOC has viewed Islamic revivalism and Muslim recognition politics with consternation (Aba 2008). It particularly feels threatened by the new historical and physical space Muslims have gained in post-1991 Ethiopia. One form of Christian resistance is discursive, e.g., labelling all aspects of Islamic revival in Ethiopia as a manifestation of so-called global Islamic fundamentalism. Similarly, Ethiopian governments across all political regimes have linked Islamic revivalism in Ethiopia with external forces. The securitization of Islam in Ethiopia was at its height during the imperial period when foreign policy was heavily affected by religious considerations. As Markakis (2003: 2) notes, 'in a speech before the United States Congress, Emperor Haile Selassie described his country as

an island of Christianity in a sea of Islam. This myth was widely accepted abroad, and was propagated by the first generation of foreign scholars who studied this country.' The ideology of Ethiopia as an island of Christianity had produced a siege mentality; Ethiopia was a country surrounded by belligerent Muslim Arab countries bent on destabilizing the Ethiopian polity, for which Ethiopian Muslims might serve as 'fifth columnists'. This siege mentality had continued during the Derg period, though its secularist thrust had reduced the degree of the securitization of Islam (Braukämper 2002).

EPRDF's securitization of Islam started in the mid-1990s. The increase in Islamic jihad in Eritrea; military confrontations between Al-Ithad, a Somali-based Islamic group which operated actively in the Ogaden region in Ethiopia, and the Ethiopian government; and the hostility between EPRDF and the National Islamic Front of Sudan in the mid-1990s (Erlich 2010) seem to have brought about a change in EPRDF's attitude towards Muslims. The main geo-political factor that has shaped EPRDF's policy towards Islam is, however, the 'global war on terrorism' (Shinn 2002). Enthusiastically joining Bush's 'coalition of the willing', the Ethiopian government has sought to reposition itself and regain its strategic geopolitical importance within the US-led post-Cold War global order. Adapting and reacting to this global discourse, the EPRDF has managed to extract tremendous economic resources (in the form of development aid) and much-needed political recognition from the West, despite its poor record in human rights and political repression, as reported by international human right organizations (see, for example, HRW 2010). Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in December 2006, against Somali Islamists (the Union of Islamic Courts), is related to this larger context. And indeed, this geopolitical consideration seems to have greatly shaped EPRDF's understand-ing of the complex Islamic reform movements, which have consequently been seen primarily through a security lens. As Østebo (2008: 435) convincingly shows in his in-depth analysis of the dynamics of religious identification in contemporary Ethiopia, although Islam does not have a political agenda in Ethiopia, the perception that it does informs government policy-making: 'An increased number of mosques and higher representation of Muslims in public life can hardly qualify as evidence for a politicization of Islam in Ethiopia. It has not been uncommon, however, to equate Muslims' demand for better representation with a politicization of Islam.'

Another enduring constraint on Muslim religious rights in Ethiopia is the lack of a legitimate and functional organization. Islam found no institutional expression in Ethiopia during the imperial period, and its first organiza-tional expression dates back to the mid-1970s. Linking up with the revolutionary fervour of the period, hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian Muslims took to the streets in Addis Ababa on 20 April 1974, claiming religious freedom and equality. The demonstrators also demanded the right to establish a nationwide

organization to represent Muslims and enable them to run their own affairs and participate in the affairs of the country in a meaningful manner. The Mejlis was formally established in 1976, but throughout the period of military rule, it functioned only as a de facto, not a de jure, organization. Moreover, there are indications that the Derg tended to view Islam and Ethiopian Muslims as a 'national security threat', especially in times of conflict with neighbouring countries, which are predominantly Muslim (Braukämper 2002: 4). The 1995 Constitution, on the other hand, has generously provided for religious freedom. Taking advantage of the constitutionally enshrined religious and associational rights, Muslims reorganized the Mejlis, attained legal recognition, and elected new leadership. In addition, other types of Islamic associations proliferated, such as the Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association, the Islamic Da'wa & Knowledge Association and the Ulama Association. The mid-1990s, however, brought government repression of Islamic organizations and a stricter control of the Mejlis. Following the 1995 'Mubarak incident', the attempt by the Jama'a Islamiyya in Egypt to kill President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, many Islamic associations and NGOs operating in Ethiopia were closed down. Within the Mejlis itself, a power struggle led to a violent conflict between police and worshippers inside the Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa on 21 February 1995, when nine people were killed and 129 wounded (Abbink 1998: 18). EPRDF has tightly controlled the Mejlis leadership ever since on the pretext of avoiding similar incidents. Over a period of a decade the Mejlis was represented by a leadership which suffered from a strong legitimacy deficit. Under popular pressure, the Mejlis elected new leaders in February 2009. Many Muslims remain sceptical towards the new leadership, who they think were 'selected' by the EPRDF. So much so that many Muslims in Ethiopia and in the diaspora sarcastically refer to the Mejlis as an 'NGO' or a 'travel agency', in reference to its subjection to periodical licence renewals by the government or its being a mere facilitator of *haj* and *umrah*.

Securitization of Islam by the government and the absence of a popular and functional national organization have limited public expression of the Islamic faith in Ethiopia. Although Islam's visibility in Ethiopia's public sphere has significantly increased in the post-1991 period, Muslims are still demanding a greater physical space for the construction of mosques to correspond with their demographic size. The construction of almost all the major mosques in Addis Ababa (and those elsewhere in the country) was invariably preceded by opposition from the Christian residents and churches of the areas in which the mosques were intended to be built, and by a protracted legal battle with the government departments responsible for granting the plots of land, issuing the necessary title deeds and the permits for construction. In fact, many of the recent religious conflicts in various parts of the country have in one way or another been related to the competition for or conflicting claims over

physical space by the various religious groups. Claims for a larger physical space are based on the desire for an increase in the number of mosques in the nation's capital and the Christian majority areas, and the right to build the first mosque in Axum, a region which the EOC has claimed as its sacred space.[1] EOC's justification that 'Muslims could build a mosque in Axum only when Christians are allowed to build churches in Mecca' is contested by Muslims, on the grounds that the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ethiopia is not comparable to Saudi Arabia. Religious pluralism in Axum is also defended with reference to the fact that Axum is also a sacred place for Islam in general and Ethiopian Muslims in particular as 'the city of Najashi', the Axumite king who had hosted the *Sahaba* during their persecution. Muslims consider this event the first Hegira.

The latest move by the government to limit the public manifestation of Islamic faith is the controversial 2008 directive by the Ministry of Education, which bans the manifestation of religious symbols in institutions of higher learning. This includes a ban on full veiling (*niqab*) and communal prayer (*salat*) in universities and colleges. The Ethiopian Constitution has committed itself to religious freedom and equality in various provisions. It takes the liberal stand that every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In practice, however, the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution have not been met. The directive has provoked widespread opposition from students, who waged demonstrations and wrote petitions to the highest political leadership. While contesting the directive, Ethiopian Muslim students have clashed with authorities in the universities in Addis Ababa as well as in new regional universities and colleges.[2] The government responded to the students' demands by saying that the new policy applies to all, not only to Muslim students. From the perspective of the Muslim students, however, the ban has forced them to choose between their religious identity and education. Faced with this unwarranted choice, they opt for the former, but this de facto exclusion from education is critiqued as yet another mechanism for excluding Muslims from the means of individual and collective advancement. Muslim students have also contested EPRDF's version of secularism, which resonates with the French variety of assertive nationalism. In the controversy surrounding the right to veil, they argue that 'government can only secularize the curriculum, not the students, who are entitled to their own world view'.

This is not to suggest homogeneity among Muslim communities in Ethiopia. Muslim communities are in Ethiopia, as elsewhere, diverse. Besides, the post-1991 liberal opening is Janus-faced. If it has created an enabling condition for the emergence of a vibrant and confident Muslim community in a country where Islam existed in the shadow of Christianity, it has also led to a diversification and fragmentation of the Muslim community. Various competing Muslim groups exist in contemporary Ethiopia, ranging from Sufi brotherhoods

to a wide variety of Islamic reform movements. A more pronounced rift exists between the Salafis and the Sufis. Sufis' saint veneration is severely criticized by their detractors as *bida* (unwelcome innovation) that threatens *tawhid*, Islam's radical monotheistic stance. Both the Sufis and the Salafis have produced narratives of authority concerning authentic knowledge and stewardship of Islam. The traditional Sufi scholars derided the literalist *ulama* as 'imitators of the Saudi Wahhabis, Muslims with superficial knowledge accredited by the so-called modern institutions of Islamic learning'. The literalists, on the other hand, employed rhetorical coercion methods, particularly regarding the validity of their position in terms of their greater competence in scriptural knowledge as compared to the local Sufi traditions. Priding themselves on the educational certificates they brought from the Arab world, these returnee ulama looked down on the traditional *ulama*, who receive education at the *zawiyya* (local Islamic centres of education). From the perspective of the new literalist *ulama*, it appeared that 'true' Islam had arrived in Ethiopia in 1991. The traditional *ulama* countered the literalists' claim on historical grounds, indicating that they have maintained Islam and nourished it for the last 1,400 years against political persecution by the dominant Christian establishment.

There seems to be competition over financial resources coming from global Islamic networks and the Middle Eastern countries which support the Salafi movement in Ethiopia. This theological debate, fuelled by ethnic cleavages, had created a potential for large-scale sectarian violence among Ethiopian Muslims, as is the case for Muslims elsewhere in the world. Government interest in and manipulation of the internal theological debate has also further politicized the sectarian divide. By and large, EPRDF tends to favour what it calls *nebaru islimina* (home-grown Islam) or *hager beqel islimina* (indigenous Islam), that is the 'apolitical' Sufi over the 'militant' Wahhabi/Salafi with a 'political agenda'.[3] Under government protection and financial support, Sufi shrines have seen a revival in recent years. The annual pilgrimage to the Sheikh Abrehet shrine in the Gurage Zone is a case in point. In August 2010 more than half a million people from various regions of the country participated in this pilgrimage, an event which was broadcast by the government-controlled Ethiopian television. Since 2008 EPRDF has also sought to co-opt the Lebanese-based Al-Ahbash as a 'moderate' and Sufi-oriented transnational Islamic movement, also known as the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects. In fact, in March 2008 Prime Minister Meles Zenawi 'agreed to officially invite Sheikh 'Abdallah al-Harari, the leader of Ahbash, to return to Ethiopia' (Erlich 2010: 178), a plan which was not realized owing to Sheikh 'Abdalla's death later that year. Instead, in July 2011 the EPRDF government invited fifteen Lebanese Ahbash *ulama* to provide training on the 'authentic' Islamic teachings of Sheikh 'Abdalla to nearly a thousand officials and *ulama* from the federal, regional and local Mejlis offices. This has triggered a heated debate among Ethiopian Muslims on the

nature of Ethiopia's secularism, as the move was seen as threatening Article 27 of the Constitution, which guarantees the separation of state and religious institutions.

The USA, reflecting its wider global strategy of combating 'Islamists', is also involved in this theological debate. As the WikiLeaks releases have shown, the USA has been involved in the Sufi–Salafi debate in Ethiopia, siding with the Sufis.[4] The US embassy in Addis Ababa has shown interest in financing Islamic shrines in Ethiopia, ostensibly to offset Saudi Arabian financial support to Islamic reform movements. In December 2008, for instance, top embassy personnel travelled to the Bale Zone of Oromia to launch a cultural preservation project at the Sheikh Nur Hussein shrine, a religious pilgrimage site established in the thirteenth century.[5] EPRDF's notion of *hager beqel islimina* and the USA's partisanship with Sufi Islam resonates with the notion of Islam *noir* (Black Islam) in West Africa.

The delegation and its activities

A novel mode of engagement that typifies the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora is sending delegations to Ethiopia. Badr and NEME advocate for legislative and public policies for the protection of the civil and humanitarian rights of Ethiopian Muslims by advancing the freedom of worship and the right of people to assemble, and by petitioning the government for the redress of grievances. They also pursue open dialogue with the government and faith-based organizations with regard to the protection of legal and constitutional rights, as well as pursuing intercultural and interfaith dialogue, which can greatly contribute to mutual understanding, cooperation and peaceful coexistence among the diverse peoples of Ethiopia.[6] Badr and NEME have also sought to reach out to the Ethiopian Muslim population and the country's political leadership through various mechanisms. They have established a strong cyber presence; issued statements on current socio-political events in Ethiopia; held demonstrations criticizing government encroachments on religious rights; organized joint homeland–diaspora meetings; conducted Paltalks and teleconferences, run online radio stations, and sent delegations to Ethiopia. Through these media outlets, the diaspora organizations have articulated the challenges Muslims face in contemporary Ethiopia. Apart from rights-based advocacy, they are also engaged in humanitarian activities such as support for the education of orphans and children from poor families and projects dedicated to the prevention of HIV and support for its victims at home. They have also engaged in economic capacity-building of peripheral peoples to enable them to meaningfully participate in local and regional economies. Badr's financial support to the Afar Salt Project of the Afar Pastoralists Development Association is a case in point. This project aims at contributing to the rehabilitation of destitute pastoralist households in the Afar region, a region which has recently

come under the strong grip of government, multinational corporations and other powerful economic players (Feyissa 2011). The heavy-handedness towards alternative Islamic organizations on the part of the Mejlis and the government has left the diaspora as one of the few autonomous Islamic voices to speak for Muslim rights in Ethiopia.

The April 2007 Muslim diaspora delegation to Ethiopia consisted of nine members of whom four came from the USA, three from Europe, one from Canada, and one from Saudi Arabia.[7] The composition reflects the efforts of the organizers to represent the Ethiopian Muslims worldwide. All the nine members of the delegation had a high social standing as the delegation consisted of religious and community leaders, scholars and known Muslim activists. They were ethnically representative and theologically plural. Before the delegation headed to Ethiopia, it conducted a baseline survey in order to establish the prominent Muslim issues in contemporary Ethiopia. On the basis of these findings, as well as the extensive feedback it received from Muslims in Ethiopia, the delegation produced a document entitled *Questions Raised by the Ethiopian Muslims' Diaspora to the Prime Minster Meles Zenawi*, which outlined and articulated the prominent Ethiopian Muslim issues. The document contained a wide range of issues, with the main talking points including:

- Securing the autonomy of the Mejlis – this entails restructuring that creates a democratic environment for the election of able and representative leaders. The need for restructuring of the Mejlis is justified on the basis of the high level of legitimacy deficits of its leadership;
- Implementing citizenship rights and religious equality – this is a reference to infringements of the freedom of association; the need to reform the sharia courts; the right to acquire land for the construction of mosques; and the right of worship in public spaces, particularly in educational institutions;
- Creating a greater historical space for Islam in Ethiopia – highlighting the Islamic heritage of the country, particularly Ethiopia's special role in the history of Islam (the shelter the country gave to the persecuted followers of the Prophet);
- Allowing the unencumbered operation of Islamic NGOs in the country – with reference to the institutional imbalance reflected in the existence of numerous Christian NGOs as opposed to the fewer and controlled Islamic NGOs;
- Allowing the establishment of Islamic banks;
- Maintaining the secularism enshrined in the Constitution – with reference to the partisanship of the leadership of the Tigray Regional State (the Orthodox Church's exclusivist claim over the town of Axum) and the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State and its leadership's favouritism towards the Protestant Church;
- Ensuring the impartiality of the 2007 census – with reference to the previous

censuses, which are believed to have grossly and intentionally downsized the Muslim population;
- Introducing more balanced and responsible mass media – with reference to the misrepresentation of Muslims as if they were a national security threat;
- Establishing a Ministry of Religious Affairs – with reference to the need for a forum for interfaith dialogue to avoid, mitigate and resolve religious conflicts.

During its one-month stay in Ethiopia, the delegation, led by Mr Nejib Mohammed, held discussions with high-ranking government officials, including the prime minister, Meles Zenawi, and a cross-section of the Muslim community and the Christian leadership. As the head of the delegation noted, 'the discussion points are of particular interest to Muslims; they are nevertheless of great concern to all Ethiopians as they form the fundamentals to the country's peace, stability and prosperity'. Besides, the reference to this document by the various Ethiopian Muslim organizations and the Ethiopian government, and in the counter-discourse of the Christian establishment, makes it appear as if it were the 'manifesto' of the emerging Ethiopian Muslims' rights movement, as the subsequent political mobilization of Muslims in Ethiopia has testified.

Impacts In the following section, some of the delegation's major achievements in the area of peacebuilding are outlined and discussed, as well as the unfulfilled promises on the side of the government, which are closely related to the escalation of religious conflict in Ethiopia.

SETTING AN AGENDA Ethiopia's political culture is marred by confrontational stances, whether by incumbent governments, opposition parties or communal contenders. For the government opposition dissent in general is equated with enmity; whereas for the opposition the EPRDF government is equated with an 'army of occupation', as if it were a foreign force. In defining the political situation in these terms, both construe political competition as 'existential'. Situated within this conflict-prone political culture in the long term, the significance of setting the agenda is crucial in resolving conflicts through dialogue. That the delegation had the opportunity to speak with the highest political leadership of the country was made possible partly thanks to the personal networks Muslims at home and in the diaspora cultivated.[8] Such networks were crucial in creating a favourable environment for the delegation to commence dialogue with the political leadership. The historical significance of the encounter between the delegation and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi is notable.

Articulating the aspirations and interests of the Ethiopian Muslims is also significant as the rights-based movement in Ethiopia is not coherent and in some places has had rather violent expressions.[9] The diaspora's rights-based

advocacy sharply highlighted some fringe elements present within the Muslim community, which espouse violence against the Christian population and the Ethiopian government to enhance Islam's standing in the country with the ultimate objective of establishing an Islamic state. This approach, which defies Ethiopia's multicultural and multi-religious traditions, is certainly upheld by the Takfir al Hijra. In 2003 Hassan Taju (2005), one of the prominent Ethiopian Muslim scholars, wrote a book on the Takfir, exposing their extremist ideology and denouncing their divisive strategy. Nevertheless, Takfir still operates in some pockets, particularly in the Benishangul region, Jimma and eastern Oromia. As Østebø (2010) noted, 'they played a central role in the Christian–Muslim conflicts in 2006 in the Jimma area, and have, in accordance with their name [...] assumed a radical position toward the Ethiopian state, seen among others by their refusal to hold id-cards and to pay tax. While this had been their attitude for some years, the issue was put to the forefront in 2009 when Takfiri followers around Jimma publicly announced this.' Given Ethiopia's proximity to the politically and religiously volatile Middle East, and the rise of Islamists to power in the failed state of Somalia and in the Sudan, a moderate and articulate religious voice is what Ethiopia currently needs the most. Some scholars have conflated these fringe elements with the wider Islamic reform movement in Ethiopia. Haggai Erlich, for instance, has claimed that Salafis (also called Wahabis) are working for the 'political victory of Islam in Ethiopia' (2007: 176). Østebø (2010: 31) refutes this assertion: 'Recognizing the country's religious plurality, [the] Salafis' position is that freedom and equality for the different groups could only be secured under a secular government.' These few but vocal radical groups and their scholarly representation act as if they were the dominant pattern and seem to have played a certain alarmist role in the securitization of Islam by the Ethiopian government, particularly in the new geopolitical context in which Ethiopia is considered by the West as one of the leading partners in the global war on terror (De Waal 2004). Against the backdrop of this complex nexus between radical religious groups, partisan scholarship and geopolitical interests, setting an agenda for Muslim citizenship rights by the diaspora is a welcome antidote.

POPULARIZING DIALOGUE AS A MODE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION Conflict resolution through dialogue was one of the key aims of the delegation, an approach which can be viewed as one means of dealing with conflicts constructively (Ropers 2004: 3). This was demonstrated at different levels of dialogue: with the government; with Christian communities; and within the Muslim communities. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, but unfortunately its mission was distorted by the state-controlled media, which presented their discussions as being related to the millennium celebrations.[10] Despite the misrepresentations, the delegation held a series

of meetings with various government officials explaining the spirit of their mission and bringing to their attention the urgent need to deal with religious conflicts in a constructive way. The main motif of the document which the delegation produced and the recognition politics of the Ethiopian Muslims in general is geared towards renegotiating the historic marginality of Muslims in the hitherto Christian-dominated Ethiopian polity. Drawing on their experiences of democracy in their host countries and referring to globally recognized legitimizing discourses, the diaspora eschewed the language of violence and framed their claims in human rights language. On the other hand, Muslim diaspora organizations are very critical of the way the government handles interfaith conflict for political purposes. Aware of the alternative language of violence espoused by some fringe elements on both the Christian and Muslim sides, NEME has framed the issue in the language of human rights. In its view,

> The Ethiopian government has to be decisive and shoulders the responsibility to protect the rights of all its citizens irrespective of their religion, ethnicity or economic status. The Ethiopian people are also expected to live and operate by the rule of law and in compliance with the constitution of the country. We urge the government of Ethiopia to engage in due diligence in prosecuting those individuals or groups that are bent on inciting violence and fomenting hatred between religious followers. Law and order is respected and justice is implemented in the land through mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among the various religious and ethnic communities that make up the unique Ethiopian mosaic.[11]

The delegation has also sought a dialogue with the leadership of Christian communities, first in the diaspora and then in Ethiopia. As the delegation was sent in the wake of the deadly 2006 Christian–Muslim conflict in various parts of the country, it was fully aware of the need to reach out to the leaderships of other religious groups. In fact, on several occasions the delegation noted the dangers of religious conflicts and the need to establish an early-warning system to diffuse potential conflicts. As the head of the delegation noted,

> The recent religious conflicts are minor hiccups. But all major hiccups spring up from minor hiccups. We have to address this issue at the root level at this time. We should not wait until it becomes [too] humongous for us to tackle it. If it becomes cancerous and if it has metastasized, it might spread to all regions and engulf all the country.[12]

Subsequently, the delegation visited the hot spots of recent religious conflicts, such as Jimma and Tigray. Before heading to Ethiopia, the delegation had organized an interfaith dialogue with church leaders in the diaspora. In this dialogue, the leaders of the delegation highlighted the common grounds between Islam and the *Ahl al-Kitab*/'Peoples of the Book' (Jews and Christians):

Before we got here [Ethiopia] we had an interfaith dialogue in the US. They [the church leaders] had the same feelings that we had. They said that it is a blessing that we came. They had no idea of how to raise the issue [...] we gave a presentation at the dialogue. In Islam People of the Book are those who follow Jesus and Moses. So Jesus and Christians are akin to us. We are cousins. Here is so much in common to talk about.[13]

This differs from the current polemical theological debate in Ethiopia, which highlights the difference between the two religions rather than their commonalities. Unfortunately, the planned dialogue with the Christian leadership did not take place. The Orthodox Church did express an interest in holding a dialogue with the delegation, but failed to contact it.

Badr and NEME sought to lend the dialogue a historical legitimacy, by referring to the Ethiopian ambience of religious tolerance within which the First Hegira is situated. One of the unique and remarkable features of NEME's second conference in Brussels in 2009 was, for instance, the special plenary session that deliberated on the Nejashi Model of Interfaith Understanding.[14] The plenary session was one of the events which promoted interaction beyond Ethiopians and Muslims themselves. Representatives from Sudanese and Somaliland communities in Belgium acknowledged the value the cordial relationship that existed between Prophet Muhammad and King Najashi can have on promoting contemporary peace, understanding and cooperation in the Horn of Africa and far beyond. The delegation's insistence on the need to establish an interfaith dialogue form seems to have borne fruit with the establishment of the Ethiopian Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative (IPI), which was launched in December 2009 under the auspices of the Ministry of Federal Affairs, with a view to enhancing religious tolerance among religions by resolving differences through dialogue. Initiatives such as the IPI could contribute to the evolution of religious pluralism in Ethiopia, provided that they are not used by the government to further its political agenda.

One of the enduring legacies of the delegation is the peace it brokered between the feuding ulema and the way it eased the simmering sectarian tensions among Ethiopian Muslims. At the time the delegation arrived in the country, the ulema were divided between the 'Sufi' and the 'Wahhabi' camps. The significance of the delegation in diffusing the tensions lies in the creation of a neutral forum to sort out theological differences peacefully. The delegation established a peace committee of twenty people – nine each from both camps and a neutral body consisting of two Muslim scholars from Addis Ababa University.[15] The two scholars were tasked with identifying the contentious issues for discussion. They came up with twenty-nine points after an extensive public consultation. Both camps have recognized only nine issues as significant points of difference. These are related to the legitimacy

of particular rituals and religious practices, such as *mawlid* (whether or not to celebrate the Prophet's birthdate), collective *du'a* after a *ja'ama salat* and *awliya* (saint veneration). The eighteen people from both camps were asked to write position papers to explain and justify their respective stances on the contentious issues. The committee set binding rules for the debate, i.e. that all issues would be discussed within the framework of the four Islamic schools of thought. The discussions were held once a week for three months and the membership was expanded to thirty-five people. This debate forum came to be known as the Addis Ababa Ulema Unity Forum (AUUF).

The AUUF managed to strike a compromise between the two camps on some of the contentious issues, and for the rest they have agreed to accommodate or tolerate their differences. On the issue of saint veneration, for instance, the Sufi defended the legitimacy of visiting and reciting the Qur'an on the burial grounds of their loved ones or devout sheikhs, to which the literalists conceded. On their part, the literalists rejected any intercession role assigned to the deceased, which the Sufis accepted. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the AUUF is its moderating effect on the authenticity debate generated by the literalists and their scorn towards the Sufis. The AUUF managed to achieve that by historicizing the cultural embeddedness of the local Sufi traditions. Accordingly, credit was given to the traditional ulema who relentlessly worked to rescue and nourish Islam in Ethiopia under unfavourable political circumstances. Both groups have also agreed to adopt a more gradualist approach in educating the public about legitimate Islamic practices than the radical approach espoused by the literalists. The AUUF also proposed structural reforms in Islamic education in Ethiopia, such as establishing a Da'awa research centre that authenticates the capability of those engaging in missionary activities; a new curriculum for national Islamic study; and a grading scale for graduates from local centres of Islamic learning.

Unfortunately, the Mejlis leadership felt threatened by AUUF's call for reform because many of them lack competence in sound Islamic knowledge. They are either political appointees or businessmen. It is no wonder, then, that one of the first administrative measures taken by the new Mejlis leadership which came to power in April 2009 was to ban the AUUF and dismiss the leadership of the Addis Ababa Mejlis which had hosted the AUUF. Although the AUUF was abolished by the federal Mejlis, the delegation had already set a model of conflict resolution. The Muslim community of the Chagni area in the Amhara regional state, for instance, drew on the experience of the AUUF in resolving a conflict between the Sufis and the Salafis.[16] By and large, therefore, the delegation has eased the rising tension generated by the confrontation between the locally entrenched Sufis and the globally resourced Salafis, an encounter which has often resulted in violent confrontations elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, in contrast to the democratic initiative of the

AUUF, the Mejlis failed to take similar conflict resolution measures within the Muslim community. In fact, many Muslims believe that the Mejlis itself was intimately implicated in the conflict situation. Moderation of the Sufi–Salafi polemic has proved to be a de-escalating factor in the heated controversy that has surrounded the promotion of the (Sufi-oriented) Ahbash by the government since 2011. In fact, keen to avoid potentially deadly sectarian violence, homeland Muslim activists have been expanding on the diaspora peace initiative.

GREATER HISTORICAL SPACE FOR ISLAM IN ETHIOPIA Many of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora organizations have focused in their writings on deconstructing the image of Ethiopia as a Christian island. They have reasoned, rightly, that such representation is not only historically unfounded but also seriously undermines the process of state reconstruction and democratization of the Ethiopian polity. Their discursive practice – deconstructing the official Ethiopian history in order to make national reconstruction on an inclusive basis attainable – is focused on the Najashi narrative, prestigiously referred to as the 'First Hegira'; Axum rivalling Medina's unique status as the land of the First Hegira. The coming of the *Sahaba* and the hospitality they received has been well established. What is contested is whether the Axumite king embraced Islam or not. Various Arabic sources have documented Najashi's conversion to Islam, whereas early scholars of Ethiopian studies have ruled out the possibility of the king's conversion on the basis of lack of evidence as well as degree of plausibility and logical possibility (Trimingham 1965 [1952]). The argument against Najashi's conversion is the absence of a major social upheaval on the scale the country had witnessed during King Susneyos's reckless adoption of Catholicism as the state religion in the seventeenth century. In this regard, Muslim scholars refer to Arabic sources that mention the existence of clerical opposition to Najashi's conversion. The issue of conversion is endorsed by the delegation and the document is imbued with the special place Ethiopia occupies in the history of Islam.

So far the Najashi narrative has been interpreted only from a Middle Eastern perspective. Hagai Erlich, one of the authorities on the history of Islam in Ethiopia, has pointed out 'Islam's dual conceptualization of Ethiopia' through which the Arab world has viewed Ethiopia: *utruku al-habasha* (the 'Leave the habesha' tradition) and the 'Islam al-Najashi' tradition. According to Erlich, the 'Islam al-Najashi tradition frames the concept of Ethiopia as the historical enemy to Islam: how Ethiopia was a land of the ultimate heresy, *Irtad*; namely being a Muslim and then betraying Islam. In the eyes of Islamic radicals, Ethiopia could therefore be redeemed only by the full restoration as part of the land of Islam.' Yet for Ethiopian Muslims at home and in the diaspora the Najashi narrative serves the purpose of repositioning Muslims vis-à-vis national

identity. Accordingly, Ethiopia is not only a special country for the Christians (the island of Christianity narrative), it is also vital for Muslims of the world in general and the Ethiopian Muslims in particular. Construed this way, goes the Najashi narrative, Islam owes Ethiopia a lot for its very survival. The hospitality and the tolerance the *Sahaba* received in Ethiopia is said to be critical to the survival and expansion of Islam. In this narrative, therefore, the idea of Ethiopia is positively charged from the 'least suspected corner', ironically by one of its historic minorities. If that is the case, Ethiopian Muslims would have less trouble in identifying with 'Ethiopia, the land of the First Hegira' than with 'Ethiopia is an island of Christianity'. The double meaning of the Najashi narrative in the reconstruction of religious and national identities is succinctly depicted in the document as follows:

> Although we do not have conclusive evidence to claim that Ethiopia is the first country to grant asylum to the persecuted we understand that Najashi could well have set a precedent for the contemporary human right conventions that include protection of the vulnerable and the persecuted. What makes Ethiopia unique in the annals of Islamic history is that the Muslim refugees had lived peacefully with other Ethiopians and this was the basis for the flourishing of Islam in the country to the level it has reached now. King Asmha's acceptance of Islam makes Ethiopia not only a land of justice and enlightenment but also the first country where Islam received recognition from a head of state. (*Questions Raised ...*: 9)

A Muslim university student commented, 'it is for the first time that we Ethiopian Muslims started reconciling being Muslim and being Ethiopian. For our forefathers reconciling both sounded a contradiction in terms.' In the communiqué it issued on 12 April 2009 on the growing interfaith tension, NEME further contested the EOC's nativist claim while asserting Islam's long presence in Ethiopia in the following manner:

> It is to be noted that the Ethiopian state preceded all the Abrahamic religions. Well before the introduction of Christianity in Ethiopia in the 4th century AD the Axumite had already built a sophisticated non-Christian civilization. Like Christianity, Islam was also introduced to Ethiopia from the Middle East just when it was being established in Saudi Arabia. Any ownership claim of the Ethiopian state and its history is thus not only ahistorical but also poses a danger to the peace and security of the country. Instead of engaging in the fruitless debate on first-comer/late-comer we should combat all forms of religious extremism and build our common nation.

Tracing the history of Islam to King Najashi thus helps the Ethiopian Muslims to negotiate their 'foreignness' as constructed by the dominant Christian population; a new foundation myth in reconstructing a national identity.

Invoking the Najashi narrative is part of the Ethiopian Muslims' rights movement that centres on religious inclusion. This entails the redefinition of the parameters of Ethiopian national identity. The Najashi narrative thus addresses the issue of a secured sense of national belonging. Partly responding to the delegation's demand for a greater historical space for Islam in Ethiopia, the government has taken various measures to enhance Muslims' sense of national belonging. In 2009 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism launched activities to make the Al-Najashi Mosque in Tigray a tourist destination, promoting it as the 'first Mosque in Africa'. It has also sought to have it registered as a world heritage site by UNESCO. The ministry is also constructing a centre in Negash town (where Najashi is believed to have been buried) that involves fifteen projects, including a modern hotel and an Islamic university, as well as a research centre. The Al-Najashi mosque is now considered by the government as a symbol of religious coexistence in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government has gone even farther in accommodating Muslims' quest for greater historical space.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITS IN ESTABLISHING LEGITIMATE ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS Associational rights and freedom to establish Islamic institutions were among the agenda points set by the delegation. Associational right and securing the autonomy of Muslim representative bodies have, however, suffered the most significant setbacks. The issue of a legitimate and functional Islamic community organization is one of the most contentious between the EPRDF and the Muslims. Responding to the plea of the delegation to secure the autonomy of the Mejlis, the prime minister took refuge in the separation clause of the Constitution (the separation between state and religion), as if government intervention in the affairs of the religious communities were not pervasive. The failure of the EPRDF government to redress this fundamental grievance of the Muslim community is intimately connected to the current confrontation between the government and the Muslim community. In fact, the government has squandered a ripe moment to redress Muslim grievances, driving these to crisis levels since the summer of 2011.

The lack of a representative organization has not only denied the Muslims a legitimate organization but also makes the EPRDF's drive to control 'Islamic fundamentalism' unattainable because the Islamic leadership in Ethiopia is divided and unaccountable, making Ethiopian Muslims further vulnerable to imported visions of Islam from various external sources. Religious radicalization among the Ethiopian Muslim youth is also a result of the leadership crisis. As one of the leaders of the delegation noted,

The youth no longer respect the supreme council. They get their answers for their questions from outside of the country. We were told by the Mejlis leaders

that the youth are getting fatwa, i.e. religious decrees, from other countries. Somebody who may have some qualm or grudge against Ethiopia, who wants to divide Ethiopian Muslims, might exploit the situation. The government cannot do anything about this because you cannot legislate behaviour in certain ways.[17]

Although popular pressure prompted the replacement of a highly discredited Mejlis leadership in 2009, its replacement is still resented by many Muslims at home and in the diaspora. Both Badr and NEME have continued to press for a representative Muslim organization, either reforming the Mejlis or allowing alternative organizations to operate in the country legally.

Among the fundamental rights Muslims have been denied for centuries is the right to organize and establish institutions. One of the thirteen demands raised during the 1966 Muslims demonstration was this basic right. To date this demand is awaiting a proper response. Worse, the sole institution that claims to represent Muslims and operates in their name has so far proved to be working against Muslims themselves. It is now understood that the so-called Islamic affairs councils from federal level down to *woredas* (districts) are serving as peripherals of the security apparatus with the mission to suppress all forms of rights claims by Muslims and pre-empt any such future aspirations.[18]

Not only has the Mejlis failed to evolve independently of the government, it has also actively sought to block the emergence of alternative Muslim organizations. The attempt by the diaspora groups to be an alternative Islamic voice was actively frustrated by the Mejlis. The recent Civil Society Law is providing a new legal framework that inhibits the growth and autonomy of civil society organizations in Ethiopia. Although other religious groups and civil organizations are also contesting the government's growing encroachments on civil liberties, this has affected Muslims more than others because a representative organization is one of the central factors in their quest for a national Islamic identity. The Muslim diaspora's attempt to bridge the organizational gap was frustrated when the delegation was denied the right to open a liaison office in the homeland, irrespective of the promise made by the prime minister in 2007. The rejection was justified by the government with reference to the new CSO law, according to which local NGOs cannot get more than 10 per cent of their income from foreign sources, and Ethiopian diaspora organizations licensed in a foreign country cannot engage in 'political domains' such as rights advocacy. Retrospectively, Badr and NEME now doubt the sincerity of the government during the discussions with the delegation. By toning down the advocacy part of their mission while emphasizing the humanitarian and developmental components, Badr has recently successfully negotiated with the government to open a liaison office in Addis Ababa.

Similarly, the delegation's call for the right to establish Islamic institutions

has also faced a setback, particularly in the area of Islamic banking. Until recently, Ethiopia had only a conventional banking system, and there is a lack of Islamic banks to cater to the needs of a sizeable Muslim population. This can also be viewed as one of the factors which hinders the overall financial sector development, because an Islamic society believes that banking with the conventional banks is against their religious faith and thus a good number of potential customers were not banking with the banks then available.[19] It is for this reason that the delegation identified the absence of Islamic banking in Ethiopia as one of the main constraints Muslims in Ethiopia face. Subsequently, the commercial banks of Ethiopia issued a proclamation in 2008 allowing the operation of Islamic banks. Taking advantage of the new favourable atmosphere, Ethiopia's first Islamic bank, ZamZam, was established in February 2011 with a start-up capital of 300 million birr and 6,000 indigenous investors. There are economic and political dividends in allowing Islamic banking in Ethiopia. By unlocking the savings of many Muslim businessmen whose money has hitherto operated outside of the formal financial sector, ZamZam and other similar initiatives in the future could contribute to the development of the financial sector in Ethiopia.[20] Politically, legalizing Muslim institutions such as Islamic banking will go a long way in raising their comfort level as citizens of Ethiopia, and as such enhances their sense of national belonging. After the initial positive consideration the government has reversed its decision. A directive issued by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) has delivered a serious blow to banks seeking to operate fully fledged non-interest-bearing banking services in accordance with Islamic financing principles and modes of operation. The directive allows only conventional banks to run Islamic operations.

Conclusion

The exposition in the previous sections has pointed out the thrust of the transnational politics of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora and its potential and contributions to peacebuilding in Ethiopia. This case study serves as an antidote to those academic discourses which one-sidedly depict the diaspora as conflict actors. So much of the literature on diasporas, and their transnational politics, is about the tendency of diaspora groups to drive political action in the homeland to extremist or uncompromising positions because they have little disincentive to do so, safe as they are in their places of exile. Pioneered by Benedict Anderson's (1993) notion of long-distance nationalism and propounded by Liisa Malkki's (1995) 'purity of exile' theory, the dominant academic discourse in transnational study put all diaspora groups and their organizations into an undifferentiated box. What is argued here is that far from being a force for extremism or radicalism in Muslim politics, Muslim Ethiopian diaspora groups have introduced a new form of politics that has positive and mediating impacts.

The specific issues that these diaspora organizations advocate for – greater historical and physical spaces; autonomous religious associations; respect for Muslim dietary and sumptuary practices – seem eminently reasonable within a liberal, multicultural framework. The chapter shows that the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora, through rights-based advocacy, is actively engaged in enhancing the wider game of democratic politics in Ethiopia. A closer examination of the tone of their rights advocacy and the symmetric collaboration between the diaspora and Muslims in Ethiopia also challenges the indiscriminate labelling of the diaspora as 'intransigent', 'hegemonic' and 'conflict actors' by the long-distance nationalism framework in transnational studies.

The case study also evidences a new kind of non-ethnic politics associated with Muslim organizations within Ethiopia's contested ethnic federalism, suggesting the processes of multiple Ethiopian state formations. One of the central themes of Ethiopian history is state formation, and the expansion and contraction of the state over peripheral areas. It is a process that has never been completed, and in this sense it is analogous to the situation in Sudan next door, which has consistently failed to control its national territory. This ongoing process of state formation is surely part of what these Muslim advocacy groups want to capture through constitutional clauses, secularism, personal status law and Muslim representative bodies. As such the transnational politics of the Ethiopian Muslim diaspora is not a mere politics of recognition of and respect for difference, but a contest over the shape and stewardship of the state itself as it relates to Muslims. If these groups are successful in establishing themselves as the authoritative representative of Ethiopian Muslims, they will gain a lot of power not only in influencing Muslim religious practice or controlling resources, but also politically within the Ethiopian state.

Notes

1 So far neither a mosque nor a Protestant church has been allowed within 18 kilometres of the town. Attempts by local Muslims to build mosques were violently blocked by the EOC with the complacency, if not consent, of the leadership of the Tigray regional state, itself predominantly represented by Christian political elites.

2 The attempt by Addis Ababa University students to express solidarity with the women Muslim students who clashed with the authorities of the University of Teppi and the University of Wello on 22 April 2009 led to swift repression by the police, who intercepted their march to the prime minister's office and arrested

many students for inciting 'religious violence'.

3 In the annual meeting with the youth in Addis Ababa in February 2009, the prime minister referred to this distinction and the need to protect the *hager beqel islimina* from persecution by foreign-funded Islam. Furthermore, as an act of solidarity, heads of regional states have visited the shrines of venerated saints. This was certainly the case when the former head of Oromia regional state, Junedin Sado, paid a visit to the Sheikh Hussein shrine in Bale. On a similar note, Ethiopian television broadcast a special programme on the *mawlid* from Jema

Nigus, another famous site for a venerated Muslim saint in Wello.

4 See, for instance, 'Traditional Islam under threat' (cable reference ID: #06 ADDISABABA2352); 'Countering Wahabi influence in Ethiopia through cultural programming' (cable reference ID: #09 ADDISABABA1675); 'Wahabism in Ethiopia as cultural imperialism' (cable reference ID: #09ADDISABABA1674); ethioleaks.blogspot.com/.

5 The ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation provided a grant of US$25,600.

6 badrethiopia.org. Badr's goals and objectives: ethiopianmuslims.net/mission statement.

7 They are Akimel Shamil, Mansur Muhammad, Nejib Mohammed and Dr Zeki Sheriff from the USA, Abiye Yasin from Belgium, Muhammad Hassan from Germany, Abdulla Hassan from Sweden, Sheikh Mohammed Awel from Canada, and Dr Abdul Jelil from Saudi Arabia.

8 Notably thanks to Dr Samuel Assefa, former academic vice-president of Addis Ababa University and Ethiopia's ambassador to the USA when the delegation was sent. Himself a former member of the diaspora, Dr Samuel embraces a liberal world view, especially when it comes to religious rights. As such he was sympathetic to Muslim university students when they were calling for a more locally appropriate secularism that allows the right to manifest faith in the public sphere, including educational institutions. As an ambassador he was open to dialogue with Muslim diaspora organizations. Many Muslims in Ethiopia and in the diaspora respectfully and affectionately call Dr Samuel 'Abu Talib', a reference to the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who was a patron of Islam without being a Muslim. Now Muslims use the term Abu Talib rhetorically for members of the Christian community who are sympathetic to the legitimate demands of Muslims in contemporary Ethiopia.

9 The 2006 Muslim–Christian conflict in western Oromia was partly fomented by

radical Islamic groups such as the Takfir wal Hijra (Zelalem 2009; Østebo 2010).

10 Ethiopian News Agency, 8 April 2007. EPRDF had celebrated the Ethiopian millennium in September 2008 with grand festivity, partly to generate political legitimacy for a regime which is widely derided by the opposition as 'unpatriotic'.

11 Statement by the First Hijra Foundation on religious conflict in Ethiopia, March 2009, www.firsthijrah.com/.

12 Dr Zaki Abdullahi Sherif, Badr chairman, interview in *Reporter* newspaper, April 2007.

13 Dr Zakir, interview in *Reporter* newspaper, 6 March 2007. This resonates with Ja'far Abu Talib's (leader of the Prophet's companions who migrated to Axum in AD 615) rhetoric of highlighting the common grounds between Islam and Christianity during their debate with the Qurayish mediated by the king of Axum (cf. the Sura of Meriam and Issa).

14 Public statement on the Second Annual Conference, Network of Ethiopian Muslims in Europe, www.ethiopian muslims.net.

15 The Sufi camp was led by Haji Umer (Mufti of Ethiopia and head of the Addis Ababa Mejlis) and the Wahhabi camp was represented by Dr Jelal. Ethnically they are respectively Amhara and Oromo.

16 Interview with Hassan Taju, facilitator of the AUUF, Addis Ababa, 12 November 2009.

17 Dr Zaki Abdullahi Sherif, Badr chairman, interview in *Reporter* newspaper, April 2007.

18 'Dilemma of Ethiopian Muslims amidst mounting rights abuses', Negashi OJ, posted 20 April 2009 by Aqibaw Yimer, blog.ethiopianmuslims.net/negashi/?p=353.

19 A recent study entitled 'Assessment of factors affecting bank preference among business organizations in Dessie town' shows that 48 per cent of those who don't have bank accounts say that they don't bank with commercial banks for religious reasons.

20 A report by the World Bank suggests

that Ethiopia has one of the lowest rates of bank penetration in countries surveyed.

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6 | The Ethiopian diaspora and the Tigray Development Association

Bahru Zewde, Gebre Yntiso and Kassahun Berhanu

Introduction

Migration scholars believed that, traditionally, most immigrants tended to sever their ties to their countries of origin as they got assimilated into their countries of destination. Recent studies suggest, however, that transnational migrants tend to maintain ties with the countries of origin and contribute to conflict or peacebuilding and development activities. It is with this premise that this investigation of the Tigray Development Association (TDA) was undertaken. TDA originated as a diaspora organization but is now an Ethiopian-based NGO with strong diaspora links.

When choosing the subject of study, the authors first shortlisted eight organizations based on two criteria: engagement in peace-related projects and the presence of partner organizations in Ethiopia. Of these eight organizations, TDA was selected for investigation because of its historical formation (it was established in 1989 by a section of the Ethiopian diaspora), its participation in post-conflict reconstruction in Tigray (a region that suffered from years of civil war), its dependence (at least partly) on diaspora remittance, and its transformation into a major development association over the years. Thus, the case study focuses on the contribution of this particular diaspora to peacebuilding and development – two closely intertwined processes.[1]

Perspectives on peacebuilding and development

The link between peacebuilding and development In 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the former secretary-general of the United Nations, presented a report entitled 'An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping', in which the term 'post-conflict peacebuilding' was introduced for the first time. In this document, post-conflict peacebuilding was defined as an action to identify and support structures that tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. The UN further refined the concept in a number of subsequent documents. It is obvious that the concept was first defined in terms of action to prevent the recurrence of violence. Peacebuilding has also been associated with actions carried out to prevent conflict.

Peacebuilding and development have long been treated as two different realities in theory and practice. But researchers have increasingly challenged this conventional dichotomization by arguing that the two processes are interconnected and complementary. Amal Khoury (2006) noted that approaching peacebuilding and development in a compartmentalized or sequential manner – the dominant position in scholarship and practice – is unrealistic. The author further noted that post-conflict reconstruction needs to be a holistic, eclectic and multilevel response integrated into a long-term vision. Jelena Smoljan (2003: 233) quite convincingly articulated the inadequacies of the conventional approach and the growing recognition of the link between peacebuilding and development as follows:

> The focus of the analysis is on the connection between peacebuilding and development. Competing views exist regarding the links between these two areas. The exclusivist approach considers them two distinct stages of a phased process, undertaken separately and under different conditions. The inclusive approach, meanwhile, argues that they are mutually reinforcing and capable of operating simultaneously. This paper demonstrates that the inclusive approach is gaining ground in the literature, and it contends that it is a more appropriate way of addressing the problems of post-conflict societies.

International organizations, such as the World Bank, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF, as well as national governments, such as those of Norway and Canada, promote a view of peacebuilding being inseparable from development. In its policy research report entitled 'Breaking the conflict trap: civil war and development policy', the World Bank (2003: 1) reported:

> War retards development, but conversely, development retards war. This double causation gives rise to virtuous and vicious circles. Where development succeeds, countries become progressively safer from violent conflict, making subsequent development easier. Where development fails, countries are at high risk of becoming caught in a conflict trap in which war wrecks the economy and increases the risk of further war.

As will be explained later in this chapter, some UN organizations have underlined how certain development initiatives, such as education, contribute to peacebuilding. Some governments have also taken bold positions regarding the link between peacebuilding and development. In its strategic framework document entitled 'Peacebuilding – a development perspective', the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004: 10) remarked:

> Peace is essential for development, and vice versa: development is essential for lasting and sustainable peace. Without peace we will not win the fight against poverty. Without peace the Millennium Development Goals will be optimistic

but unrealistic promises. Violent conflict leads to and exacerbates poverty, and poverty is often a cause of violent conflict. Conflicts are a serious threat to development and their adverse consequences extend far beyond the geographical areas where they are being fought.

In sum, there is a growing recognition that responses to humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction activities must go beyond relief to address the long-term welfare of distressed people. Hence, social and economic development is seen as an integral part of all peacebuilding efforts designed to attain lasting and sustainable peace. Social and economic development in this context relates to the process of repatriation and reintegration of refugees, internally displaced persons and former combatants; reconstruction of infrastructure (e.g. roads, electricity, water and telecommunication) to fulfil public functions and make people feel that peace indeed brings benefits; promotion of social development by improving education and healthcare with an emphasis on quality, accessibility and non-discriminatory entitlement; and economic development that involves stimulating private sector development, employment, trade and investment.

From this, it is obvious that many of the elements of peacebuilding are the same as measures taken to promote development in peaceful situations/areas. It is equally important to note the fact that not all development work carried out in conflict areas or in post-war situations can be considered as peacebuilding as some projects may perpetuate existing conflicts or fuel new ones. This underlines the need to understand the context and intention of project undertakings. For the purpose of the present study, the relationship between peacebuilding and social development (education and health) is further discussed to provide analytical context for the activities of TDA in Ethiopia.

Peacebuilding and education Many believe that education is a cornerstone of peacebuilding. International organizations and national governments are among the leading advocates of this view. UNESCO declared the year 2000 to be the Year of the Culture of Peace to sensitize children to the practical meaning and benefits of non-violence. The International Decade for the Culture of Peace ran between 2001 and 2010. Since the mid-1980s, UNICEF has supported what has come to be known as Education for Peace (understanding, reflecting and teaching values), marking a departure from Peace Education (knowledge about peace). UNESCO (1998: 4) stated:

> Reflecting its fundamental purpose, to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women, a culture of peace requires that education be the principal means of accomplishing this task. This includes not only formal education in schools, but also informal and non-formal education in the full range of social institutions, including the family and the media.

The fundamental argument is that inculcating the ideals of peacebuilding should start quite early in families, communities and schools if a culture of peace, tolerance and conflict resolution is to be built. According to Mary Biggs,[2] the vice-president of the Canadian Bureau for International Education, although education is no guarantee of a cessation of hatred and war, it enlarges people's horizons and reduces stereotypes and prejudices. She noted:

> Schools have the power to shape the attitudes and skills of young people toward peaceful human relations. Through teaching young children values of respect, tolerance, and empathy, and by equipping them with the necessary skills to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner, they are provided with the tools they need, now and in the future, to foster peaceful relations at home, at school and around the world. Education builds the foundations for good citizenship, respect for self and others, democratic values and tolerance of opinions. Educational research indicates that when young people are trained in civics, mediation, ethnic tolerance and conflict resolution, the likelihood that they will resort to violence later in life is diminished.

Some writers also explained the contribution of education-sector initiatives to rebuilding war-torn societies. Annette Isaac (2002) stated that reconstructing a society after conflict offers an opportunity to test new educational approaches and/or bring substantial reforms into the existing education system. The author further noted that innovative approaches in basic education and non-formal education could serve as an effective means of relieving war-related trauma. Adult education programmes can provide parents and families with skills to help children recover from stressful and traumatic war memories.

Peacebuilding and health It has also been claimed that health-sector initiatives have the potential to make a meaningful contribution to post-conflict peacebuilding (Glick 2008; Commonwealth of Australia 2004; MacQueen and Santa-Barbara 2000). The scenarios in which health projects could go beyond mere humanitarian relief and play key roles in promoting peace are multiple. Health can act as a bridge for peace, and health-sector reconstruction can assist in rebuilding the social contract, thereby re-establishing the legitimacy of governments (Glick 2008). According to the Commonwealth of Australia (2004), 'political violence has both human rights and health implications. Addressing the health needs of populations is an important first step to minimizing the effects of violence and promoting peace.'[3]

MacQueen and Santa-Barbara (2000) noted that the transition towards peace in war-affected zones will often improve healthcare and the health status of populations. In this process, health workers would have a role to play in expanding peace, and health itself would provide a critical element for long-term peacebuilding. MacQueen and Santa-Barbara (ibid.: 293) noted:

War affects human health through the direct violence of bombs and bullets, the disruption of economic and social systems which people use to address their health needs, the famine and epidemics that follow such disruptions and the diversion of economic resources to military ends rather than health needs. In recent years war has been framed as a public health problem. This highlights the role of health workers in preventing and mitigating destructiveness.

The report of the Commonwealth of Australia (2004) provides lengthy details about the link between health and peacebuilding. The report stresses that, guided by the ethics of preserving life and promoting health, health professionals are uniquely placed to act as monitors of human rights abuses. As leaders in their communities, they are also expected to promote reform and social justice across society as a whole, and engender trust in the settings where social cohesion has broken down. The report also underlines that good population health is essential for effective community action, including participation in post-conflict reconstruction. Health interventions may also offer a model for collaboration among a broad range of actors: public organizations, the private sector, traditional services, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the international community. According to the report, health initiatives would draw together families and communities, thereby creating a sense of social cohesion. It was also stated that a culturally sensitive approach would harmonize traditional practices with modern medicine rather than undermine traditional healthcare.

The Ethiopian diaspora in historical perspective

Early manifestations Ethiopians generally have a reputation for insularity, preferring to stick it out at home rather than venturing abroad for greener pastures or safer shores. In this respect, they represent a perfect antithesis to their neighbours, the Somali. In general popular perception, it is only in the wake of the 1974 revolution that Ethiopians began to migrate outside their country in large numbers. But this popular perception, like all such perceptions, is only half true since Ethiopians had a tradition of moving out and settling in significant numbers elsewhere even before the revolution.

The first such experience had a religious character about it, with Jerusalem and Rome representing the two major destinations. The migration of Ethiopian monks to the Holy Land culminated in their acquisition in the twelfth century of the Deir Sultan monastery adjacent to the Holy Sepulchre. The building of another Ethiopian church in the nineteenth century and other buildings by the royal family in the early twentieth century further contributed to the consolidation of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem (Tigab 2001). Another Ethiopian religious and educational centre evolved in the Vatican, with a concentration of Ethiopian priests and monks there since the fifteenth

century. Their increasing number and commitment attracted the attention of Pope Sixtus IV, who gave them the San Stefano church, located behind the basilica of St Peter, in 1481. One of these priests, Abba Gorgoryos, was to attain lasting fame as the main source for the first major history of Ethiopia, entitled *New History of Ethiopia*, by the German scholar, Hiob Ludolf. In the early twentieth century, the Ethiopian community also managed to get new land in the Vatican garden on which it founded what has come to be known as the Ethiopian College, which has served as a residence for Ethiopian and Eritrean students doing postgraduate studies in philosophy and theology.[4]

These early migrations, however, rarely arose out of situations of conflict. They were relocations that arose from the quest for religious redemption or in pursuit of knowledge. It was in the twentieth century that conflict, more specifically war and revolution, came to generate a mass exodus of Ethiopians abroad. Three major events stand out in this respect: the Italian invasion and occupation of Ethiopia, the 1974 revolution, and the seizure of state power by the Ethiopian People's Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) in 1991. We shall examine below each of these three periods in some detail.

The Italian occupation (1936–41) Following the defeat of Ethiopian forces and the entry of Fascist troops in Addis Ababa on 5 May 1935, there was a large-scale flight of Ethiopians to other countries, both near and far. Two days before the entry of the Italians, the vanquished emperor, Haile Selassie, accompanied by other members of his family and a few of his favoured followers, fled the country and sought exile in England. Others followed soon after, their number swelling significantly after the nefarious 'Graziani Massacre' of February 1937. The major destinations were: the neighbouring countries (British Somaliland, French Somaliland or Djibouti, Kenya and the Sudan); Jerusalem; and various European countries.

The Ethiopian community in Jerusalem saw an influx of refugees following the Italian occupation. By April 1938, their number was reported to have grown to 318, of which twenty-three were members of the nobility. A number of these exiles came to be affiliated with two associations: the Ethiopian Youth Hope Association and the Ethiopian Exiles' Association (Tamrat 1944: 31–4). Another major destination of Ethiopian refugees was British Somaliland. When the British declared war on Mussolini and Hitler, the able-bodied refugees were organized into four companies to be part of an operation led by the French from Djibouti. As the Italians came to threaten British Somaliland itself, the refugees had to flee for their safety, eventually settling in Kenya, where they joined the refugees, numbering over ten thousand, who had already settled there. When the British launched their two-pronged campaign (from the Sudan and Kenya) to liberate Ethiopia, the Ethiopian refugees in Kenya were organized into a force of ten companies and played an indispensable role in bringing

about the collapse of the Fascist forces in southern Ethiopia by infiltrating behind enemy lines and gathering intelligence on their capabilities and the attitude of the local population.

Sudan, which was also under British rule at the time, was yet another important destination for refugees. Indeed, some of the most colourful members of the Ethiopian elite ended up here, including Takkala Walda-Hawaryat, Aman Mikael Andom, Deressa Amante, Yoftahe Neguse, Mared Mangasha, Abiy Abbaba and Mangestu Neway. By virtue of the strong patriotic resistance in the adjoining provinces of Gojjam and Gondar, some of the refugees worked actively to undermine the Fascist occupation by infiltrating across the border and trying above all to coordinate the rather disparate exertions of the patriots (Heywat 1967). Topping the list of those who worked actively to serve as a bridge between the exiles and the patriots were the Eritrean-born Lorenzo Ta'ezaz, Getahun Tasamma, Kabbada Tasamma and Gabra-Masqal Habta-Maryam, leader of the movement for the union of Eritrea and Ethiopia after 1941. It is, therefore, not surprising that, when the British launched their main campaign of liberating Ethiopia from the Sudan under the code name Gideon Force, it was in the direction of these major centres of anti-Fascist resistance, particularly Gojjam.

Intervention of a more daring nature was represented by the exploits of Bashahwerad Habtawald and Shaqa Balehu Dagafu. The former was one of the first three Ethiopians educated in the United States in the 1920s. After the defeat of the Ethiopian forces in 1936, he accompanied the emperor into exile but then returned to Ethiopia. Implicated in the abortive plot to assassinate the Italian viceroy, Rodolfo Graziani, on 19 February 1937, he was caught in the Fascist backlash and appeared to have died under torture (Bahru 2002: 89–95). A similar fate awaited Shaqa Balehu, who also had returned from exile. Both were believed to have been sent back with instructions to catalyse the patriotic resistance to the Fascist occupation.[5]

After the restoration of Ethiopian independence in 1941, the emperor made a point of relying on his exiled followers and servants to consolidate his position. This was made all the more imperative by the strong base that the patriots who had resisted the occupation for five years had managed to build. No other person typified the political ascendancy of the exile group more than the personality of Walda-Giyorgis Walda-Yohannes. He had served as the emperor's private secretary during the period of exile. On their return, he rose to become the de facto prime minister (Bahru 2001: 203–5).

The 1974 revolution The 1974 revolution was the culmination of decades of opposition to imperial autocracy. It combined the plots and conspiracies of some members of the ruling establishment who were apprehensive of the pitfalls of the monarchic order, peasant discontent, ethno-nationalist rebellion and

vociferous student opposition. With regard to the student opposition, much of the ideological inspiration could be said to have emanated from outside rather than from inside the country. The acrimonious ideological divisions of Ethiopian students abroad were to have fateful consequences in the course of the revolution, leading inexorably to the Red Terror and their mutual liquidation. That resulted in the consolidation of totalitarian dictatorship and the ascendancy of the ethno-nationalist movements.

The abortive *coup d'état* of 1960 led to the emergence of the first signs of political dissidence abroad. Two supporters of the coup continued their agitation against the imperial regime from outside the country. The first was Tafari Sharaw, Ethiopian ambassador in Sweden at the time of the coup. Following the failure of the coup attempt, he sought asylum in his host country and continued to oppose the regime, including giving support to the student groups based in Sweden which were beginning to call for revolutionary change. Another supporter of the coup, Getachaw Garadaw, first fled to Somalia but later moved on to Germany, from where he continued to harangue successive Ethiopian regimes. Yet another high official who defected while on duty was the Washington-based Ethiopian ambassador, Berhanu Denqe. He was to be the most prolific of the foreign dissidents against the imperial regime.

But it was the foreign-based Ethiopian student unions which were to be the major platform for diaspora political opposition to the imperial regime. In some respects, it is not exactly accurate to characterize these students as being in the diaspora, for some of them were on short study trips and would eventually return home and join the civil service. Nevertheless, it remains true that the most committed, or the ones who went farthest in opposing the regime, found it difficult to return and thus inadvertently constituted the first nucleus of the Ethiopian diaspora. The students were grouped into two regional unions: the Ethiopian Students Union in North America (ESUNA) and the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE).[6]

There is general consensus that the year 1965 represents a landmark in the radicalization of the Ethiopian student movement. This was true for both the home-based and the foreign-based Ethiopian students. From then on, the student movement became ever more strident in its opposition, which could be said to have peaked in 1969. The unprecedented level of agitation culminated in the hijacking of an Ethiopian Airlines domestic aircraft to the Sudan by a group of seven students in the summer of 1969. The hijackers eventually ended up in Algeria and, led by Berhana Masqal Radda, formed a nucleus around which the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) was eventually to be set up at a congress in Berlin in April 1972.

Its rival, the All Ethiopian Socialist Movement (more commonly known by its Amharic acronym, Ma'ison), was founded in Hamburg in 1968 by the leaders of ESUE (Andargachaw 2000: 13). Its leader, Hayle Fida, had tried to

woo over the Algiers group to the side of his incipient organization. But the latter had ideas of their own about the future of the student movement and leftist politics. The disagreement of the two leaderships ended up splitting the hitherto monolithic ESUE into two camps. The Algiers group was assisted in building its own constituency by an influx of radical students to Europe and the United States caused by the repressive measures that the government took in the wake of the widespread 1969 protests. The differences between the two groups, which were largely diasporic in nature, were transposed to Ethiopian soil after the outbreak of the revolution in 1974, with lethal consequences both for themselves and the country at large.

As the leaders of EPRP and Ma'ison returned home to promote their rival political agendas, a new wave of emigration took place following the seizure of power by the Derg in September 1974 and, in particular, its bloody execution in November 1974 of some sixty members of the former ruling elite as well as dissidents within its own ranks. These new exiles consisted mainly of members of the ruling establishment who had managed to escape the detention that became the fate of almost all members of their class. The more politically active eventually formed in succession two political organizations that tried to challenge Derg rule: the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance (EPDA). The former managed even to have an armed presence in north-western Ethiopia, thereby challenging both the Derg and the budding Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Members allegedly belonging to the latter were rounded up by the Derg in 1983 and accused of conspiring with CIA support to overthrow the revolutionary government (Spencer 1984: 379).

The liquidation of EPRP and Ma'ison through the Red Terror effectively signalled the end of multi-ethnic opposition to the Derg and the ascendancy of ethno-nationalist opposition. While that opposition was essentially character-ized by rural armed struggle, it had an important diasporic component. In a way, the pattern for such armed opposition combining guerrilla warfare inside the country and agitprop in the diaspora was set by the Eritrean struggle. As the UN-sponsored federal arrangement became increasingly eroded in the 1950s through a combination of unionist manipulation and imperial autocracy, a number of Eritreans dissatisfied with or unable to operate under the prevalent trend migrated to neighbouring states. It was these elements which set up the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM), which was superseded by the Eritrean Liberation Front as of 1961. In subsequent decades, the mobilization of public support for the struggle, both among the Eritrean community and among the international public, was to be an important factor that contributed to the ultimate success of the struggle for independence.

In the rest of Ethiopia, the two major armed liberation movements were the TPLF and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), formed in 1975 and 1976,

respectively. Both came to have a large pool of supporters in the diaspora. While the bulk of this diaspora was located in the United States, a sizeable number were found in Europe as well. Such was the context within which the Tigray Development Association (TDA) had its genesis in Washington, DC, in 1989. This is not to say, however, that the Ethiopian diaspora was always aligned with one or another of the ethno-nationalist movements or even that it was all politically motivated. A substantial proportion could hardly be said to have been politically engaged, opting for the fostering of cultural and social networks such as setting up Ethiopian Orthodox churches and gathering around the annual football tournaments, as well as running a wide range of media programmes and community support initiatives (Wheeler 2008: 18). Of those who were politically involved, a significant proportion rallied around what one can describe as a pan-Ethiopian agenda rather than ethno-nationalist programmes.[7]

The post-1991 scene A recurring feature of Ethiopian diasporic formation is the reversal of group status following a change of regime. In the wake of the 1974 revolution, the student radicals who had effectively exiled themselves returned home to promote their revolutionary programmes. Conversely, members of the ruling elite – or more exactly those who managed to escape execution or prolonged incarceration – were forced to seek asylum abroad, mostly in Europe and the United States. Before too long, as the revolution degenerated into civil war, both in the capital and in the areas of rural insurgency, they were joined by those fleeing the Red Terror and the devastating wars. With the change of regime in 1991, a sizeable proportion of the Tigrayan diaspora, including their main organization (the TDA), relocated to Ethiopia. Conversely, again, a large number of people who found it difficult or impossible to live under the new political dispensation were forced to seek refuge abroad. This new wave was largely composed of those with pan-Ethiopian sentiments but also came to include others who were either affiliated or suspected of being affiliated with ethno-nationalist organizations, whose honeymoon with the new rulers was to be rather brief. Such was the case with the OLF, which fell out with the EPRDF regime in the wake of the controversial 1992 elections. It was followed not so long after by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF).

Diaspora political activism has increased in the past two decades and reached its peak during the 2005 elections. The prospect of peaceful democratic change promised by the pre-election debates raised wild expectations both at home and abroad. The dashing of that hope with the massive post-election repressions, while subduing domestic protests, catalysed the diasporic opposition as few other events have succeeded in doing before or since. The political activism was kept at a high pitch throughout the two-year incarceration of the leaders of the main opposition party, Coalition for Unity and Democracy

(CUD). It subsided only after divisions within the CUD leadership surfaced soon after their release from detention.

The Ethiopian socio-political context and implications

Though voluntary associations with various forms and purposes have existed in Ethiopia for a long time (Pankhurst 1958), the coming on the scene of modern NGOs is a recent phenomenon. In traditional Ethiopian society, various social organizations in the form of religious entities, extended family systems and mutual self-help groups undertook voluntary activities to address common problems affecting individual and group members (CRDA 1998: 4). These exist to this day, without having undergone substantial changes to their modes of operation and fields of engagement. In the mid-1970s, prior to the revolutionary upsurge, there were very few modern and formally organized NGOs in the country, and they were mainly engaged in limited social welfare and community development efforts to deal with pressing needs of vulnerable groups by providing relief aid, educational and health services, and vocational training.

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a veritable mushrooming of modern NGOs. The recurrent famines precipitated a massive influx of aid organizations from abroad and the coming on the scene of a few local counterparts. In view of the humanitarian crisis experienced during the period in question, the successive imperial and military regimes were forced to allow the intervention of foreign NGOs to deal with the threats of prevalent drought and food insecurity (Dessalegn 2002: 106). In the face of the persistence of these ills and the attendant consequences, the NGOs continued their operations while at the same time gradually increasing their numerical size and diversifying their activities by effecting changes in the scope and essence of their mandates (from relief/rehabilitation to development). Following the May 1991 regime change, introduction of some liberalization measures led to considerable growth in the numerical size of NGOs. It is at this point in time that TDA and other similar regional/ethnic-based development organizations obtained legal recognition.

The promulgation of the Civil Code (IEG 1960) in 1960 was the first instance when non-governmental organizations were mentioned in Ethiopian official policy and legal provisions made governing their formation, areas of engagement and mode of operation. These were further elaborated in a legal notice known as the 'Internal Security Act' of 1966 and issued by the Ministry of Interior. Despite several developments since then, the imperative of control remained the major concern of successive regimes in dealing with matters associated with non-state actors and their fields of engagement. Regulatory bodies overseeing NGO operations have changed over time: the Ministry of Interior under imperial rule, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission[8] under the military regime, and the EPRDF government until 1995, and subsequently

the Ministry of Justice. Since the beginning of 2009, a unit under the Ministry of Justice known as the Charities and Societies Agency has taken charge of overseeing NGOs and other civil society organizations. The primacy accorded to the imperative of control and state scrutiny is demonstrated by the government's introduction of a directive known as Guidelines for NGO Operations in the mid-1990s, which aimed to classify 'groups and provide guidance on the priority areas of NGO programming' (Clark 2000: 6).

In view of these developments, non-governmental organizations in Ethiopia have been overcautious lest they provoke the sensitivity of political regimes and incur deregistration. There is hardly any record of a proactive stance on the part of NGOs and other non-state actors with a view to demanding their rights to autonomous existence and freedom of operation. The farthest they had gone in this respect has been participation in consultative meetings on government policies and programmes in whose formulation they were not meaningfully involved. In 1999, the formally registered NGOs in Ethiopia came up with what is known as the NGO Code of Conduct as an expression of a commitment to self-regulation (ibid.; Dessalegn 2002: 109).

Some semblance of serious consideration of the Ethiopian diaspora at the policy level was shown for the first time by the incumbent EPRDF regime with the creation of a directorate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The directorate was charged with the task of facilitating diaspora participation in socio-economic activities in the country. Measures introduced in this regard include the initiation of a column known as the 'Diaspora Forum' in the ministry's regular newsletter. According to the *Indian Ocean Newsletter* (2003), the Ethiopian government also finances a radio programme in Washington, DC, to convey its messages to the Ethiopian diaspora.

The contemporary scene is dominated by legislation (FDRE 2009) that was promulgated on 13 February 2009 with significant implications for the NGO sector. It provides for the establishment of a regulatory body known as 'The Charities and Societies Agency' and defines its objectives, powers and functions. The proclamation states that the establishment of the agency is necessitated by the need to make charities and societies adhere to the law of the land in a transparent and accountable manner. Article 7 of the proclamation provides for a governing board of seven members, of which two are to be nominated by the charities and societies. The board is vested with a wide range of powers, including licensing, registering and supervising charities and societies, removing and replacing their officers, and suspending and cancelling their licences.

The new legislation is widely recognized as prohibitive with respect to NGOs and other civil society organizations that receive the bulk of their funding from external sources. These are barred from registering as Ethiopian charities or societies if they engage in areas such as justice, democracy, conflict resolution,

human rights, and gender and child rights. Given that NGOs in Ethiopia are highly dependent on external funding, the provision effectively inhibits NGOs from engaging in the aforementioned activities. Moreover, it is feared that, given the prevalent ethos of state control and scrutiny, the new legislation could culminate in the termination of several associations as a result of the broad discretionary powers that the new regulatory body enjoys.

The role of the Ethiopian diaspora in peacebuilding and conflict

Literature pertaining to the genesis of Ethiopian diaspora groups and their role in socio-economic and peacebuilding activities is both recent and scanty. The most notable works on the subject include those of John Sorenson (1996), Terrence Lyons (2004, 2006, 2008), Yatarikna et al. (2007) and Thomas Wheeler (2008). Citing different sources, Wheeler (2008: 17–18) provides the geographic distribution of the Ethiopian diaspora along with their numerical size, ethnic composition, educational and social background, sociocultural networks, and causes of departure from the country of origin since the 1970s. On the basis of the findings of empirical studies, Wheeler emphasizes that, in the majority of cases, the flight from Ethiopia is attributable to conflict and insecurity, which in turn contributed to the ascendance of ethno-nationalism as one of the major ideological underpinnings of diaspora engagement in politics. The role and influence of the Ethiopian diaspora as an important constituency for those engaged in domestic politics – including those in government and the legal opposition – are clearly, albeit briefly, outlined in this study (ibid.: 29) and others (e.g. Lyons 2006, 2008). According to Levitt (1998: 926), in addition to making financial remittances, diasporas associate with their countries of origin in a wide variety of ways, including social remittances expressed in the flow of ideas, values, norms, behaviours and social capital. As demonstrated by the events surrounding the May 2005 elections, the Ethiopian diaspora groups have shown their potential to be sources of ideas and strategies that contributed to the further polarization of the positions of the political protagonists of the time. By the same token, they can also shape and influence endeavours aimed at stabilizing abnormal situations through peacebuilding endeavours.

The North–South Centre of the Council of Europe (2006) includes within the category of social remittances innovative ideas, valuable transnational networks, knowledge and skills, political outlooks and norms, and ethical values that are acquired by the diaspora in the host countries and transmitted to the lands of origin. In this connection, Wheeler (2008: 27–8) cites the case of the Ethiopian Extended Dialogue (EED) forum that was active between 1999 and 2003 and suggests that engaging a conflict-generated diaspora in a process of conflict resolution has the potential to alter the perception of their constituencies regarding conflict in the country of origin. By virtue of the comparative advantages that they enjoy as compared to their compatriots at

home, diaspora political players exercise considerable influence on the disposition of parties operating within the legal milieu in the country of origin. This has been demonstrated on various occasions, notably in the critical role they played during the 2005 elections (Lyons 2006: 26). On the basis of an analysis of the case of the Ethiopian diaspora in North America, Lyons concluded that conflict-generated diasporas 'relate to homeland politics and conflicts in specific ways and are an additional, often complicating, set of actors to processes of change in the homeland' (ibid.: 10). In a similar vein, Barth and Shain (2003: 461) argue that diasporas exert a disproportionate and 'more direct influence through contributions to parties and candidates of their choice'.

Financial remittances constitute another important element in diaspora relations with places of origin. These remittances could be in the form of capital investments or transfers for family and individual assistance. However, it is not always easy to document such transfers since official statistics often tell less than half the story. Nor is it easy to disaggregate remittances captured by the official records regionally.

According to another source (Capital 2004), official financial remittances to Ethiopia between 1996 and 2000 made up 1.2 per cent of GDP, reaching a sum of US$1 billion in 2008 (Muluken 2008). It should be noted that these do not include the larger sums transferred through unofficial channels. Remitters opt for informal channels because these are allegedly cheaper and better suited for transferring funds to remote areas and maintaining anonymity at both the sending and receiving ends (Ratha 2004: 5; World Bank 2007; Julca 2007). Mohan and Zack-Williams (2002: 211) argue that 'both politically and economically, the diaspora has an important part to play in contemporary social processes'. According to the North–South Centre of the Council of Europe (2006), migrant remittances defined as transfer of funds from members of the diaspora to relatives or friends in the country of origin are now recognized as the second-largest source of global development finance, providing highly needed foreign exchange to the home countries and supplementing the domestic incomes of millions of poor families in the world. In 2002, the flow of remittances to the developing countries stood at US$72 billion, which is higher than the total official aid flows (Ratha 2003). This, albeit in a limited manner, applies to the situation in Ethiopia as well. Financial remittances enable beneficiaries to maintain established livelihood systems in the face of growing income and food poverty.

On a broader level, diasporas were also instrumental in the efforts of aid organizations to find resources for providing their services to their constituencies. It is to be recalled that at the height of the civil war in Ethiopia in the 1970s and 1980s, in addition to the tapping of bilateral and multilateral assistance by the relief organizations created by the insurgent Eritrean and Tigrayan rebels, namely the Eritrean Relief Agency (ERA) and the Relief Society

of Tigray (REST), respectively, diaspora funding of these organizations was significant (Young 1998: 42).

In the following sections, the case of an Ethiopian diaspora group that evolved at a critical stage in the political history of the country and subsequently boosted the developmental efforts in one of the regions is presented. Based on the findings of this study, the instrumentality of financial and social remittances originating from this group and how these have impacted on the normalization/peacebuilding endeavours of the major domestic political actor, namely the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), are highlighted.

The Tigray Development Association

Background The Tigray region in northern Ethiopia, which is one of the earliest areas of concentrated human settlement in the country, has experienced a host of problems that have heavily impacted on people's livelihoods in several ways during the past several decades. Settled agricultural and related activities deemed essential for sustaining livelihoods have taken place in the region over the past several centuries. Around the end of the nineteenth century, the region suffered from a plethora of experiences characterized by recurrent drought-induced famines, weakening of established coping and adaptive mechanisms, and deterioration of ecological and environmental resource bases. These were compounded by persistent conflicts that took place both internally and as a result of foreign invasions. These predicaments worsened in the second half of the twentieth century with the unfolding of the famine of the early 1970s, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and entailed massive displacement. It is acknowledged that the famine and its consequences formed the backdrop to the Ethiopian revolutionary upsurge of 1974, which culminated in the ousting of the *ancien régime*.

Expectations for a better future and substantial improvement of situations resulting from the regime change of the mid-1970s were, however, short lived. Mounting disillusionment arising from the coercive measures of the military regime that had seized power on the crest of the popular revolutionary tide in respect of the legitimate aspirations of society led to widespread discontent in the country, including the Tigray region. In 1975, an ethno-nationalist insurgent group known as the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), advocating 'the right of the people of Tigray to self-determination',[9] was formed, and it succeeded in gradually rallying the support of the local population. Between the mid-1970s and the end of the 1980s, Tigray became a battleground where different protagonists with diverse orientations and competing aspirations engaged in violent armed conflicts[10] from which the TPLF emerged as a major protagonist that seriously challenged the incumbent military regime. In the process, the predicament of the people of Tigray was compounded by the 1984/85 famine, which brought about the flight of about a tenth of the Tigrayan population, who were forced

to seek asylum in Sudanese refugee camps and elsewhere outside the country. Concurrently, the government forcibly relocated several thousand Tigrayans to state-sponsored resettlement sites in the southern and south-western parts of the country. TPLF's intensified insurgency moved to an advanced level and resulted in the liberation of the Tigray region in 1989 and culminated in the regime change of May 1991 spearheaded by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of forces led by TPLF.

The Tigray Development Association (TDA) was founded in Washington, DC, in August 1989, a few months after the liberation of Tigray, by members of the Tigrayan diaspora, most of whom had fled Ethiopia during the height of the civil war (TDA 1999). It was officially established as a non-profit, non-political and charitable organization dedicated to the reconstruction of the war-ravaged infrastructure and the rehabilitation of the population displaced by the conflict and famine of the 1970s and 1980s. The initiative taken by the Tigrayan diaspora in Washington, DC, was soon emulated by their compatriots living in different parts of the United States, Canada, western Europe and the Middle East, resulting in the creation of associated branches of the organization. In this manner, TDA's geographic coverage and operations were broadened between 1989 and the immediate aftermath of the May 1991 regime change.

Initially, TDA's activities were limited to sending educational material and medical supplies to the newly liberated Tigray. TDA also organized symposia in Washington, DC, and later in the regional capital (Mekelle), in which several supporters and sympathetic professionals actively participated (ibid.). Within about two years of its founding, dozens of TDA branches proliferated in the different parts of the Western world and in Ethiopia. As a result, its membership grew from a few hundred to tens of thousands and eventually reached hundreds of thousands. In 1992, TDA's first General Assembly decided to move its headquarters to Mekelle, the regional capital. Cognizant of the importance of Addis Ababa as the headquarters of several regional and international organizations, such as the OAU (later changed to the AU) and the UN/Economic Commission for Africa, TDA's Liaison Office was established in the Ethiopian capital. The Liaison Office is entrusted with the task of enhancing fund-raising efforts, facilitating membership services, and serving as a hub for promoting TDA–donor relations (ibid.: 29).

Objectives, mandate and governance At its inception, TDA mainly focused on mobilizing Tigrayan professionals in the diaspora to visit the region and share their experience and technical and other skills as part of the effort aimed at saving lives and rehabilitating the war-ravaged regional economy and physical and social infrastructure (TDA 2009a). Immediately after the end of the civil war in 1991, TDA moved its headquarters to Mekelle. This was justified by

the organization's intention of mobilizing local resources by working closely with the local beneficiaries and other stakeholders. TDA's objectives have been refined and adjusted over the years in line with its growth, capacity development and the pressing needs of its target groups. As stated in its various documents (TDA 1999, 2009a), the organization articulated its vision as one of striving to mobilize and carefully utilize available resources in a manner that can lead to the realization of '[...] an affluent Tigrai [...] free from poverty and backwardness [...]'. In view of this, it has set down the following objectives:

1 improving educational and health services and infrastructure;
2 training the youth within the ranks of the poor and the needy sections of the population in marketable skills;
3 enabling target groups and communities to secure a sustainable livelihood free of poverty and want;
4 facilitating ways and means of creating access to credit services and gainful employment opportunities for the poor and the needy in the region;
5 familiarizing target groups with new information, production techniques and relevant and appropriate technology; and
6 forging partnership with pertinent government bodies at grassroots, local/ regional and national levels and networking with development and donor organizations that could support the attainment of the organization's objectives (TDA 1999).

Subsequently, the following strategic objectives were laid down (TDA 2009a):

1 build the capacity of secondary schools and improve the quality of secondary education in the region;
2 enhance the quality of technical and vocational education and training;
3 expand and strengthen non-formal adult education;
4 support the endeavours of the Youth and Sports Affairs Bureau of the regional state;
5 encourage and enhance the availability of gainful employment opportunities;
6 assist efforts aimed at the development of tourism in the region;
7 initiate and promote good governance within the organization and beyond in order to achieve healthy developmental goals; and
8 improve the quality of health services through the provision of medical equipment, chemicals and drugs obtained from partners and supporters outside the country.

The strategies designed to realize these objectives included intensifying mobilization through vigorous enlisting of members and supporters both in the country and abroad; embarking on the identification of potential donors while maintaining links with those already existing; organizing special fund-

raising events; investing in the development of human power and other assets; identifying beneficiaries and target areas on the basis of prioritized needs; undertaking information exchange with regard to organizational programmes and activities through the use of different media – radio broadcasts, quarterly newsletters and brochures (TDA 1999, 2009a). During the early stages (1992–95) of its operations in Ethiopia in general and Tigray in particular, the major preoccupation of TDA was social and physical infrastructural rehabilitation and development, focusing on education, health and skill training. At a later stage, other areas of TDA intervention included involvement in agricultural and natural resources development, transportation, culture and sports, and conflict resolution (TDA 2009a).

TDA is governed by bodies charged with the responsibility of policy-making and management. Its organizational structure and institutional arrangements show clear division of tasks and a system of institutional checks and balances. Accordingly, the General Assembly, composed of elected representatives of chapters and sub-chapters, is the ultimate decision-making body. It meets biannually to deliberate and decide on general policy and strategic issues and to elect members of the board of directors. The composition of the latter is designed to be a balanced representation of the different chapters in the diaspora (mainly North America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East), Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia.

The organization claims to have developed standard working documents in the form of personnel, financial, logistics and procurement manuals containing clear guidelines that are strictly observed. TDA also claims to have smooth working relations with several major development agencies, which have provided it with considerable financial, material and technical assistance over the years (TDA 1999, 2008, 2009a). Individual and corporate membership is open to those who support its aims and objectives and are willing to extend their assistance for the realization of the stated goals.

Major actors, stakeholders and chapters/branches From the outset, TDA explicitly stated that it follows a participatory approach to ensure that the people of Tigray have a stake in each and every programme component and project-based activity. It also clearly declared that its major involvement would be in rural rehabilitation and development aimed at reaching the region's most disadvantaged, and needy sections of society in the rural areas. TDA's mission statement underlines its determination to work as a viable development actor and its commitment to combating poverty. Adherence to the principles of transparency and accountability is cited as one of its core values (TDA 2009a).

The major stakeholders that proactively participate in the organization's endeavours include founder-members and supporters in the diaspora, individual and corporate members and supporters within Tigray and the rest

of the country, local and regional government agencies in the Tigray National/ Regional State, bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, partner NGOs and, most importantly, the target communities that actively participate in various rehabilitation and development projects. TDA has established several branches and sub-branches both within the country and abroad. According to the update posted on the organization's website (16 April 2009), branches operate in all of the regional states and some selected urban centres in Ethiopia. It has several branch offices operating outside the country, notably in the United States, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

TDA activities TDA was established as the Tigray region was coming out of years of civil war and recurrent drought and famine episodes. Thus, the original intention of the association was to make 'resources available to the people of Tigrai for their use in their struggle to overcome years of misguided government policies, natural disasters and war' (TDA 1999: 26). Initially, TDA depended heavily on the rapidly growing contributions of its members in the diaspora. Araya Zerihun, the late chairman of TDA, stated that the first General Assembly held in 1992 adopted a budget of 14.6 million birr for the following year, 'expectantly counting on the goodwill of its enthusiastic members' (ibid.: 4). The participants of the meeting, who came from different corners of the world representing TDA members, were given quotas to raise to reach the total budget. However, when the headquarters of TDA was relocated to Mekelle in 1992, the association lacked funds to meet the daunting challenges it faced. Araya recounted:

> The challenges were daunting and yet exciting when I first came to Mekelle to head the Tigrai Development Association (TDA) [...] As the Tigrai People's Liberation Front (TPLF) gradually gained control of the region [Tigray], TDA began limited rehabilitative activities, sending supplies from America [...] The people's expectations and eagerness for reconstruction, rehabilitation and development were very high but the amount of money we had in the bank was only 250,000.00 birr [...] in 1994 and 1995 when we conducted our telethons, it was extremely gratifying to witness a great outpouring of contributions coming from members and supporters across Ethiopia and elsewhere. (Ibid.: 4)

The development and consolidation of TDA and the activities it undertakes in line with its stated goals and objectives could be categorized into three major phases: formation and consolidation (1989–92), preoccupation with rehabilitation and reconstruction (1993–95) and involvement in development activities in collaboration and partnership with other national and international NGOs, local/regional government agencies and donor organizations.

As indicated earlier, and as articulated in another programme document (TDA 2007), the major initial undertakings and accomplishments of the organ-

ization were in the fields of education, health and skill training. These were subsequently followed by agricultural and natural resource development, transportation, culture and sports, and conflict resolution. It is claimed that TDA's interventions in implementing its diverse programme components covered all the administrative zones of the region. The districts and lower administrative units were served on the basis of local priorities and needs as well as the capacity and the resources at the disposal of the organization (interview at TDA HQ, 2009).

Over the years, TDA has transformed itself from a charitable diaspora network in the USA to a major development association currently operating in Ethiopia. However, the association maintained a strong connection with and continued to receive support from the Tigrayan diaspora in different parts of the world. Besides its history as a refugee organization engaged in post-war reconstruction, it is this active link with the diaspora which makes the association relevant for the present study, which reveals that the Tigrayan diaspora has been making different contributions through the TDA. These include supporting the post-war reconstruction and development; direct investment to the tune of 1,590,926,187 birr up to 2008; construction of private houses that contributed to the development of Mekelle town; and financial remittances to relatives that helped many families to improve their lives.

TDA PROJECTS Apart from the limited participation in the early rehabilitative activities, TDA did not launch its major and programmatic operations until the 1993 General Assembly. The association spent much of the formative stage (1989–93) in attracting members needed to provide resources, organizing a series of symposia in Washington, DC, and Mekelle to identify the problems in Tigray that require immediate attention, mobilizing resources and devising strategies to use the growing resources. The 1993 General Assembly was held before the TDA staff had the time to develop intervention projects for the association. Therefore, the assembly endorsed certain projects that the government offices recommended:

> The TDA's small staff had little time to research data for the 1993 General Assembly, so it relied on various departments of government to provide data defining the current state of affairs. Together with the data came recommended solutions in the form of project proposals by these departments, later to become Bureaus of the State government [...] the General Assembly decided on certain projects and TDA entered into contracts with the regional Bureaus to provide funding for the government projects. These projects were to be implemented by the Bureaus, using their own work crews [...] or by contractors [...] The stories of these government projects are basically the story of the experimental phase of TDA, with the exception of three unusual projects:

construction and furnishing of 11 public libraries, improvement of two rural market roads, and the first construction-skills training. (TDA 1999: 33)

During the early stages of its operation, the organization was more active in massive rehabilitation works, socio-economic and infrastructure building, basic skills training, and the promotion of culture and sport.[11] The period that TDA depicts as the experimental phase was helpful to the association in many respects. Since the government projects were scattered geographically and were meant to meet the basic demands of the people (e.g. schools and clinics), TDA had the opportunity to work throughout the region, build its support base, and identify intervention areas for the years to follow.

EDUCATION When the civil war in Tigray ended in 1991 and rehabilitation work started soon after, it became apparent that the education sector was one of the areas with multiple challenges. These included rehabilitating the war-ravaged schools, building new schools in areas where they never existed, increasing the participation rate in primary schools (which was below the national average of 30 per cent), and addressing such problems as lack of facilities, overcrowding, shortage of relevant teaching materials, and limited teaching aids (ibid.). The association, in consultation with the Regional Bureau of Education and the communities, played a significant role in responding to these challenges. The association pursued formal and non-formal programmes and provided opportunities for primary- and secondary-level education. The results in the first ten years of TDA operation were encouraging. A report prepared in the context of the tenth anniversary of the association indicates the achievements as follows:

> In its effort to improve the rural communities' access to primary education, TDA has constructed and furnished 82 primary schools (about 12% of the total primary schools in the region). As a result, improved educational services are now accessible to about 33,600 children each year (44.6% of them girls). The majority of these children, aged 7 to 14 years, had never had access to education. Compared with 1991, the current regional primary education gross enrollment rate is estimated to have increased 22%, of which 7.2% is attributable to the construction of schools by TDA. (Ibid.: 52)

According to data obtained from TDA headquarters in 2009, the association constructed a total of 121 primary schools, provided grants to 750 primary schools to implement school improvement plans, rehabilitated 16 war-affected primary schools, and conducted school feeding programmes that benefited more than 32,000 children in 80 drought-affected schools. Certain measures were also taken to improve the quality of education in secondary schools. For instance, 14 schools were furnished with equipment, chemicals and books.

Tutorial programmes for mathematics and English were introduced in 1993 in 14 high schools. Encouraged by the positive impact of the programme in improving the academic performance of students, TDA expanded the tutoring programme to include all upper primary (7th and 8th grades) and secondary schools, covering biology, chemistry, physics, geography and history. To date, more than 30,000 students are reported to have benefited from the programme. TDA instituted a student award programme to improve the academic performance of students through competition. Students achieving high scores in the national school leaving examination receive awards every year. Teachers' capacity-building and supply of reference books were also among the strategies TDA pursued to improve education quality in secondary schools.

The Special Kelamino High School for gifted students was established in 1998 in Mekelle with the objective of improving the human resource base of the region and the country at large (ibid.). Moreover, by providing four-year high-school scholarships to outstanding students to study at Kelamino, TDA intends to cultivate healthy academic competition in elementary schools. Data obtained from the school in 2009 reveal that between 1998 and 2009, a total of 904 students (638 male and 266 female) were accepted. The school record shows that most of the graduates performed above average in the national university entrance qualification examinations.

At the end of the civil war, libraries and reference books were practically non-existent in Tigray, and some 79 per cent of the adult population was illiterate (ibid.: 59–60). TDA tried to address those challenges as well. In 1991, the association entered into an agreement with the regional government to construct ten public libraries in the regional towns and rehabilitate one dilapidated building in Mekelle. The eleven libraries were built and furnished with high-quality reference texts and other books, and an estimated 140,000 people have been using them since (ibid.). At the end of the 2007 budget year, these libraries and three additional libraries were being rehabilitated and furnished with computers, internet networks and books on HIV/AIDS prevention and control. To address the illiteracy problem, TDA launched functional literacy programmes to equip adults with basic literacy skills: reading, writing, numeric and oral skills. Moreover, a working knowledge of the fundamentals of agriculture, health, nutrition, family planning and natural resource and environmental protection was also imparted.

Initially, TDA revenues were disbursed by the association on projects deemed necessary by the General Assembly. In 2005, however, TDA introduced a project-centred fund-raising scheme, which allows local and diaspora chapters to choose and execute certain projects in places of their choice. TDA remains responsible for verifying the relevance and feasibility of the proposed projects with the pertinent government institutions. The project-based fund-raising approach was believed to have created huge interest and healthy competition

among branches thanks to the sensitization work by the TDA leadership. The official website of the association reported how the TDA director's trip to Europe helped to sell the idea to the diaspora:

> Tigrai Development Association's (TDA's) campaign in Europe in the name of Unity for Development led by Ambassador Tewolde Gebru, Executive Director of TDA, was very successful [...] During his successful tour in March [2007] aimed at increasing members and [explaining the] [...] project-centred approach, TDA chapters of Sweden, Switzerland, England, Rome, and Milan each pledged to carry out construction of secondary school additional blocks. Discussion and mobilization were held to avoid weaknesses and to strengthen chapter Switzerland. As a result a total of 16,000 Swiss francs (over 100,000 birr) was pledged in a single fundraising event for the construction of an additional block in the name of TDA chapter Switzerland. TDA chapter Germany is the pioneer chapter to welcome the project centred approach of TDA.[12]

According to the 2008 annual report of TDA, 32 projects (14 primary schools, 11 high school additional blocks and 7 libraries) were completed or were operational. Some diaspora chapters sponsored the construction of 13 of the 14 primary schools and 3 of the 11 high-school blocks.[13] Of the six European TDA chapters, five were engaged in school construction projects in accordance with the project-based approach. It is apparent that the Tigrayan diaspora in Europe participated directly or indirectly in many of the educational projects discussed thus far. By so doing, they contributed to the rebuilding of their war-torn home region. As stated earlier, inculcating the ideals of peacebuilding should start quite early in schools, among other institutions, if a culture of peace, tolerance and conflict resolution is to be developed. In this regard, the education-sector initiatives of TDA constitute peacebuilding efforts, which are inseparable from development.

HEALTH In the aftermath of the civil war, health services were accessible to only 35 per cent of the population of Tigray (TDA 1999). This figure grew to 50 per cent in 1999 thanks to the efforts of TDA and the government. The efforts made by TDA in constructing sixty-two rural clinics, the health centre in Seleklaka town, believed to be serving over 100,000 people, and the hospital in Maichew town that improved access to referral services and secondary treatment for more than 900,000 people, were among the remarkable achievements of the first ten years of TDA's establishment. The 1999 TDA report reveals that the sixty-two rural clinics made healthcare available to more than 350,000 rural people, and an estimated 11 per cent of the health services in the rural areas were offered in establishments built by TDA. Apart from constructing health facilities, during the first ten years TDA engaged in training 371 traditional birth attendants and community health agents to improve maternal and child

healthcare; conducted research on acute respiratory infection and the provision of training to health workers in its diagnosis and treatment; provided training to high-school dropouts (encompassing 6,000 youngsters) as peer educators in AIDS prevention; and distributed medical supplies and equipment shipped to Ethiopia by TDA branches in the diaspora (ibid.: 68–70).

Data obtained from TDA headquarters in 2009 reveal that since the turn of the twenty-first century, TDA has expanded earlier accomplishments while launching certain new programmes. The construction of more facilities raised the total number of health establishments from 64 in 1999 to over 70 in 2008. The number of TDA-trained traditional birth attendants and community health agents increased from 371 in 1999 to 992 in 2008. TDA has been providing support for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) since 2005. The project started with 75 children and in 2008 there were 105 OVC getting such support. In the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and control, awareness-raising programmes were conducted with tens of thousands of schoolchildren (apart from school dropouts) to bring about behavioural changes. Moreover, anti-AIDS clubs were strengthened and support was given to people living with HIV/AIDS and volunteers who are engaged in the fight against the pandemic. Nine village water wells were also built and protected from contamination. TDA has been working with national and international organizations in executing its health projects.[14]

From interviews with TDA officials in 2009, it became evident that financial contributions from members and branches in Ethiopia and abroad were used for the implementation of many of the health projects, particularly those executed prior to 1999. Medicine and medical equipment worth millions of birr were sent by the overseas TDA branches. These supplies were donated to different health institutions across the Tigray region to improve the overall quality of health services (ibid.: 70). TDA clearly stated that one of its objectives is: 'To improve the service quality of health establishments through the provision of medical equipment, chemicals, and drugs primarily obtained from partners and supporters residing out of Ethiopia.' On many occasions, the association recognized the valuable contributions the diaspora community has been making in terms of shipping medical supplies. On 17 January 2009, TDA recognized and thanked its German chapter as follows:

> The German chapter of the TDA has donated 120 hospital beds with mattresses including 80 hospital cupboards worth Eth. *Birr* 3,480,000. The donated items will be distributed to four hospitals in Tigrai Regional State. The TDA International office would like to send its gratitude to w/ro Alem Tesfay and Ato Aynalem G/medhin, the general secretary of TDA Germany, for their relentless effort to collect and send hospital equipment to the needy people of Tigrai. It is important to recall that the German chapter has been very active in the last 15 years in soliciting medical support to Tigrai.[15]

Most TDA chapters in Europe participated in health projects (through financial remittance) implemented by the association during the first ten years. For instance, in its 2007 financial statements and reports, the chapter in the UK (TDA-UK) indicated that it has been involved in various TDA activities, such as the construction of schools and clinics, the supply of water tankers, vocational and skills training, credit provision for women, and training for traditional birth attendants; and coordination of the supply of essential books, hospital beds, medical equipment and computers for schools.[16] In recent years, the shipment of medical supplies to Tigray region seems to be the dominant area of diaspora engagement in the health sector. The participation of the diaspora in health-sector initiatives undoubtedly contributed to post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in the war-torn Tigray region.

SKILLS TRAINING The third major intervention area of TDA was provision of skills training in selected fields. This programme, designed to produce skilled workers for the reconstruction and recovery work in Tigray and to enable the trainees to become self-sufficient, is reported to have grown out of the following three concerns (ibid.: 76):

- Tigray lacked skilled workers and entrepreneurs and its Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Recovery Programme needed skilled workers if it was to be successful;
- there was a considerable pool of potential workers: landless rural households, returnees from settlement or refugee camps, former soldiers and fighters. These had all suffered from the repeated shocks of drought and war, and were vulnerable and needed assistance to recover and cope with a post-war situation.
- given the prevalence of soil erosion, land degradation, drought and overgrazing, an almost total dependence of Tigrayans on farming for a living was likely to perpetuate the reign of poverty and hunger unless sustained and vigorous interventions were introduced.

TDA established two training and demonstration centres to train the aforementioned groups of people in strategically selected fields – namely, basic construction, metalwork, woodwork, carpet-making, improved bee-keeping, roof tile technology, and general agricultural development and livestock production. Before its tenth anniversary in 1999, TDA trained a total of 3,494 people and this number increased to 7,000 in 2003, the year the training programmes were terminated owing to budgetary constraints. TDA claims that more than 80 per cent of the trainees are subsequently employed and it thereby helps to meet the high demand for skills in development projects. Moreover, 200 disabled veterans were trained in metal, wood and textile production skills and they have become employees of the centre.

One of the two training centres is in Seleklaka, a town located in western Tigray. Here, training was given in basic construction skills and improved bee-keeping. According to the records of the centre, a total of 1,920 people were trained between 1997 and 2003: 1,252 in bee-keeping and 568 in basic construction.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION In the late 1990s, the region of Tigray once again suffered owing to the bloody war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The border conflict in 1998/99 caused deaths, property destruction and population displacement. According to authorities, a total of 300,000 internally displaced persons (Tigrayan residents of border areas), 100,000 Ethiopian deportees from Eritrea and more than 12,000 Eritrean refugees were on the Ethiopian side of the border seeking support. Many people displaced by the war were psychologically disturbed, materially impoverished and socially disarticulated. According to an unpublished report by TDA-UK, 'this war has caused great loss of life and property; conflict over meagre resources among displaced and host communities; mistrust, hatred and lack of good neighbourliness; trauma and psychological problems'. TDA established what it called the Conflict Resolution Project (lasting from 2002 to 2005) with the objective of healing trauma, mitigating psychosocial stress, enhancing people's conflict resolution skills, and creating mutual trust among the peoples living along the border.

TDA developed this project in collaboration with its UK chapter and secured funds from the Baring Foundation to support the war-affected people. The various support activities included awareness-raising workshops, training in conflict resolution and psychological counselling, TV and radio programmes on conflict-related issues, establishment of a resource centre, facilitation of conflict resolution activities by releasing grants, distribution of leaflets and posters, and conducting harmonization activities between the Eritrean refugees and the local people in the border areas. According to informants, the training was given to community leaders, religious leaders, leaders of women's and youth organizations, and other influential personalities capable of calming down their respective communities and providing psychosocial assistance. A music band was also dispatched to send a message of peace and harmony to the displaced, deportees and refugees. Regarding the impact of the project, the undated TDA-UK report noted:

> As a result of our [...] intervention, the displaced people have been rehabilitated psychologically, most of the deportees are able to engage themselves either in self-employment or in other employment sectors and people around the border have started [to] smooth informal cross-border communications and trade exchange relations. Above all, people who participated in the conflict resolution trainings are trying to handle conflicts properly, to resolve them

peacefully and assist others to behave similarly. The two external evaluations indicated that the project was successful.

Some 90 per cent of the internally displaced persons are reported to have returned to their home villages, while some could not return because of the continued dispute over the territory and/or security concerns. Those who returned had to be rehabilitated, and the expenses included money for building their houses, demining the areas, and the development of infrastructure. Each deportee was given 3,000 birr for resettlement and re-establishment in different parts of Tigray. The 12,000 Eritrean refugees were also supported by this project. The money for physical rehabilitation came from the World Bank; the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was involved in executing the programme. According to officials, the process of deportation of Ethiopians from Eritrea continued until 2009. The recent deportees were younger people, who were given a small amount of money for re-establishment.

INVESTMENT PROMOTION Through its chapters and members, TDA played a significant role in attracting investment to Tigray. The association works closely with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which controls the regional government, with respect to diaspora mobilization, because both organizations believe that the diaspora could make a significant contribution in peacebuilding, transfer of knowledge, and transfer of financial resources in the form of remittance or direct investment. Economic development that involves stimulating private sector development and investment is widely recognized as contributing to lasting and sustainable peace. The Tigray Regional Government claims to have created a favourable environment for private investment.[17] As of March 2009, a total of 1,569 investments with a total capital of more than 13.5 billion birr have been licensed in eight different activities. Some 151 investments with a total capital of nearly 1.6 billion birr (11.76 per cent of the total) were made by the diaspora. Of the 151 diaspora investments, 36 came from Europe and their capital was 200,281,382 birr (12.59 per cent of the diaspora total).

TDA has been serving as an intermediary agent in bringing together the leadership of Tigray region and the diaspora. Meetings between high-level Tigrayan officials and the Tigrayan community in Europe were held on occasions of TDA anniversaries. For example, the TDA chapter in Germany organized what was called 'TDA Europe Festival' on 15/16 August 2008, and the president of the Tigray region was the guest of honour. According to the TDA website,

> The delegation led by H.E. Ato Tsegay Berhe, the president of Tigrai Regional State, and TDA top officials successfully completed their mission in Europe. The participants of the festival discussed about 19 years of accomplishment and the vision of TDA for the next 30 years in the context of the development in Tigrai and Ethiopia. The participants also discussed the current situation and

future plan of the development of Tigrai with Dr Wolday Amha, the chairperson of TDA, and Ambassador Tewolde Gebru, executive director of TDA. The next day, 16 August 2008, the president of Tigrai Regional State, H.E. Ato Tsegay Berhe addressed the big audience representing almost all parts of Europe.[18]

Sometimes, TDA and TPLF events are organized on the same day, in the same venue, and for the same audience. On 3 March 2007, the Tigray community in Stockholm, Sweden, had a TDA meeting coinciding with TPLF's thirty-second anniversary. Ambassador Tewolde Gebru attended the double-purpose event in his capacity as executive director of TDA-International and member of the Central Committee of TPLF. A report by the organizers (TDA-Sweden Branch, Union of Tigrians in Europe Sweden Branch, and Union of Tigrian Women in Europe Sweden Branch) of the event states:[19]

> Ambassador Tewolde dwelt during his speech on the numerous achievements of various communities and branches of TDA at home and abroad and gave ample evidence of the importance of participating in project forms [...] He also praised the role the members of the community played in accomplishing earlier tasks and projects as well as contributions [...] The meeting was then immediately followed by celebration of the 32nd anniversary of the birth of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Ambassador Tewolde as guest of honour held a speech by paying tribute to the memory of the fallen heroes in the fight against the fascist Derg and by emphasizing the necessity of upholding peace, democracy and development through the concerted efforts of all Ethiopians.

OTHER ACTIVITIES In the aftermath of the civil war, TDA was also engaged in other post-conflict construction activities, although not on a large scale. According to reports on its website under facts and figures, these include road construction, water development, agriculture, natural resource and livestock production, irrigation dams, and culture and sports. TDA constructed two rural access roads covering 62 kilometres (the Freweini–Hawzien and the Kaze–Tsegede roads) to facilitate market access, emergency food distribution and transportation to remote villages. It also developed 9 rural water wells, constructed 10 micro-dams to store water for irrigation, developed 13 forage and vegetable seed multiplication centres, established 52 tree nurseries, and distributed 36,000 kerosene stoves to reduce deforestation. In the area of culture and sports, it established Circus Tigray as well as football, cycling and martial arts clubs.

FUNDING Currently, the funding sources of TDA include contributions from members (diaspora remittances included), grants/donations, property rental and sales, and different fund-raising activities. Initially, however, the association

relied mainly on contributions from its members and supporters. For example, more than 91 per cent of TDA's annual budget for the year 1993/94 came from membership contribution. In 1994/95, income from members constituted 76.8 per cent of the annual revenue. This was the year during which the Tigrayan diaspora in Europe made the highest contribution in one year: 1,235,189.26 birr (7.64 per cent of TDA's revenue for that year). The diaspora in Europe has remitted a total of 10,988,745 birr since the establishment of the first three TDA chapters in 1989. It is important to note that some remittances came in cash and others in kind. The Tigrayan community in Europe continues to support TDA, though the amount of remittance has shown significant variation with a general trend of decline as of 2005. The association tried to galvanize diaspora support in Europe, however, by strengthening the existing chapters, establishing a new branch in France, organizing sensitization events to increase membership and mobilize resources, and introducing the project-based fund-raising programme discussed earlier.

With the objective of curbing the declining trend in membership mobilization, TDA has consolidated its chapters in North America (the major remittance bloc, followed by Europe) and established new contacts in Australia, Djibouti, Israel, Kenya, Riyadh, Uganda and Yemen since the turn of the twenty-first century. The consolidation and expansion efforts in Europe and elsewhere in the world seem to have gradually paid off, as evidenced by the increase in gross membership contribution.

TDA was aware of the fact that remittance alone cannot be expected to address the formidable and multidimensional challenges in post-conflict Tigray. Hence, it devised strategies to raise funds locally and globally. Locally, the association vigorously worked on recruiting new members and opening new branches in Ethiopia. Between 1994 and 2008, TDA collected 63,409,650 birr from the local branches – 4.7 times more than the amount obtained from the diaspora (13,485,746 birr) in the same period. In the fifteen years between 1994 and 2008, the fund mobilized from local members has constituted more than 20 per cent of the association's revenue. From 1993/94 to 2003/04, local contributions came mainly from the Tigray region and Addis Ababa. The amount of contribution from the two regions, however, declined, hitting its lowest point (772,690 birr) in 2003/04. Perhaps alarmed by this downward spiral, TDA established several branches/sub-branches in different parts of Ethiopia and has successfully managed to reverse the local revenue decline since 2004/05.

TDA is known for developing and submitting project proposals to national and international funding agencies to sponsor certain activities. According to information obtained from the headquarters, some of the partners and supporters of the organization include USAID, EU, MfM, SIDA, CIDA, DANIDA, ESRDF, REST, Community Fund of UK, Banyan Tree Foundation, Baring Foundation of UK, UNICEF, PACT, GTZ, A Glimmer of Hope, CRDA, Comic Relief Society

of Britain, and Pathfinder-Ethiopia. The first big sum in the form of a grant/donation (22,458,534 birr) came in 1995/96. The phenomenal increases in TDA revenues from donations and other sources in the years that followed dwarfed the numeric (if not the strategic and symbolic) significance of membership contributions, especially the diaspora remittance. However, TDA has found it to be in its best interests to engage members both at home and abroad to maintain its legitimacy. The association has been using the capacity of the diaspora to develop project proposals, locate/contact donors, and attract investors. For example, TDA-UK, in collaboration with TDA-International (as the headquarters is called), developed a project for the promotion of conflict resolution skills and secured funds amounting to 2,736,600 birr from the Baring Foundation. Besides building a school block in Tigray, TDA-UK collaborated with the head office in 2007/08 on another project aimed at securing funds from the Big Lottery Fund for a feasibility study on HIV/AIDS prevention and control. Based on the study, they developed an HIV/AIDS prevention/control project and submitted a proposal to the fund for further support.

The other sources of income of TDA include house rental, machinery rental and sales, stock sales, sales of investment shares, revenue from leased land, income from dairy and horticulture, income from special lotteries (tombolas), trade fair income, and income from resource mobilization events, especially telethons, TDA's iconic fund-raising strategy. TDA conducted telethons in 1994 and 1995; Araya Zerihun, its late chairman, was the first to introduce fund-raising through telethon events in Ethiopia. In October 2008, TDA organized its third telethon event in Addis Ababa. According to a TDA communiqué posted on its website on 6 October 2008, the third major fund-raising telethon that was declared 'successful and resounding' was conducted in the presence of the Ethiopian head of state as the guest of honour, high-ranking federal and regional government officials, high-profile business persons, several hundred members and sympathizers of TDA in both the civilian and military ranks, representatives of public and private profit-making enterprises, bilateral aid agencies, and representatives of TDA chapters from within the country and abroad. The central theme of the event was transforming 725 schools in Tigray from makeshift shelters to standard and relatively well-equipped and decent physical infrastructural set-ups. The organizers had expected to raise Ethiopian 50 million birr. However, the outcome far exceeded the target as a total of 146 million birr was raised in the form of cash and material donations and pledges.

Critical issues related to TDA operations
LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING TDA AND THE DI-ASPORA Interviews conducted in Wejerat and Seleklaka reveal that different people have varied knowledge of TDA, the diaspora and their respective roles. In the two sites, government officials, educated people (e.g. teachers, and health

workers) and enlightened leaders of community-based organizations were well informed about TDA and the role of the diaspora in the reconstruction and development of Tigray. The enlightened people also clearly distinguished between TDA and the regional government as much as they expressed the strong bond between the two. On the other hand, ordinary people and moderately enlightened community leaders in Wejerat seemed to make hardly any distinction between the regional government and TDA, which was generally viewed as an agent of the former. It seemed that the regional government was given credit for what TDA claims to have accomplished. Nor did the informants in Wejerat clearly distinguish between Tigrayans in the diaspora and those living elsewhere in Ethiopia. However, they were aware of the fact that their fellow Tigrayans residing outside the region (be it inside Ethiopia or abroad) have been extending a helping hand since the end of the civil war.

The perception of all categories of informants of TDA and the Tigrayans supporting their home region was very positive and appreciative. A high-school teacher in Wejerat noted that TDA and the diaspora are highly respected development actors in Tigray. The local people seem to have an inflated view of the capacity of TDA and the Tigrayans living outside of Tigray. There was huge demand for and expectation of more interventions (in education, health and infrastructure) and disappointment with terminated projects. In a group discussion held at Wejerat, informants voiced their demand for the recently built high school and a hospital, which they characterized as empty buildings without even the minimum supplies, to be furnished. They also expressed their desire for a cut-through road (12 kilometres) that would connect the town to the Mekelle–Addis Ababa highway. Interviews conducted in Seleklaka town reveal the high importance attached to the TDA skills training programme, largely because it provided job opportunities. A female construction worker claimed that she would be earning between 25 and 35 birr per day when there is construction work. A bee-keeper noted that the training in modern bee-keeping made him a rich farmer in his community. Most informants in Seleklaka expressed disappointment at the closure of the training centre.

PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL PEOPLE IN TDA PROJECTS The participation of the local community in TDA-sponsored projects is a prime requirement that is strictly enforced by the association. According to TDA (1999: 48), 'It has always been one of TDA's fundamental principles that communities should have a say in all aspects of development which affect them, starting from project idea formulation to implementation and sustaining it, particularly when it is done in collaboration with TDA.' Practically, however, many TDA projects (especially those sponsored by membership contributions) rarely passed through the conventional project cycle management phases. In terms of the construction of schools and clinics, for instance, TDA simply accepted

project locations recommended by the relevant government bureaus. In this regard, TDA continues to implement government projects. It seems that the regional government did not undertake baseline surveys in all project areas where TDA has been operating. Authorities indicated that project locations are normally recommended to TDA based on prior government plans to fill identified gaps and/or pressing community demand. It is equally important to note that projects funded by partners (donors) were implemented largely based on project identification exercises conducted by TDA. While TDA-sponsored projects were rarely evaluated, those funded by partners were rigorously monitored and evaluated.

Once the project area is determined, the local people would be contacted by the *woreda* administration and TDA representatives to participate in site selection, provide free labour and supply raw materials (e.g. stone and sand). Hintalo Wejerat is one of the *woredas* in which TDA recently completed a school construction. The small town of Wejerat (also Debub) was selected for the construction of a high school (now called Isra Hade) based on community demand, according to officials. Initially, the community participated in choosing the school site, although the final determination was left to experts. Three parties were involved in the construction of the three-block high school, which accepted the first batch of ninth-grade students in the 2008/09 academic year. TDA-UK, the Wejerat community and their supporters from within Ethiopia, and the administration of Hintalo Wejerat *woreda*, built one block each. The residents reportedly provided free labour in earthwork and stone collection during the construction phase, although some people initially thought that the government should build the school as a matter of duty. The Wejerat Development Association, a local NGO, is reported to have risen over 100,000 birr and is making further progress to build a fourth block.

PERCEPTIONS OF TDA–TPLF RELATIONS The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is an ethnicity-based regional political party that administers the Tigray Regional State. Moreover, it plays a dominant role in national politics as evidenced by its grip on power since 1991. TDA was established by Tigrayans in the diaspora and moved to Ethiopia to engage in post-conflict reconstruction and development in the Tigray region. The two institutions have been working very closely, while officially maintaining their different status as governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, critical observers contend that the relationship between the TDA and TPLF is much more than the formal partnership between a political party and an NGO. Some of the views and misgivings seem to be shaped by hearsay and unconfirmed reports, while others are based on credible sources, such as TDA's own reports.

One of the views is that TDA was established by the diaspora and operated overseas as an integral part of the overall movement for the liberation of Tigray.

The proponents of this position point to the close working relations between the leadership of TPLF and TDA both before and after the 1991 government change in Ethiopia. Many members of TDA, including those in the leadership, are believed to be members and/or strong supporters of TPLF. It was argued that the double-membership phenomenon is indicative of the inseparability of the two institutions. An extreme variant of this view alleges that TDA is a proxy organization that works for TPLF, which directs the activities of the association and controls its investments. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), a banned opposition party, describes TDA as one of the pro-TPLF organizations that contributes to the grand mission of TPLF to develop Tigray while letting the other regions deteriorate. In its online publication entitled 'EPRDF replaces public enterprises with political party businesses', OLF described the history and the current role of TDA as follows:

> When Tigray was liberated from the control of the government in Addis Ababa in 1988, the TPLF was faced with the challenges of developing Tigray. To cope with this challenge, the Tigray Development Association (TDA) was created to mobilize resources from educated, wealthy, and pro-TPLF members of the Tigrayan Diaspora particularly in Europe and North America. Though it was assumed to be independent of the TPLF structurally, members of its Board of Directors are top TPLF political leaders. After the end of the war [...] TDA experienced a rapid organizational growth [...] [It increased its financial resources] through an intensification of fund-raising campaigns backed up by the political power of the TPLF.[20]

The response from TDA officials to such critics is unequivocal. The association is a non-political and non-partisan independent organization established by the diaspora who were not members of the TPLF. Informants indicated that leaders of TDA and TPLF have been collaborating since 1989 (both during and after the liberation struggle) because helping the people of Tigray has been their common concern. Although individual members of TDA have supported and/or joined TPLF and vice versa over the years, TDA is reported to have maintained its integrity as an independent development association with a track record of working with all friends of Tigray in Ethiopia and abroad. One senior member of TPLF stated, 'had it not been for its non-partisan position, TDA would not have secured support from individuals and political organizations opposed to TPLF and the current government of Ethiopia'. A top TDA official reported that the current executive director of TDA is the first TPLF member to assume a leadership position in the association.

There exist other allegations that TDA has enjoyed preferential treatment from the regional government of Tigray and the federal government from the beginning. First, in the early 1990s, the regional government provided a partially constructed government building to serve as TDA headquarters. The question

that is raised in this regard is whether the region has the jurisdiction to grant public resources to NGOs. Secondly, TDA's fund-raising and other events were broadcast live via national radio and television, federal resources that are inaccessible to ordinary NGOs. Thirdly, TDA is the only national NGO to open several branches in different parts of Ethiopia and, on a single occasion, raised as much as 146 million birr through a nationally televised telethon. In this regard, the association is believed to be mobilizing members and resources in the shadow of TPLF's formidable political clout in Ethiopia.

Conclusion

This study has shown that Ethiopian migration abroad started well before the twentieth century, assuming the form of religious pilgrimage. However, diasporic impact on the homeland could be said to have begun only in the twentieth century, when such migrations began to have political dimensions. Three major landmarks that could be discerned in this regard relate to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936, the 1974 revolution (in both its antecedents and repercussions), and the 1991 regime change. The 1974 revolution in particular had special pertinence to diaspora formation in two ways: first, exiled student radicals played a significant role in providing ideological direction to the revolutionary movement, and secondly, the outbreak of the revolution and its bloody course soon led to a mass exodus of Ethiopians abroad, mainly to the United States and Europe. The regime change of 1991 had a similar effect of entailing the return of former exiles and the flight of new ones, depending on their political sympathies or antipathies.

It thus appears that political remittance has been the main thrust of diasporic impact on the homeland, be it in the ideological impact of the student movement abroad on the home front or the political oppositions first to military rule and then to the post-1991 regime. But political remittance tells only half the story since financial remittance emerges as an important feature of diasporic impact on the homeland, particularly with the economic stresses in the last years of military rule. This has assumed significant proportions in recent years, and the birth of organizations such as TDA has amplified this aspect of diasporic intervention in homeland development. Social/cultural remittance, too, seems to have increased dramatically over the last two decades with the frequency of visits of diasporic Ethiopians. It would not be easy, however, to determine how much the changes in Ethiopian social and cultural life are due to the influence of diasporic Ethiopians and how much to other modern media of acculturation.

Since its establishment in the late 1980s, and particularly after relocating to Tigray in the early 1990s, TDA has played an important role in the rebuilding of establishments and livelihoods by reaching marginal areas with important services and facilities never provided before. Thus, the interventions of TDA in

the (re)construction of schools, clinics and roads fit well into the definitional ambit of peacebuilding. The provision of skills training to former refugees, ex-soldiers and the resource poor with the aim of re-establishing their lives and contributing to the recovery process has also contributed to peacebuilding. In the context of rural communities, skills training represented a creative means to reduce pressure over land and avoid potential conflict over such scarce resources. Moreover, TDA's conflict resolution training programme undertaken in 2002–05 produced some tangible results in terms of awareness creation and sensitization on issues related to peace. Although Ethiopia and Eritrea are still at a stand-off as regards their border dispute, their citizens in the border areas live in relative peace, and this state of affairs could partly be attributed to the programme. The same programme is reported to have prevented potential conflict among people (especially between hosts and IDPs) over meagre resources such as grazing and farmland.

TDA has transformed itself in two ways over the years: first by shifting its drive from purely charitable humanitarian assistance to a widely recognized development intervention; secondly, by transforming itself from a diaspora organization into one based in Tigray itself. This evolution has ensured the continued presence of the association in Tigray to consolidate previous achievements, reach out to new target groups and areas, and contribute to developmental efforts in the region. This does not mean that the external branches of TDA have ceased to be an important component of TDA activities. On the contrary, TDA continues to attach great importance to its external constituency as signified by its recognition of the efficiency with which its European branches have been operating. The challenge that TDA faces is the size of Tigray, with a population of 4.3 million. Hence not all Tigrayans affected by the war could benefit from the post-conflict reconstruction efforts since there is still a need for more schools, clinics and roads to serve those who lacked such opportunities for so long, including after the end of the war. In this light, what TDA has accomplished to date constitutes only a fraction of what is required to be undertaken in post-conflict reconstruction.

Whether TDA will be affected in an adverse manner as a result of the new legal dispensation remains to be seen. It is true that TDA has managed to build a relatively broad base by enlisting hundreds of thousands of corporate and individual members and sympathizers in the different parts of Tigray and the rest of Ethiopia. The organization's fund-raising efforts are further boosted by occasional events that result in generating considerable sums internally. According to 2004 figures, 35.6 per cent of its revenue was reportedly generated from membership contributions whereas it still remains heavily dependent on foreign funding (estimated at around 45 per cent), which impedes its re-registration as an 'Ethiopian' charity, as per Article 2 of the new legislation, which stipulates that organizations raise 90 per cent of their

revenue internally to qualify as an 'Ethiopian' charity. Even the amount from membership contributions cited above was not entirely raised from internal sources, as the diaspora members continue to contribute a significant share of this. Registering as an 'Ethiopian resident' charity, the option open to NGOs that get more than 10 per cent of their funding from external sources, may not have an adverse effect on the organization as TDA's engagement in the areas proscribed for 'foreign' and 'Ethiopian resident' organizations (in such fields as governance, conflict resolution, democracy, human rights, etc.) are not within its purview. Moreover, the organization's close links with the TPLF are likely to help it weather whatever temporary setbacks the new legislation might entail. It is worth noting that TDA's closeness to the locus of power is demonstrated in several ways, such as the financial, material/infrastructural support it receives from state sources (see TDA 1999).[21]

Moreover, government officials at all levels actively participate in its various fund-raising events and anniversary celebrations. Besides, the fact that TDA is managed by a leading member of the TPLF at the time of writing is not without some significance. Hence, one can conclude that it has a better chance of coping with the consequences of the new legal restrictions than other NGOs and similar organizations.

Notes

1 A combination of data collection methods was employed, namely, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and literature reviews. Informants were selected based on their depth of knowledge and participation in TDA activities. Apart from visiting the headquarters of the association in Mekelle (the capital of the Tigray region), fieldwork was undertaken in three specific research sites (Mekelle, Wajerat and Seleklaka) to solicit data from the direct beneficiaries. Transcription and translation work followed the data collection process. Upon reviewing the transcribed and translated documents, the research team developed the structure of the report and followed this with the interpretation/analysis of data and the write-up.

2 www.peace.ca/downloads/educ.doc, accessed 30 July 2009.

3 www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/ SPHCMWeb.nsf/resources/AUSCAN_Issue _Paper_I.pdf/%24file/AUSCAN_Issue_ Paper_I.pdf+peace+building+health&cd= 3&hl=en&ct=clnk.

4 www.esai.org/myESAi/viewtopic-t-3222.html.

5 The full story of the abortive plot is narrated in fascinating detail in a forthcoming book: Ian Campbell, *The Plot to Kill Graziani: The Attempted Assassination of Mussolini's Viceroy*, Addis Ababa University Press (forthcoming).

6 This section on the Ethiopian student movement is based on the extensive data that Bahru Zewde has been gathering on the subject as part of his ongoing research project.

7 Wheeler is fond of referring to 'Amharic' communities or groups. This, presumably, is meant to refer to the Amhara, for 'Amharic' is a linguistic and not an ethnic category. More importantly, it echoes a common fallacy of equating pan-Ethiopian sentiments with Amhara identity.

8 This unit was subsequently renamed the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) and, more recently, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA).

9 In its manifesto issued in 1976, the TPLF declared that it was fighting for the establishment of an independent republic. This stance was soon dropped owing to lack of internal support for the proposed project.

10 Following its founding in the mid-1970s, the TPLF had to contend for space and constituency of support in the Tigray region with other political forces of ethno-national and multi-ethnic composition and political orientation; the Tigray Liberation Front (TLF) represented the former category while the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) represented the latter. As a result, it entered into military confrontation with these groups in addition to its armed struggle against the military regime. Hence it was forced to engage on several fronts against its adversaries, emerging victorious and eventually succeeding in controlling the Ethiopian state and dominating the political scene in the post-1991 years.

11 temp.tdaint.org/aboutus_t.html.

12 temp.tdaint.org/Europe%20Tour1.html.

13 A Glimmer of Hope (NGO), local chapters and corporate members were responsible for the remaining sixteen projects. There are other educational projects that TDA executed or continues to execute without direct diaspora engagement. These include the establishment of the Mekelle Institute of Technology (MIT); the construction of schools with funds from A Glimmer of Hope and the embassy of Japan; the implementation of Basic Education System Overhaul Project (BESO I), Basic Education Strategic Objective Project (BESO II) and Community School Partnership Programme (CSPP) activities with the assistance of USAID; the (Ambassador's) Girls Scholarship Programme in three *woreadas* with the assistance of Academy for Educational Development to cover the basic expenses of some eighty-four girls from poor families.

14 TDA runs community-based reproductive health and family planning programmes in five *woredas* (Hintalo-Wajerat, Seharti Samre, Ahferom, Naeder Adet and Woreile) in cooperation with CRDA and Pathfinder. Reproductive health activities include fistula identification and treatment, dealing with harmful traditions, adolescent and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS (awareness-raising and condom distribution), and capacity-building. The family planning activities include capacity-building and provision of contraceptives (pills and injections) to all *woredas*. In the process of implementation, at the local level, TDA works with peer educators, community councillors (teachers, principals, etc.), community conversation facilitators, *woreda*-level health experts and *woreda* advisory committees consisting of a *woreda* administrator, a church leader, representatives of community-based organizations, a police officer, etc.

15 www.tdaint.org/News/tabid/56/ctl/Details/mid/416/ItemID/65/Default.aspx.

16 www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registeredcharities/ScannedAccounts/Ends15%255C0001018315_ac_20070930_e_c.pdf+TDA+uk+2007+report&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk.

17 In addition to incentives at the federal level (namely, exemptions from customs duty and income/profit tax), the regional government provides additional incentives, such as low and fixed land lease prices, prolonged lease payment periods, the right to use lease rights as collateral, the right to bequeath investment land to successors, etc.

18 www.tdaint.org/News/tabid/56/ctl/Details/mid/416/ItemID/51/Default.aspx, 2 August 2009.

19 See www.ethioobserver.net/Stokholm_32TPLF.htm.

20 'EPRDF replaces public enterprises with political party businesses', *Oromia Speaks*, 10(1), www.oromoliberationfront.org/Publications/OSvol10Art1002.htm, accessed 30 July 2009.

21 The Tigray National/Regional Self-Government provided TDA with a sum of hundreds of thousands of Ethiopian

birr to be used as seed money in the early 1990s. Moreover, the present TDA headquarters is located in a former public building granted to the organization as private property. The various subregional units of the regional government, including the municipalities under them, have also provided it with public land that it can use as deemed necessary and appropriate. It is also worth noting that the current chief executive officer of TDA is Ambassador Tewelde Gebru, a leading figure and a central committee member of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

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European approaches to diaspora engagement

7 | Interaction between Somali organizations and Italian and Finnish development actors

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Engaging diasporas for peace and development: a dynamic approach[1]

In the course of the last decade development institutions and governments in migrants' countries of residence and of origin have been increasingly seeking ways to engage diaspora groups to contribute more effectively to the development of their countries of origin, varying in their modes, willingness and abilities to effectively engage with diasporas. Although this engagement is still a rather marginal phenomenon, which builds on the spontaneous involvement of diasporas in initiatives towards their country of origin, it has been taking several forms, such as involving migrants in policy formulation; building the capacity of diaspora organizations to become professionals and manage development projects; funding diaspora organizations' projects; recruiting diaspora members as volunteers; or involving immigrants in return programmes of different types (De Haas 2006: 4). This topic has been much discussed in the policy domain, whereas a thorough theoretical analysis of engagement dynamics, mechanisms and processes of interaction between organized diaspora groups and different actors in the peace and development fields still remains to be undertaken.

This chapter aims to fill this gap, by comparing mechanisms and processes of interaction occurring in Italy and Finland between institutional actors and the Somali diaspora (organized or as individuals, acting within organizations). The rationale for comparing the two countries derives from several differences between country contexts, namely their migration history, their historical relationship with Somalia, existing policies on integration, funding structures available for diaspora organizations, and initiatives to engage the diaspora in development cooperation. These differences provide a good starting point to enrich the theoretical approach to migrant mobilization, showing, as the Somali case demonstrates, that contextual opportunities/structures matter but cannot alone justify the numerous similarities found in diaspora engagement dynamics in both countries.

From a theoretical perspective we have built a conceptual framework that draws from the most recent evolutions in social movement theory, namely

'contentious politics'. This theory has yet rarely been applied to analysing diaspora politics or immigrants' forms of mobilization and organization. Such a framework, without denying the importance of contexts/opportunities/structures as explanatory variables in migrants' patterns of engagement, brings in dynamic elements, by focusing on mechanisms and processes of interaction and contention, alliances, ties, networks and partnerships established between organized Somalis and Italian and Finnish governmental and non-governmental institutions. The framework has also the advantage of being applied on different scales: from small-scale claims-making processes occurring between diaspora organizations and (local) institutions, to high-level involvement in transnational politics. This perspective is further discussed in the next section.

Theoretical reflections and definitions

Theoretically, the chapter's inspiration can be positioned within criticisms of neo-institutional theories, with a specific focus on the notion of political opportunity structures (POS). This notion, first developed in social movement and collective action theory (Tilly 1978; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi et al. 1995), was adopted by many comparative ethnic and migration studies to explain variations in forms of migrants' grassroots organizing, mobilization and participation.[2] The basic idea is that each form of collective action is understood as 'part of a larger political process and as being shaped by opportunities and constraints offered by its political environment' (Koopmans et al. 2005: 16).

When applied to ethnic and migration research, however, the POS approach lost some of its complexity (Bousetta 2000: 232). POS has thus been criticized for being static in explaining mobilization patterns; for not considering the local and transnational level; for its one-sided emphasis on institutional factors, undermining the agency and strategies used by migrants; and for being too general, irrespective of the characteristics of particular issue fields and collective actors (ibid.; Baubock 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Garbaye 2005; Caponio 2005, 2006; Martiniello and Lafleur 2008). In particular, as highlighted by Bousetta, the POS framework seems to neglect immigrant/ethnic organizations' internal and identity construction processes, thus 'misinterpreting immigrants' true role [...] and portraying them as passive agents whose actions are determined by institutional structures alone' (Bousetta 2000: 235). This chapter aims to analyse interactive dynamics from the diaspora's perspective, in this way contributing to addressing some of the theoretical gaps highlighted above.

The concept of 'institutional interlocutors' has been adopted in the chapter with the aim of further providing a dynamic account of the role of patterned dialogues and relationships between the diaspora and various institutional and civil society actors (Landolt 2008: 54).

In Tilly and Tarrow, contentious politics unite 'contention, collective action and politics' (2007: 4–7). The contentious politics framework has been here

applied to analyse migrants as organized groups ('collective action'), putting forward claims ('claims-making'), and interacting with governmental actors and non-governmental institutions, thus connected to 'politics', within both the country of origin and that of settlement. 'Contention' has to do with claims-making that impacts somebody's interests.[3] 'Collective' action is a manifest, coordinated initiative in favour of common interests or programmes. 'Politics' refers to the fact that most contentions take place outside the political sphere. The political arena is entered when interactions happen with governmental agents: institutions on the national or local levels.[4] It must be noted, however, that politics has different graduations, from mere routine to issues of extreme gravity, such as violent conflicts. Most importantly, without denying the importance of institutional and contextual elements, our theoretical framework shifts the focus from contextual conditions (POS) to more relational and dynamic dimensions inherent to patterns of mobilization (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007; more recently, Morales and Giugni 2011).

Tilly and Tarrow (2007) in particular called for increasing attention to 'mechanisms and processes of contention'.[5] In their theorizations 'mechanisms' are 'a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations' (McAdam et al. 2001: 24; Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Processes are 'regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements' (ibid.).

Within a contentious politics framework, interactions have been observed taking place at the local level (especially in Italy) and at the national level (mostly in Finland). Throughout the presentation of empirical material in this chapter, three types of interactive mechanisms between the diaspora and institutional interlocutors have been analysed in detail: 'certification', 'brokerage' and 'diffusion'. Many more exist. However, what is important to note is that mechanisms do not operate on their own. Mechanisms and processes form a continuum, whereby two processes are fundamental: mobilization and demobilization (McAdam et al. 2001: 14).

Comparing the contexts: different opportunities for the Somali diaspora

There are significant differences between the Italian and the Finnish contexts that have affected both the living conditions of Somalis and the interaction mechanisms between diasporas and settlement-country institutions. First, the relationship that Italy and Finland have with Somalia is very different, which partly explains the different formation of Somali communities in both countries. While southern Somalia is a former Italian colony, the historical link between Finland and Somalia started through development cooperation programmes in the 1980s.

Because of its colonial legacy, Italy hosts a historical Somali community, largely composed of local elites, who arrived in the country starting in the 1950s (Aden and Petrucci 1991; Farah 2003). The Somali population in Italy grew in the late 1980s/early 1990s owing to the civil war in Somalia, but soon after started decreasing in number, owing to the lack of social benefits, housing and employment opportunities for refugees (Mezzetti and Guglielmo 2010). Indeed, many Somalis relocated to other European countries. In the early stages, Somali flows towards Italy were composed predominantly of women who were the wives of diplomats and Somali politicians. This partly explains the large number of well-educated Somali women in Italy, active in establishing diaspora associations and in participating in trade unions, political parties, grassroots organizations and NGOs. The gender composition of the Somali diaspora can also be explained by the little state support for refugees and asylum seekers mentioned above, coupled with the market demand for caretaking jobs directed at women. It has been harder for men initially to find satisfactory work, which has resulted in the past in decisions to move elsewhere or to not even choose Italy as a primary destination. However, recently there has been an increase in the number of people arriving in Italy from the Horn of Africa: as of 31 December 2010, 8,112 Somalis officially resided in Italy,[6] compared to the 2009, 2008 and 2007 figures that registered respectively 7,728, 6,663 and 6,237 Somalis (National Institute of Statistics Italy 2011, 2010, 2009).

Better social benefits have been offered by northern European countries, which received refugees and asylum seekers predominantly in the 1990s, allowing family reunification programmes. The first refugees of Somali origin arrived in Finland in the late 1980s and in higher numbers from 1990 onwards as asylum seekers. In 2011, 14,045 Somali mother tongue speakers resided in Finland, of which 7,421 are Somali nationals (Statistics Finland 2012). Somalis represent the first and largest group of migrants coming from Africa and the fourth-largest group of all immigrants in Finland (Statistics Finland 2011), attracting interest from policy-makers and academics. Over half of the Somali community consists of youth and children under nineteen years old and 55 per cent of the community members are male (Statistics Finland 2012; Tiilikainen 2003; Hautaniemi 2004). Many Somalis are now Finnish citizens.

Secondly, Italy and Finland differ in their immigration and integration policies and measures. National immigration law defines the social benefits, the integration procedures and migrants' status with all related rights and duties. Italian immigration legislation is strict and often contradictory (Pastore 2004); it is permeated by anti-immigrant rhetoric and recurrent shifts between reception and rejection measures (Bolaffi and Damiani 1996; Zincone and Caponio 2006) and still reflects the need for harmonization with other European immigration policies and practices. At present, Somali refugees in Italy are entitled to receive a residence permit for twelve months only,

whose renewal takes another six months. During these months, refugees are illegal residents in Italy, and this causes difficulties in satisfying their basic survival needs, such as finding a job or renting an apartment. The Italian Ministry of Interior is the responsible institution for immigration issues. Its role is, however, limited to the management of a reception quota system, which establishes the number of immigrants that can enter Italy every year, and to the acceptance of refugees and asylum seekers, through the decentralized programme for the protection of refugees named SPRAR (System for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers).[7]

Also with regard to social policies and integration measures, since the late 1990s Italy has developed a decentralized system, where local institutions may develop their own immigration policies using national funds (Chaloff 2005). However, Italian immigration and integration legislation and policies remain dispersive, and this negatively impacts the capacity of national institutions to benefit from a paradigm that could fruitfully connect migration and development. When looking at institutional structures, the separation between migration and development issues is further revealed: while the Ministry of Interior is responsible for immigration issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deals with international cooperation policies and the two ministries scarcely interact.[8]

Finland, in turn, has effective policies and measures for integrating immigrants, and social allowances are available, based on the Act of Integration (L 493/1999, §2) which came into force in 1999, and was last amended in 2011. Upon the settlement of refugees, municipalities are in charge of realizing their integration plan, and during the realization period (three years) refugees are entitled to allowances. Although the integration system includes social allowances, in reality resources have been criticized as being insufficient and the process of integration for being too much 'authority-driven'. In Finland the Ministry of Interior is responsible for immigration policies, and integration issues are dealt with by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The actual tasks that relate to immigration, integration and good ethnic relations are carried out by the immigration units of the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment at the regional level. The ministry engages with immigrant organizations mainly through the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO),[9] on which there is also a representative of the Somali community. As in Italy, institutional separation exists between ministries regarding migration and development issues.

Thirdly, both development cooperation administrative structures and formal initiatives for engaging the Somali diaspora in the two countries differ. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been articulating its activities with the Somali diaspora under two different departments: Development Cooperation General Direction (DG/CS) and the Sub Saharan Africa General Direction (DG/

ASS); however, neither has elaborated any specific guidelines or an explicit vision, nor do they have dedicated funding mechanisms for supporting diaspora groups in their efforts to achieve peace and development in the countries of origin. This gap at the national level is sometimes addressed at the local level (regions, municipalities), where decentralized cooperation initiatives take place. As a consequence of the 1990s decentralization process in Italy, local authorities (municipalities, provinces and regions) have a certain degree of autonomy from the central state; for instance, they can enact their own norms, laws and regulations, provided that these are in line with the Constitution.

As at the national level, local authorities usually have two separate departments for welfare/immigration policies on the one hand, and for international relations/decentralized cooperation on the other. In implementing their international cooperation policies, regions, provinces and municipalities in Italy may fund both Italian and diaspora NGOs that grew at the local level thanks to the above-mentioned national fund established by Law 40/1998. However, initial funding experiments were often unsuccessful, as migrant associations often lacked professional guidance and were left alone in dealing with issues they were unprepared to manage. Additionally, as funds decreased, migrant associations imploded. As a consequence, national and local governmental institutions in Italy have often preferred to delegate migrants' issues to Italian NGOs, which claim to be representative of migrants' interests, generating a 'crowding out effect'[10] (vis-à-vis migrant organizations; see also Caponio 2005). There are, however, signs of a shift in this trend, with migrant organizations receiving training and capacity-building that make them better equipped to manage transnational development projects, and access financial support from the European Union, bank foundations and municipalities (Mezzetti et al. 2009). These experiments and pilot projects are generating partnerships between diaspora and Italian NGOs for promoting and implementing cooperation projects in the diaspora's countries of origin, as described in the next sections.

In the Finnish case the 'Government Resolution on Development Policy' (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland 2004) defines migration as one of the areas to be dealt with in the development policy coherence framework. The resolution states that 'the Government will consider issues relating to migration and immigration more coherently from the perspective of development policy. It aims to support the positive effects of migration and prevent harmful effects, especially trafficking in human beings, prostitution, and other crimes associated with illegal immigration' (ibid.: 25). Migration is recognized as a development issue and, if properly managed, as having potential to contribute to development (ibid.). Within this policy framework there are, however, no explicit guidelines on how to engage Finnish-based diaspora groups in development activities in the countries of origin. Engagement and cooperation thus take place within existing mainstream policies and frameworks. This

reflects the Finnish integration policy based on the ideals of an egalitarian welfare state, which traditionally aimed at integrating and 'equalizing' all of its members. In this respect, Finland does not have differentiated structures for diasporas, but the aim has been to integrate them into the existing system. This being the case, the key issue is the capacity of certain diaspora groups to 'get their voice heard' among Finnish actors and to access funding structures available to all citizens. In contrast to Italy, initiatives aimed at the Somali diaspora's involvement in peace and development issues have, at least so far, taken place at the national level.

Diaspora engagement dynamics in Italy and Finland

The following section offers a description of Somali diaspora groups in Italy and Finland involved in development and peacebuilding initiatives aimed at the country of origin, whereby the groups' characteristics and modes of engagement clearly shift and transform based on resources and opportunities available in the different contexts (including at the transnational level).

The Somali diaspora in Italy and Finland: characteristics and shifts over time Forty-one Somali networks and organizations were found in Italy, mainly established in the northern part of the country. Originally, the majority of them dealt with problems related to the Somali diaspora in the country of settlement and could be classified as 'community-based organizations'. During the late 1980s and 1990s these organizations acted as reference points for the whole Somali community and newcomers. Today, however, these organizations are less structured and popular and have shifted their scopes. The organizations' active leaders and members often belong to the former Somali ruling class and are highly educated. These same leaders have also been active in local politics. In Italy, however, the lack of political opportunities, in terms of funding, policies and alliances offered to the organizations, has sometimes induced these leaders to look for opportunities at the transnational level, especially by taking part in the national reconciliation process at 'home'. Entry into 'homeland politics – directly engaging with the politics in the country of origin' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 762) represents a first 'shift' in the organizations' orientations (from the country of settlement towards the country of origin) that has been observed over time. Importantly, however, participation in politics – whether in the country of residence or geared towards the homeland – occurs mostly at the individual level, while the associations act as a legitimizing constituency forum.

Over the years community-based organizations have become the launching pad for individuals to act at the transnational level, either in the Somali political sphere, or at the developmental level 'in translocal politics', through 'initiatives from abroad to better the situation in local communities of origin'

(ibid.: 763). Some of these same community-based organizations evolved instead into development organizations, capable of implementing development activities in the places where the diaspora organizations' leaders and members are originally from. This second shift indicates that some associations have developed their capacities and operate like any other developmental NGO, working in partnership with other Italian organizations and through local counterparts in Somalia, sometimes run by returnees. (See more on the issue of returnees in Hansen 2007.) Diaspora organizations in Italy show differences in their levels of formalization and professionalization; in some cases they have overcome voluntarism and have moved towards a more professional structure, with salaried members among their staff who are highly qualified and professionalized. Importantly, in all these cases, membership is mixed and intercultural, including Italians and/or migrants with different backgrounds. The orientation of Somali diaspora organizations in Italy towards development in the country of origin, while occasionally evidence of opportunistic behaviours, has been largely dependent on the availability of funding opportunities. This orientation may also be induced by the institutions' interest in considering the diaspora as actors of change in Somalia. Many organizations engage simultaneously in different types of activity directed both towards Italy and Somalia (see also Kleist 2007). 'Immigrant politics' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 762), including women's integration and empowerment as well as the facilitation of intercultural initiatives, is in fact still an area of operation of Somali diaspora organizations acting at the transnational level.[11]

In the case of Finland, Somalis are active in associations which they have established on their own, or else they join multicultural or native Finnish NGOs and CBOs, which also lobby on Somalia-related issues at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Some Somalis are also active in politics, in particular at the municipal level. Despite the 'proactivity' shown among this community, Somalis in Finland are also often associated with social problems in the media. The level of unemployment among Somali nationals is very high, 55.2 per cent in 2008 (Statistics Finland 2010), and as a community it is perceived to be in a marginal position in society.

The total number of Somali associations in Finland is both an indicator of the community's commitment and proactivity and a sign of its fragmentation: there are over one hundred registered Somali associations, of which around forty to fifty are functioning (Pirkkalainen 2009). The exact number of functioning Somali associations is very difficult to establish as the figures are continuously changing: new ones are set up while others close down; some are only officially registered and names change frequently. Finland, like other Nordic European countries, generally has a very high number of voluntary associations compared to other countries in the world (see, for example, Siisiäinen 2008) and immigrants, refugees in particular, have been

active in establishing voluntary associations (Saksela 2003; Pyykkönen 2007). Establishing an association in Finland is rather easy, and it is a common way to participate in Finnish society.[12] However, running an association is challenging and resources are scarce. It has been observed that many associations have ceased to exist after active individuals committing their own time got tired or too busy in other arenas of life. In Finland, there are several examples of small community organizations set up by Somalis. They often carry out activities to facilitate the integration of Somalis into Finnish society, as well as activities designed to maintain the Somali culture and language, thus being engaged in 'immigrant politics' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 762).

In addition to small community organizations, there are two umbrella types of organization. One functions as a 'guardian' for the rights of Somalis, as a 'facilitator' for the integration of Somalis in society and as a reference point for Finnish institutions. The second is the network for organizations working for the development of Somalia. There are, however, continuous challenges in creating 'a common voice' of Somalis, as the internal fragmentation of the community is also reflected within diaspora organizations. In terms of the orientation of associations and shifts over time, many associations started with activities oriented towards 'immigrant politics', and have shifted towards development activities in the areas of origin, and are currently maintaining both activity levels simultaneously. Thus a clear line between community-based organizations and development-project-oriented organizations is often difficult to draw. Some Somali organizations have accessed external funding for development projects and can thus be defined as development organizations engaging in 'translocal politics' (ibid.: 763). There are also examples of Somalis engaging in 'homeland politics' (ibid.: 762) geared to Somalia/Somaliland, but, as already noted in the Italian case, this engagement takes place mostly at the individual level.

Mechanisms and processes of interaction

In this section we analyse interactions between the Somali diaspora and institutional interlocutors in the countries of settlement in activities aimed at realizing peace and development in Somalia using the contentious politics theorization (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007). These relationships are assessed in terms of different 'isolated' mechanisms of interaction for analytical purposes, which instead interface among themselves, and are at the basis of more complex forms of migrant mobilization and participation. What clearly results is the two-sided direction of such interactions, the non-passive role of diaspora groups, their ability to use experience and specific strategies and repertoires of 'political' action in different settings, the osmosis and sometimes even difficulty in defining boundaries between mechanisms of interaction, which can lead to mobilization in specific moments in time.

'Certifying' Somali diaspora organizations In both countries, Finnish and Italian institutions have been aiming at strengthening and empowering Somali diaspora organizations in terms of capacity-building, networking and fund-raising capacities. Institutions have thus been interacting with diaspora organizations through such initiatives of assistance, showing their availability in recognizing and approving the existence and claims-making role of this political actor, in this case diaspora organizations. This mechanism of 'certification' is de facto the recognition process, whereby institutions in the settlement countries hold the power to set requirements for legitimizing certain organizations (McAdam et al. 2001: 158). In this type of interaction, diaspora actors have been able to show their proactivity in responding to the available opportunities put in place by institutional interlocutors, as the following examples demonstrate.

In Trento, Italy, diaspora organizations have been approached by local institutions to start development projects in their countries of origin. These initiatives, subject to some necessary requirements, resulted in an explicit recognition of the diaspora as a valid interlocutor in development activities. Such requirements include: being a non-profit organization active in the Province of Trento, having solidarity and international development among their goals, and fund-raising activity in this territory.

Several techniques have been adopted by the Somali diaspora to meet the necessary reqirements for accessing the Province of Trento's funds. The following example describes the capacity exercised by the Somali diaspora in adopting sophisticated strategies for being 'certified' as a valid interlocutor for development activities. The NGO 'Una scuola per la Vita' (Trento) is an 'ethnically mixed' organization – including Somalis and native settlement-country members. It is formally headed by an Italian president who is a prominent member of local civil society (i.e. the Italian Christian associations of workers (ACLI) – a system acting nationally, which engages and carries out lobbying activities with local and central authorities). The founder of 'Una scuola per la Vita', by contrast, is a Somali woman who 'recruited' the outstanding candidate for the presidency position, with the specific objective of bringing his strong institutional and associational background know-how and contacts into the organization, so that in this way he migh act as a 'trustee' for the NGO, enabling the establishment of relationships with local institutions and in general receiving help in running the association. This is the story in her own words:

> In 1995 I met the Secretary of Acli [...] and I proposed that he become the President of the association 'Una scuola per la Vita'. He was very busy and I had to show determination. He finally accepted and our agreement was that he would act as the official representative but I would take on the entire organization's workload. In fact I worked hard and I managed to achieve good results in fundraising. In turn, in his capacity as Secretary of the Acli, he obtained an office

for the organization within the Acli premises. The office was fully furnished and equipped and it was completely free of charge. This gave credibility to my organization at the local level and I can say it became my best entry point from which to reach out to local institutions: slowly I had one project funded, then another one and so on.[13]

The Somali woman continued to be the driving force of the organization and to maintain contacts with the local partner NGO in Somalia, while deliberately deciding to give up a visible and prominent role in the organization. This strategy allowed the organization to obtain formal approval ('certification') by the Province of Trento, and maximize success in funding opportunities. The case of 'Una scuola per la Vita' demonstrates the existence of strategic thinking adopted by the Somali diaspora to benefit from Italian professionals' relational and professional expertise that they can bring into diaspora organizations with the aim of meeting certification criteria set by donor institutions. As demonstrated by the words of another Somali woman living in the Province of Trento, this dynamic is not limited to just one single case:

In 2007 I founded the organization Kariba with five Italian friends. The current president is an Italian woman who works as a social assistant. Initially I asked another woman who worked in the field of refugees and migration policies but she was already the president of two NGOs and she directed me towards the current president. Among the five founders there is also a man who works in the Acli.[14]

Fieldwork in Trento highlighted another strategic element adopted by Somalis in setting up their organizations: the use of development cooperation professionals to correctly draft project proposals and in this way gain access to institutional funds. The case is referred to by an interviewee: 'Our current president has studied how to write project proposals. Since she took this post six years ago, we have succeeded in approaching institutional donors for big projects and we are considered one of the most serious organizations for Somalia here in Trento.'[15]

In the Finnish case a number of Somali diaspora organizations have accessed funding from the NGO Development Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). This funding line for NGO development projects is divided into: a) support for small/medium-sized civil society organization (CSO/NGO) projects and b) support for large NGO programmes.[16] Within this funding line about two hundred NGOs are currently involved in implementing development cooperation projects in ninety countries, or in sharing information on topics related to development.[17] Somali organizations, unlike other diaspora groups in Finland, have been active in applying for funds for their development projects from the NGO Development Unit at the MFA. The first development project

carried out by a Somali association obtained external funding from the MFA in 2000, while more than ten years later in 2010, 11 Somali organizations received support.[18] It is, however, important to highlight funding criteria put in place by the NGO Development Unit of the MFA: there is no 'Somali quota', thus all project proposals of all NGOs/CSOs are evaluated on the same basis; the best project proposals, which meet the formal requirements and have the organizational capacity, get funding – and through these measures receive formal 'certification'.

From the MFA's point of view, the low capacity of Somali diaspora organizations – in terms of management, reporting, writing good-quality applications, realizing development projects and their more general lack of knowledge/ experience of all bureaucratic procedures required in the running of their associations – has hindered their access to funding. All this is reflected in the following statement:

> The Finnish formal bureaucratic system is difficult for Somalis. They clearly face a need to learn the organizational culture and this creates a need for further discussions and contacts with the MFA. At the MFA, funding decisions are made on the basis of written project proposals and it is challenging for Somali organizations to show their excellent local knowledge in the proposal, partly because of the language. Organizations which have been applying for a long time have over the years raised their capacity. Every year there are new organizations applying but very rarely does an organization get funding on its first try.[19]

The MFA has, however, directly contributed to supporting capacity-building measures for Somali organizations by funding the Finnish Somalia Network.[20] The Network was founded in 2004 by a few Somali and native Finnish NGOs/ CSOs working towards development in Somalia in order to improve the quality of development cooperation initiatives delivered by associations working in Somalia, as well as to produce and exchange information on issues relating to Somalia. From its set-up and until 2009, a native Finnish NGO – a partner organization of the MFA with several development projects in Somalia (Somaliland) – functioned as the coordinating organization for the Network. As reported in the words of a representative of the MFA:

> [...] As Finland has no bilateral relations with Somalia, Somali diaspora organizations are in a key position to channel development cooperation to Somalia [...] But since the MFA is not dealing differently with diaspora organizations, they are treated the same as native Finnish organizations. [...] in practice this means that organizations that are weak and have difficulties in making the correct decisions are recommended to take part in training and further build their capacity.[21]

In 2004 the board of the Network met with officials from the MFA and a project proposal was submitted. The proposal was approved and the Net-

work received funding for the period 2005–10. This support for the Network represents an example of 'certification', whereby an external authority, the MFA, has shown its willingness to recognize and approve the existence and claims-making ability of Somali diaspora organizations. As reported in the words of a diaspora representative:

> For foreigners, things in Finland are difficult; no one gives you money right away. Step by step it is getting better. When you apply to the MFA, three, four times you get negative responses, then slowly you can get money. We discuss with authorities, we create networks, we have set up our organization in 1998, and the first MFA project funding we got was in 2005. But it is not big support, slowly we can increase the amounts, […] now we are ready to handle larger projects. We are well known in Finland and in Somalia, we have created a positive image, and people are convinced that projects are sustainable – we want to grow, but you have to supply your own funding and this affects us. In the future we hope that the MFA will grant us more money, because if it's the first time, the MFA needs to know how the first project succeeds, if it succeeds you may get more support.[22]

In 2010, the Network encompassed twenty-eight member associations (twenty-five Somali and three native Finnish NGOs). The Finnish Somalia Network arranges courses and training, events and discussions. The Network registered itself as an association in 2009, and in 2010 an executive director (a native Finn with a long research background on Somalis) was appointed in order to strengthen the Network and search for funding.

Much as in Italy, strategic thinking among Somalis can be observed in attempts to meet the objective of gaining certification criteria. Representatives of many Somali organizations have attended training courses offered by the Somali Network, some organizations have looked for Finnish experts to recruit to help and support them in activities, drafting and planning the projects, and in some cases making audits. These can be seen as efforts by Somali organizations to better their chances of getting certification from the MFA. On the other hand, the MFA has often set some preconditions before allowing organizations to apply for funding, such as requiring them to contract an external auditing company. In some cases, particularly for the first projects funded in the early 2000s, small funding of a pilot type was granted for a year, after which progress within projects was assessed and further funding granted when the organization had proved its capacity to handle project work. In many cases rather small amounts of funding were granted, in proportion to the capacity of the organizations to handle projects and more importantly to their ability to secure their own funding – 15 per cent of the whole project budget – which is a formal MFA requirement.

Somalis acting as transnational 'brokers' 'Brokerage is the mechanism linking two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with one another and/or with yet other sites; mediators can be single activists or organisations' (McAdam et al. 2001: 24). The examples below clearly show how single people, in most cases charismatic associative leaders, acted as 'brokers' in connecting, for example, diaspora activities and/or ideas and the work of a Finnish CSO (Finland) or in strategically building partnerships between actors that hardly ever worked together (Italy). One of the most important qualifications for a 'broker' is trustworthiness in the eyes of both social sites s/he is connecting, as shown in examples from both country cases below.

In Finland there are some cases of Somali individuals having been unwilling to create their own associations, and rather having chosen a different 'path' to access NGO funding from the MFA by bringing project ideas to existing Finnish NGOs/CSOs. This can be seen as a strategic choice by Somalis not wanting to add to potential and existing competition over funding, but wanting to secure a position in development cooperation by collaborating with Finnish NGOs/CSOs.

In one case, Somali individuals originally from the Sool and Sanaag regions were active in community work in a Finnish association based in Helsinki, called 'Horisontti ry'. This cooperation was based on tight and trusted personal relationships between native Finns active in the association and Somalis while working for immigrant integration issues in Finland. Horisontti ry, formerly 'West-Helsinki's unemployed' (*Länsi-Helsingin työttömät ry*), is an association set up in the early 1990s in order to prevent unemployment and marginalization of people in Finland. In 2000 it changed its name and extended the focus beyond Finland to include development issues internationally, as stated in the MFA project proposal for the Somalia project:

> The aim of the association is to function to promote sustainable development nationally and internationally and to develop partnerships to prevent unemployment, poverty and marginalization. The association has extended its functions to cover developmental issues and sustainable development internationally. Somalia is the natural choice to implement development cooperation because in our association there are Somalis who came to Finland as refugees and they have a lot to contribute to the projects' implementation.[23]

What appears interesting in this case is that Somali individuals have 'recruited' Horisontti ry and its organizational capacity in order to establish a development project in Somalia. Managing and coordinating a development project in Somalia through a well-established association, where the organizational structure is in place, can in fact be more beneficial than starting a new diaspora organization, which often requires a considerable amount of

time-consuming effort in terms of meeting the bureaucratic requirements (management of an association, acquiring the funding required for MFA-funded projects, etc.). The association[24] has opened its doors to these Somalis first because they had their own interest in development cooperation and clearly saw an added value in engaging diasporas in their work, and secondly as through the previous community work in Finland Somali diaspora individuals had gained a trusted position:

> We wanted to start working internationally, in development cooperation, the geographical area could have been Russia or whatever but we did not have contacts [...] we had Somalis active in the association when we did community work in Finland, the idea came from them [...] particularly one person, he was trustworthy and we had known him for a long time.[25]

The institutional interlocutor, Horisontti ry, has functioned as a gatekeeper, holding the power either to allow or deny diaspora member(s) and their ideas and contacts to enter the organization, and in particular, as this case shows, allowing a person who is trustworthy in their own experience to join.

In this specific example Somali individuals acted as 'brokers' in connecting Horisontti ry with well-functioning organizational structures in place, and interested in starting development cooperation, with a local organization in Somalia. Brokerage, the ability to connect previously unconnected sites (Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 31), took place when Horisontti ry was linked through the Somali diaspora to locals in Somalia, making the new development cooperation project possible. The project plan was designed in collaboration with Finnish CSO representatives, Somalis in Finland and locals in Somalia; a fact-finding mission was conducted, after which the project plan was drafted; the application for funding from the MFA was filed; and in 2006 the project received funding.

In Italy, during the time before funding was available for migration and development initiatives (i.e. EU programmes; OIM-MIDA Italy), and before the build-up of a market of opportunities for diaspora organizations and NGOs, individual people played a vital role. A prominent Somali woman who had been living in Italy, in Turin, since the 1980s helped establish the local NGO IIDA after moving back to Somalia. Through her contacts and expertise, she partnered with a well-known Italian NGO, COSPE, based in Tuscany, in fund-raising activities. In this case, it is the role of returnees which must be highlighted, in running activities in Somalia that maintain, develop and sometimes even deepen contacts established through the migration process. This is clearly an example of the diaspora acting as a 'broker', connecting sites previously unconnected.

The value-added of the partnership between IIDA and COSPE is explained from the NGO's perspective in the following words:

IIDA gave us a good entry point into Somalia. They were the ones suggesting to us that women in Somalia were a pivotal component of the civil society and needed support. They already had a clear strategy in this regard; suffice to say that they are the first inter-clan organization composed only of women in the whole country.[26]

In fact, COSPE started working in Somalia in response to a specific request, developing a long-term Somali diaspora partnership strategy from the very beginning of its activities in the country. Strategies are reportedly decided in Somalia and the Somali (diaspora) NGO has strong ownership of the programming and implementation of all the project phases. The effect of this collaboration has been very successful and of benefit to both organizations, as well as for the beneficiaries of development activities, as described below:

Being an international NGO that works in about thirty countries, COSPE helped IIDA to grow and access the international community. IIDA, on the other hand, helped COSPE in terms of vision and understanding of the conflict in Somalia. COSPE has always promoted projects aimed at improving the gender condition, and it is not by accident that we decided to invest in women in Somalia as drivers of change in the country: this has to do with our partnership with IIDA, of course.[27]

The partnership between IIDA and COSPE has been ongoing for many years, and after fifteen years the Somali NGO IIDA decided to establish its own office in Italy, with the aim of directly managing fund-raising activities and disseminating awareness of the situation in Somalia. IIDA-Italy is now also able to approach Italian authorities, especially at the local level, obtaining sponsorships for events and activities.

Transferring transnational political competences: examples of 'diffusion' The third mechanism observed in our empirical research is 'diffusion', the circulation of a form of (political) contention/claims-making on a particular issue, or the ways in which it is framed (ideas, practices, resources), from one site to the other (McAdam et al. 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007: 31). In both Italy and Finland, Somalis' interest in political activism in the country of settlement as well as that of origin was observed: migrants who have been exposed to and trained either in local politics (parties, trade unions) or in civil society organizations have at some point in their lives decided to utilize their expertise in their own initiatives. The empirical examples reported below show the 'diffusion' of political ideas and competences acquired, and transferred transnationally from one location to another.

In 2006, the Italian international cooperation under-secretary and a group of Somali women activists living in Italy met in Bamako during the World

Social Forum, where they discussed the possibility of launching a project to support dialogue between Somali women in Italy and the representatives of Somali transitional government institutions under the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on 'Women and peace and security'.[28]

The small group of Somali women already knew each other, through previous personal, political or professional affiliations, as explained below:

> I came from Tuscany [...] the other woman from Livorno. We met at the airport and decided to prepare a joint speech on behalf of ANCI-Tuscany.[29] At the Social Forum [in Bamako] we met various Somali women from Bari, Milan and Trento that I had previously met during cooperation meetings on Africa at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[30]

According to a Somali activist woman, following the Bamako meetings, in June 2007 the Italian international cooperation under-secretary proposed a meeting in Nairobi to further discuss the role of women in peacebuilding: 'In that meeting we elaborated a joint project and we subsequently met in June at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome [to officially initiate it]. At that time, in Rome, we [Somali women] were united and we were many. It has been a wonderful working day.'[31]

The under-secretary exhorted the group of Somali women to further engage the Somali diaspora in the process. In April 2008, the selected Somali women organized themselves into a Somali women's umbrella association based in Italy, named ADEP (Associazione Diaspora e Pace), with the mandate of working towards the empowerment of women, both in Somalia and in the diaspora. As reported by one of the main activists:

> The Ministry advised us to officially form an association and we called it ADEP. Every woman in ADEP has her own organization in Milan, Bari, Naples, Rome, Florence and Trento. ADEP is therefore an umbrella organization established by seven women. We need to enlarge it and to enrich it of experiences and contributions. So far we have interacted with Italian institutions also in Addis Ababa. Everybody asks for an idea for Somalia [...].[32]

What has been established through empirical research is that all Somali women involved in ADEP were not only active organization leaders, but also activists in Italian party politics. Through the ADEP network, they tried to transfer/'diffuse' competences acquired in the Italian political domain into the Somali political environment.

With regard to opportunities, the lack of opportunities for Somalis to access the Italian political sphere at the national and governmental levels, and simultaneously openings in Somalia during, for example, the peace process conferences in 2000, 2007 and 2008, led to a renewed interest from the diaspora in engaging in transnational political practices: 'In Tanzania we decided to

form a political party of Somali women, rather than begging for gender representation in the Somali parliament. This party has not yet been formalized as we are waiting for the next national elections in the country.'[33]

In Finland a visible example of the diffusion mechanism, whereby political ideas are transferred from one site to another, is the engagement of individuals who have been setting up a new political party in north-west Somalia, self-proclaimed Somaliland.[34] The case analysed concerns one of the establishers of Somaliland's political party 'UCID' (*Usbiga Caddaalada iyo Daryeelka*, Justice and Welfare Party), more precisely Faisal Ali Farah (Warabe). He was born in Hargeysa in 1948, studied in the former Soviet Union and received his engineering degree in 1973, after which he worked in Mogadishu in several positions until the civil war broke out. He then fled the war and arrived in Finland via Moscow with his family in 1990. Since the early years of his arrival he has been strongly proactive in Finland, working for the Somali community, while being involved also in Finnish party politics and simultaneously engaged in the area where he is originally from in Somaliland, which proclaimed its independence in 1991, while not yet recognized internationally. Mr Faisal Ali Farah was among the founders of one of the first Somali associations in Finland, 'Suomen Somaliland Seura' (Finland's Somaliland Association), registered in 1992. In 1995 he was part of the group of activists forming the 'Somaliland Peace Committee' in Somaliland, which was mediating the conflict. After the mediation work within the peace committee, and the peace agreement in Somaliland in 1996, he came back to Finland and enrolled in the University of Helsinki, where he studied political sciences and formed the 'Somali Social Democrats' organization in Finland. He also functioned as a chairperson of the Somaliland Societies in Europe (SSE) in 2001. That same year the constitutional referendum took place in Somaliland, which introduced the multiparty system, legalizing 'the formation of political parties' (Bradbury 2008: 133). This opened up new doors for political engagement, and Faisal Ali Farah was among the founders of one of the new political parties in Somaliland, the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID), which shares social democratic ideals, as he states:

> We decided to join the Social Democratic party in Finland, because the party was in favour of refugees [...] we have developed good friendships with Social Democrat MPs in the parliament [...] they were trying to make me a candidate for European Parliament elections [in early 2000] but I decided to go home and make a similar party [...] so now our party is a Social Democratic party.[35]

His strong activism, combined with his ability to engage with Finnish party politics and in particular with the Social Democrats in Finland for years, has translated into his engagement in forming a new political party, UCID, in Somaliland, which shares most of the same political ideals. This is clearly a prime example of diffusion of ideas from one location to another.

Concluding remarks

A dynamic approach, inspired by recent developments in contentious politics thinking focusing on mechanisms and processes of interaction between the Somali diaspora and institutional interlocutors, guided the analysis in this chapter.

Certification, brokerage and diffusion mechanisms have been 'isolated' for analytical purposes, but form a continuum that must be understood as the dynamic interaction between these same mechanisms that allow for the construction of more complex processes, and in particular that of mobilization (which can also at some point in time turn into demobilization). Mobilization is the process by which at a certain moment people previously inactive start voicing contentious demands. This is possible when diffusion and certification as well as other mechanisms are at work, as preparatory and key elements, acting backstage, which at some point in time allow diaspora groups – building on experience, legitimization, etc. – to stand in the public sphere.

The empirical examples from both Italy and Finland showed that Somali diaspora groups make use of their agency. The cases under investigation have shown that none of the actors of the paradigm is entirely passive: both the Somali diaspora and institutions in Finland and Italy are proactive. The level of proactivity of Somalis in particular is notable: despite a substantial difference in the political opportunity structures (POSs) available to the diaspora in Italy and in Finland, Somalis are active and strategic in engaging institutions in the countries of settlement. Furthermore the empirical material showed that the strategic approach used by the Somali diaspora is similar in Italy and in Finland. Somalis in both countries adopted specific strategies to become legitimized – 'certified' in contentious politics language – as 'actors' in development and peace. Similarly, in the two countries of settlement, they have been acting as 'brokers', mediating between actors that previously did not work together. Moreover, in a number of cases both in Italy and in Finland, individuals belonging to the Somali diaspora have participated in local elections and have joined political parties; this political activism has been further transferred to the country of origin, in the form of diffusion of political ideas.

Along with more classical forms of protest and participation, new forms of transnational mobilization also emerge. As explained in the previous pages it is quite common to observe associations that over time have shifted the core of their activities: initially focusing on 'immigrant politics', then moving towards 'translocal' and 'homeland politics' geared to Somalia/Somaliland, and more recently turning back to classical forms of protest, demanding refugees' and immigrants' rights in the countries of new residence. These protests and forms of mobilization must also be understood in their dynamic and transnational patterns: mobilization and demobilization processes can alternate, depending on opportunities available (or completely absent) in one context or the other,

on mechanisms at work in such specific contexts. This way it is possible to position and better understand the dynamics behind specific episodes of contention and claims-making which emerge in a specific moment in time.

We believe that further research on such dynamics of interaction could still be done, specifically concerning the relationship between diaspora organizations and institutional actors, allowing a better understanding of how, if and when specific mechanisms and processes occur and engage either single persons/leaders or the organizations' repertoires.

Notes

1 The chapter is based on empirical data collected in Finland and in Italy between August 2008 and May 2010, through semi-structured interviews and participant observations that followed shared data collection guidelines (see also Pirkkalainen et al. 2013). In Italy, 46 interviews were conducted, 16 with institutional and non-governmental Italian actors and 30 with Somalis/Somali organizations. In Finland, a total of 50 interviews were conducted, 35 with Somali organizations/individuals; 15 with ministerial officials and Finnish non-governmental actors. Fieldwork research in Italy was conducted in five cities in five different regions: a) Turin-Piemonte; b) Milan-Lombardia; c) Firenze-Toscana; d) Roma-Lazio; and e) Province of Trento. Turin is a historical destination for Somalis in Italy; Milan and Rome are the two metropolitan areas, and Rome is also the city where most Somalis have settled; Florence is a destination for new arrivals, and Trento represents an interesting laboratory on engagement dynamics between diaspora groups and institutional actors. In Finland fieldwork was carried out in the Helsinki metropolitan area (cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa); 77 per cent of the total community of Somali mother tongue speakers in Finland live in the Uusimaa region, where the cities of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa are located (calculations based on Statistics Finland 2011). While in Italy most Somalis interviewees were women (25 out of 30), in Finland most interviewees of Somali origin were male (31 out of 35).

2 The POS notion has been applied to migration studies since the early 1990s. In particular, Patrick Ireland in his seminal work *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity* (1994) introduced an 'institutional channelling' framework for the study of ethnic mobilization.

3 In everyday life contention can also be based on issues of little importance; however, in the simplest version of contention at least two parties are at stake: a party formulating a claim addressed to another party, these being people, groups or institutions (there must be at least one actor openly claiming an 'object'). Contention thus always includes an actor, an object and the action of claims-making.

4 The implication of governments does not at all imply that governments must appear as an active or a passive actor of contentious actions, but often contention can start between non-governmental actors that will at some point involve different levels of governments.

5 It is important to underline that the notion of contention in this study is used in a very broad sense, not implying exclusively struggles and conflicts but the ability to make claims in a cooperative manner. In this same direction the term engagement emphasizes interactions between diaspora individuals and groups – in search of support for their causes – and different actors, in a peaceful manner.

6 This figure refers to citizens of Somalia and official residents in Italy; it does not include illegal immigrants or naturalized Somalis. In Italian statistics there is no distinction between citizens/those speaking their mother tongue.

7 The SPRAR Programme is also aimed at offering housing support to asylum seekers and refugees through its local 'Territorial Commissions Programme', responsible for processing the applications submitted by immigrants. Until 2002 there was only one commission in Italy responsible for these decisions, but as of January 2008 there are seven Territorial Commissions, located in different cities. For more information about the SPRAR system, see www.serviziocentrale.it/ita/documenti.asp.

8 Interestingly a Ministry of Development Cooperation and Integration was created in 2012 under the technical government chaired by Mario Monti. It has been functioning without a portfolio, to promote coordination and to offer guidelines for all activities undertaken by those ministries with jurisdiction over development aid, and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and also shares a mandate over issues of migrants' integration. Although jurisdiction over these issues returned to the traditional institutions, this interlude has slightly advanced the discussion in the public debate.

9 ETNO is a broad-based expert body set up by the government, and its purpose is twofold: 'to promote interaction between Finland's ethnic minorities and the authorities, NGOs and the political parties in Parliament, equally at the national, regional and local level', and secondly, 'to provide the Ministries with immigration policy expertise in the interests of furthering an ethnically equal and diversified society' (Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, Intermin website).

10 Native associations mobilizing on behalf of immigrants become the main recipients of municipal funding and partners in policy-making, thus preventing immigrants from forming their own organizations and participating directly in the political sphere.

11 Second and third generations often form informal discussion groups, mostly composed of highly educated members (writers, journalists, etc.). In Italy these groups are focused more on identity and pan-African issues than on the specific situation in Somalia. In Finland these organizations aim at serving youngsters by organizing common activities and functioning as a meeting point for young Somalis.

12 According to the Finnish association law (Act of Association, Finland, 1989, *Yhdistyslaki* 26.5.1989/503), a minimum of three people are required to form the board of an association.

13 Interview with SC, volunteer at Una Scuola per la Vita, March 2010, Trento, Italy.

14 Interview with NA, volunteer at Kariba, March 2010, Trento, Italy.

15 Interview with SC, officer at Una Scuola per la Vita, March 2010, Trento, Italy.

16 In 2010, eleven native Finnish NGOs had a partner organization status. The total share of funding for partner organizations is over half of the whole budget for NGO development cooperation. Organizations apply to get this status in open calls for proposals.

17 Source: MFA, NGO development cooperation website. See www.formin.fi/Public/default.aspx?nodeid=15339.

18 These numbers have been estimated by the authors by going through the names of organizations in the list of NGO development projects funded in 2010 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland 2010). On the basis of the authors' familiarity with them, Somali organizations and native Finnish CSOs/NGOs were easily identified. The MFA does not differentiate between diaspora associations and native Finnish NGOs in the selection processes.

19 Interview with a representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, August 2008.

20 Not all Somali organizations in Finland belong to the Network. Some of those not belonging to it have participated in general training courses open to all NGOs and CSOs in development cooperation project management, reporting and proposal-writing provided directly

by the Service Centre for Development Cooperation (KEPA).

21 Interview with a representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, August 2008.

22 Interview with a representative of a diaspora organization, April 2009, Finland.

23 Horisontti ry's project proposal for the MFA.

24 While small CSOs are often able to see this added value, the situation may be different for larger professional development NGOs that have international branches and local offices in developing countries and thus do not necessarily see the same added value in working with the diaspora. For example, in one case a Somali individual approached a large development NGO in Finland with a project plan in Somalia, but was not involved in the actual planning and running of the project. In this case the implementation of the project was undertaken through the local branch of the NGO in Somalia; thus no added value in working with the diaspora was perceived.

25 Interview with a representative of Finnish CSO Horisontti ry, February 2010.

26 Interview with LP, head of the Africa Programme at COSPE, September 2009, Florence, Italy.

27 Ibid.

28 The project is known as 'Gender and Peace in Somalia – Implementation of Resolution 1325', funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by ADEP and UN INSTRAW.

29 ANCI stands for National Association of Italian Municipalities.

30 Interview with GA, Somali woman activist, November 2009, Florence, Italy.

31 Ibid.

32 Interview with LM, February 2009, Rome, Italy.

33 Ibid.

34 This is not, however, to say that there is no political activism by Finnish Somalis in other regions of Somalia, but this example has been chosen as it clearly represents the diffusion mechanism of political ideas from Finland to the country of origin.

35 Interview with Faisal Ali Farah, November 2009.

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8 | Approaches to diaspora engagement in the Netherlands

Giulia Sinatti

Introduction

Some of the chapters in this book offer insight into the nature of the contributions that diaspora groups can make to peacebuilding and broader development processes in the Horn of Africa by illustrating the experiences of Somali and Ethiopian groups in various European countries and in their countries of origin. This chapter, by contrast, focuses on the ways in which mainstream development and peacebuilding actors acknowledge the potential role of diaspora groups in promoting development and peace in their homelands and reach out to them as new partners. Growing recognition among national, international and intergovernmental institutions of the weight of diaspora contributions to development and peacebuilding is in fact leading to explicit policy interest and numerous concrete attempts to engage practically with diasporas in these fields.

The European Commission's definition of diasporas as 'actors of home country development' (European Commission 2005: 6), for instance, has inspired various recommendations and initiatives to facilitate their direct involvement. Similarly, the work undertaken by the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) between 2003 and 2005 culminated one year later in the United Nations General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and in an annual Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) since 2007. A large inter-agency collaboration, the Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI),[1] has been set up to provide support to small-scale migration-development projects, which further illustrates a global determination to identify shared policies, strategies and actions.

The direct engagement of diasporas in the field of development cooperation has also been a theme of growing interest in many national contexts, with programmes promoted by individual home and host governments, development institutions and NGOs (De Haas 2006; Gamlen 2008; GTZ 2009; Horst 2008; Ionescu 2006; Libercier and Schneider 1996; Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001a). Increasingly, international donors also reach out to diasporas as promoters of peacebuilding through transnational engagement from their countries of residence or as 'liberal peace partners'

who are recruited and posted to their home countries within post-conflict governance programmes (Turner 2008: 183, 185). These numerous initiatives testify to a critical turn in which 'migrants have emerged as important "agents of development"' (Piper 2009: 94) and transnational migrant associations in particular 'have come to occupy the imagination of both academic analysts and policy-makers' (Faist 2008: 22).

Many mainstream actors on the development scene, in fact, feel that 'because of their simultaneous engagement in two or more societies, migrants and their organisations can be effective *partners* for implementing development policies' and programmes (De Haas 2006: 4, emphasis added) and that migrant initiatives may well complement efforts made through official Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The 2003 edition of the World Bank's *Global Development Financial Report* had in fact indicated that migrant remittances are at least three times larger than global investment in ODA, and the latest forecasts for 2012 anticipate a remittance flow of US$377 billion to developing countries. In addition to other important non-financial resources transferred by migrants, this amount is pivotal in ensuring a better livelihood for millions of people worldwide. Alongside the trends just outlined in development policy and practice, academic research has also paid a great deal of attention to the contributions made by migrants to homeland development and peace processes, as well as the forms of migrant collective organization in host countries and their modes of transnational action. Little attention, however, has been paid by researchers to the development industry itself as an object of study. This is the topic at the heart of this chapter, which focuses on the attempts that established actors in the development and peacebuilding field have made to incorporate diasporas in their own work.

Based on research conducted in the Netherlands,[2] this chapter investigates the dynamics by which diaspora groups have been incorporated into the Dutch development and peacebuilding scene. Specifically, the policies and practices adopted by mainstream development actors to reach out to diaspora groups are analysed in light of theoretical advancements in the literature on civil society participation in development and peacebuilding. A number of reasons make the Netherlands a pertinent case study. Various governmental policy memoranda on migration and development have been adopted by this country, which also features an active community of development and peacebuilding professionals who have long and established working relations with diaspora groups. Moreover, whereas elsewhere collaboration with diaspora organizations is a relative novelty introduced in concomitance with the recent surge of interest in migration-development, in the Netherlands this practice was widespread even earlier among institutions dealing with immigrant integration in a multicultural society. These factors have contributed to the Netherlands' reputation as one of the forerunners on the international scene in terms of

opportunities for diaspora engagement, making the country particularly suited for the analysis of collaboration established between non-diaspora actors and diaspora groups in homeland development and peacebuilding. Through an analysis of the Dutch scenario, I observe that in opening the doors to diaspora groups in the fields of development and peacebuilding, governmental and intergovernmental agencies, think tanks, training institutes and NGOs resort to a varied range of forms of collaboration. These trends in policy and practice are associated with broader evolutions in development and peacebuilding theory, which have progressively indicated that civil society is a key 'participant' in development and peacebuilding processes.

Diasporas as partners in development and peacebuilding

Current efforts on the part of the development industry to 'engage diasporas' are supported by a wealth of research investigating their influence over transformations in their country of origin. Evidence shows that migrants can promote development in a number of spheres through the transfer of financial, social, human and cultural capital, and that they may act individually or through collective engagement in community projects (De Haas 2005; Levitt 1998; Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002; Ratha and Shaw 2007; Wescott and Brinkerhoff 2006). Following the argument at the core of this book, moreover, diasporas have also been shown to contribute to the positive transformation of conflict situations in the homeland by way of direct engagement in peacebuilding initiatives, or indirectly through a commitment to longer-term development activities that can create stability through the sustainable transformation of structural conflict.[3] In contrast with literature suggesting that diasporas may exacerbate homeland conflicts by adding a transnational dimension to them (Collier 2000; Duffield 2001; Kaldor 2001), in fact research confirms that when diasporas originate from conflict-affected settings a 'deterritorialisation of the conflict' (Demmers 2002) may not necessarily exclusively lead to negative effects for the home country (Bercovitch 2007; Bush 2008; Cochrane 2007; Orjuela 2008; Østergaard-Nielsen 2006; Smith and Stares 2007; Zunzer 2004).

This research demonstrates that diaspora groups can be key players within the fields of development and peacebuilding, therefore calling into question their positioning within the broader arena of other actors in the same fields. The emergence of 'diaspora engagement' discourse and practice, in fact, marks a shift in the understanding of migrants from independent participants in the development of their home countries to participants in the *international development apparatus*.

Research on the repercussions for development and peacebuilding of contributions made by migrants to their home countries has been matched by a growing corpus of literature on migrant collective organization in their countries of residence. This work focuses on the nature of the activities under-

taken by diaspora groups and has highlighted that migrant organizations most frequently simultaneously pursue development objectives in the country of origin while also assisting the insertion of immigrants in the country of residence (Warnecke et al. 2009). This dual directionality of migrant collective action has raised questions about the relation between immigrant integration and transnational engagement, followed by research evidence showing that active diaspora mobilization towards the homeland is correlated with good levels of integration in the country of residence (Guarnizo et al. 2003), a finding that is also confirmed among transnational communities in the Netherlands (Mazzucato 2005; Snel et al. 2006).

Other research has focused less on the nature and contents of diaspora action and more on the emergence and establishment of migrant organizations and home-town associations in host societies. Much of this work is concerned with how diaspora organizing is shaped by institutional structures and power configurations that create opportunities and constraints for mobilization in the country of residence (Landolt 2008; Mezzetti et al. 2010; Schrover and Vermeulen 2005). This literature is largely rooted in the work of Kriesi and colleagues (1995) and in Tarrow's (1998) work on social movements, which both suggest that resource-poor actors – a definition that can be extended to many diaspora organizations vis-à-vis the formal development industry – mobilize through collective action in response to changes in the available political opportunities and constraints. Many of the studies inspired by these theories have included a diachronic research perspective that provides a dynamic account of the evolution of engagement with the home country through the settlement history of one or more specific diaspora groups (Kleist 2008; Lacroix 2010; Mezzetti et al. 2010; Van Heelsum 2007).

Research of this kind has also been undertaken in the Dutch context, where in analysing the development of Turkish and Surinamese organizations in Amsterdam, Vermeulen (2006) integrates a diachronic perspective with insight drawn from theories of organizational ecology, calling into question issues of competition and legitimacy. Based on a comparison between the Netherlands and Germany, Østergaard-Nielsen suggests that diaspora political mobilization is differently affected by opportunity structures according to its directionality (towards the home- or host land) and that highly inclusive policies for multicultural immigrant incorporation in the Netherlands have favoured greater diaspora mobilization in this sphere, while not leading to important differences in social homeland political organization (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001b: 271).

All the literature just outlined shares a predominant focus on the agency of the diaspora, which is understood as being framed within given prospects and constraints. While changes in the external political opportunity structures that shape diaspora agency are indeed taken into account, nonetheless factors that are external to the diaspora are treated as mere structure and little

emphasis is placed on the agency exercised by the actors who shape those same political opportunity structures. More specifically, when it comes to migrant involvement in development and peacebuilding there is paucity of research that investigates why, how and with what outcomes existing actors in these fields actively provide room for diasporas. The work of Nijenhuis and Broekhuis (2010) constitutes a notable exception and – while offering a comparison of policies and programmes introduced in France, the Netherlands and Spain – calls for more research to analyse concrete migration-development initiatives, their implications for diaspora organizations and their development impact.

In this chapter, moreover, I also argue that research has so far not been concerned with what 'engagement' actually means. This is an important omission for at least two reasons. First, diasporas as well as other collective actors 'never mobilize in a vacuum. They are always confronted with established actors who already occupy certain positions in the "playing field" with whom they enter into relations of competition, alliance or opposition' (Koopmans et al. 2005: 21). Diaspora engagement is therefore best understood as the outcome of a two-way process in which diaspora associations and the policies and practices of non-diaspora actors mutually influence each other (Van Naerssen 2011: 153). Secondly, diaspora engagement is tied to important transformations in development and peacebuilding theory and practice that are worthy, on their own, of being further investigated. The main focus of this chapter is thus on established actors in the development and peacebuilding industry as key decision-makers who ultimately hold the power to determine which forms diaspora engagement may concretely take, as well as who is admitted to and who is excluded from the game. Specifically, the research on which this chapter is based was guided by questions asking what justifies development and peacebuilding actors' turn towards diaspora engagement; how the idea of partnering with the diaspora is reflected in policies and implemented concretely by these actors; and what diaspora engagement as it is being practised tells us about its ultimate meaning.

Shifting the research focus from diaspora groups to established actors on the development and peacebuilding scene requires looking more deeply into the theoretical underpinnings of the idea of diaspora engagement. In this chapter, I argue that diaspora engagement can be interpreted as a particular declination of a human-centred approach to development (Nussbaum 2011). Such an approach is 'based on recognizing existing capacities of people as active claims-making agents' (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 3) and promotes participation as a means through which popular agency can be exercised in relation to development (Howell and Pearce 2001). Civil society, local communities and grassroots organizations have been increasingly *en vogue* in development thinking since the last decade of the twentieth century. By then, the belief that the state was the central actor promoting and regulating development – which had been at the core of the 'modernist' paradigm – was seriously

challenged, leading scholars and policy-makers to recognize the failure of top-down approaches and thus seek alternative paradigms.

The notion of civil society participation has also made its way into peace-building theory (Belloni 2008; Fischer 2006; Paffenholz 2010; Rigby 2006; Van Leeuwen 2009). Civil society is indicated as having a prominent role in various phases, from the initial establishment of peace (Bell and O'Rourke 2007) to subsequent post-conflict reconstruction processes (Kage 2010) and even in conflict prevention (Megoran 2005). This new faith in participation as the way forward in development and peacebuilding is currently being extended to migrants, who are seen as key civil society actors in the pursuit of human-centred development. As argued by Faist, '[m]igrant transnational associations constitute the newest expression of this trend, as evidenced by the evolution of the migration-development nexus' (Faist 2008: 23). Migrant organizations in particular are seen as an expression of civil society characterized by trans-national connections and a double engagement in home and host societies, and they are the target of important slogans such as 'diaspora participation', 'diaspora involvement', 'diasporas as partners'. The analysis of how these ideals are reflected in concrete policies and practices for diaspora engagement of the formal development and peacebuilding apparatus gives further insight into the nature and meaning of the involvement of diaspora groups in this industry. As will be illustrated in the following sections, in fact 'diaspora engagement' discourse has inspired migration-development initiatives and programmes that raise questions about the understanding of migrants as participants in development and peacebuilding processes.

The Dutch setting for diaspora engagement

With a total population of 16.6 million, 20 per cent of people living in the Netherlands in 2011 were of foreign descent, or *allochtonen*.[4] The Netherlands is thus home to various diaspora groups, including almost 45,000 people origin-ating from the Horn of Africa.[5] In this setting, numerous actors among gov-ernmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations currently interact with diaspora groups in peacebuilding and development activities.

At the governmental level, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the main institution with responsibility for issues of development and peacebuilding and sets the broader policy scene within which other actors also operate. The ministry is structured into departments on the basis of thematic competence or regional expertise,[6] among which the Consular Affairs and Migration Policy Department includes a special division dedicated to international migration and development and plays a prominent role in collaboration with diaspora groups. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations also have competence over migration issues, but with a focus on aspects relating to integration in the Netherlands.

The issue of diaspora engagement is at the core of a policy memorandum on migration-development that was jointly issued by the ministries of Justice and of Foreign Affairs in 2008 (MinBuZa 2008). This document acknowledges the value of migrant networks and their knowledge of the home countries, and it defines diasporas as playing an important bridging function. It proclaims that: '[i]ncreased cooperation between traditional Dutch development organisations and migrant organisations can maximise this potential' (ibid.: 55) and indicates that strengthening the involvement of migrant organizations is one of its key policy priorities. This memorandum is important not only for its emphasis on collaboration with diaspora groups, but also because it explicitly links migration with international development cooperation. This had already been evident since the 1970s in various government initiatives facilitating the return of migrants to their countries of origin with a view to enhancing local development (Bonjour 2005; De Haas 2006; Obdeijn 1987), and was marked also by the adoption of earlier policy memoranda in 1996 and 2004 (Bonjour 2005; De Haas 2006; Hermele 1997). Collaboration with minority associations on behalf of local and central government authorities also has precedents in Dutch history and dates back to the early twentieth century, when ethnic groups were involved in the management of publicly funded services through the model of pillarization (Lijphart 1975; Uitermark et al. 2005). From the early 1980s, this model led to the institutionalization of consultations with ethnic minorities through purposely created bodies. This is the function of the National Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee (Landelijk Overleg Minderheden, LOM), which was set up in 1997 and is still the official organ in which recognized representative bodies of ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands act as interlocutors for the central government on issues of immigrant integration.[7] Despite continuity in its practice, the nature and scope of dialogue with ethnic groups have changed significantly over the years, following broader political shifts from 'minority policy' to 'diversity policy' during the 1990s (Uitermark et al. 2005; Vermeulen 2006), and from the latter to 'assimilation policy' after the turn of the millennium (Vasta 2007). Current 'diaspora engagement' efforts in development can be seen as the latest shift in this tradition of consulting with diaspora groups.

Alongside governmental institutions, other actors currently play an important role on the Dutch diaspora engagement scene. At the intergovernmental level, the IOM is noteworthy for running various projects that aim at supporting homeland development processes through the direct involvement of diaspora members living in the Netherlands in temporary return schemes. Non-governmental actors are also very active in collaborating with diaspora groups, and the role of Co-Financing Agencies (CFAs) is particularly significant. Specific to the Dutch development industry, CFAs were established as such in the 1980s with the purpose of setting up an alternative channel to bilateral

and multilateral aid flowing directly from the government, and they receive considerable funds to support small-scale actions launched by private initiative. Since 2004, a significant portion of funding available to civil society organizations has been channelled through the Linkis platform, a facility established jointly by various CFAs[8] that provides information and advice to civil society organizations wishing to access funds or other resources in support of low-threshold development initiatives.

Notable CFAs, such as Oxfam Novib and Cordaid, have made efforts to collaborate with diaspora organizations in development and peacebuilding, followed by the initiatives of many other Dutch NGOs, think tanks and training institutes. As in the case of governmental actors, collaboration with the diaspora among Dutch CFAs and NGOs is also rooted in a historical past, when interaction focused on activities in the Netherlands. When it was created in 1999 through the merger of three Catholic development aid organizations (Memisa Medicus Mundi, Mensen in Nood and the CFA Bilance), Cordaid inherited the past experience of each of its partners. Memisa Medicus Mundi and Mensen in Nood had a tradition of working on projects in the Netherlands, enjoyed relative financial independence and had had active collaborations with migrants since the 1980s. Bilance was more dependent on funds from the government and therefore also tied to the latter's development priorities; nonetheless, it also worked with Moluccan and Surinamese migrants.[9] Oxfam Novib has also had long-standing collaborations with diaspora groups, which started with support for the awareness-raising initiatives of migrant organizations in the Netherlands, then broadened to migration-development activities in home countries, up to the adoption of internal policies and management plans with an explicit focus on migration. Many diaspora engagement actions are also initiated and supported through the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO), which defines itself as a knowledge centre and undertakes research, provides training and disseminates information with the aim of encouraging citizens to take direct responsibility on global development issues.

Various organizations and institutions in the development and peacebuilding field are therefore currently active in diaspora engagement on the Dutch scene. For many, collaboration with diaspora groups is not a novelty introduced with the recent surge of interest in migration-development and the discovery of migrants as development and peacebuilding partners. Rather, collaboration with diaspora groups found fertile ground in the Netherlands thanks to historical precedents and gradually became embedded in Dutch development practice as part of a broader shift towards civil society and participatory approaches. The establishment of a system based on CFAs and the underlying philosophy of nationwide organizations such as the NCDO which encourage direct citizen engagement in development, in particular, are very

much in tune with notions of human-centred development and peace. The widespread emergence of participatory paradigms in development thinking and the concrete hold these theories took in the Netherlands created a setting that proved particularly favourable to seeing migrants as key actors for the promotion of development and peace. When investment in diaspora engagement began explicitly at the end of the 1990s, in fact, 'the government [had] started to support "civil society construction" as part of a general change of policy course after 1998' (De Haas 2006: 48). Current forms of collaboration with diaspora groups in development, peace and reconstruction efforts outlined in the following section are therefore better understood as an outcome of this historical build-up.

Diaspora engagement practices

Diaspora engagement is justified in theory by a basic argument that a) sees migrants as key stakeholders in local development and peacebuilding in their countries of origin, b) acknowledges that they spontaneously make important contributions to such processes, and therefore c) advocates for their greater engagement in official development and peacebuilding assistance. In practice, this argument is translated into different forms of exchange and collaboration with diaspora groups, which range from exclusion to contact, to diaspora empowerment efforts, to support for the autonomous action of diaspora organizations, to partnership in the implementation of joint projects. The picture is therefore one of a relatively lively scene, in which many opportunities exist for the diaspora to be included in development and peacebuilding work. Many development and peacebuilding actions, nonetheless, are still implemented by mainstream actors in the industry independently, a statement that is supported by the fact that with respect to 'the total ODA budget, co-development activities generally take place on the fringe of the official development arena' (Nijenhuis and Broekhuis 2010: 261). The different forms of collaboration outlined in the subsections that follow, however, highlight that diaspora engagement practice has led to far less significant transformation in the ways of undertaking development and peacebuilding than official discourse might lead us to assume.

From non-participation to contact Dutch development and peacebuilding actors have created many opportunities for contact with diaspora organizations, bringing together policy-makers, researchers, experts, practitioners and other actors on the basis of a common interest in a region, country or theme to share views and experiences, and promote synergy of efforts. The diffusion of events such as conferences, debates, workshops, expert meetings and exposure programmes has in fact favoured general awareness of mutual complementarity, the establishment of collaborations, and the consolidation

of inter-organizational networks and alliances. According to De Haas, a series of conferences organized by the NCDO contributed to 'putting the issue of migration and development on the Dutch development policy agenda and in network building between diaspora organisations and development actors' (2006: 51). Many initiatives of this kind are nowadays also promoted in the Netherlands by diaspora groups, in which case non-diaspora professionals are the ones being invited to attend. On many occasions, diasporas, the Dutch government, CFAs, NGOs and other actors in fact all contribute in different ways by hosting, funding, organizing or running these events, which ultimately makes it difficult to trace who might be the main initiator.

Alongside events favouring contact with the diaspora, consultations are more explicitly geared towards the formulation of policies and programmes and aspire to ensure dialogue with diaspora groups in this process. The importance of consultations as a tool for diaspora engagement is explicit in the Dutch policy memorandum, which mentions the importance of opportunities for 'sharing thematic or country-specific migrant knowledge and expertise with ministries and other appropriate organisations' (MinBuZa 2008: 55). In accordance with this spirit, the Division for Consular Affairs and Migration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs annually organizes consultation days open to diaspora organizations and individuals[10] to debate how diaspora groups in the Netherlands can contribute to homeland development and peacebuilding processes. These consultations have been used to voice diaspora perspectives also in the international arena and are at the centre of the extensive participation of Netherlands-based diaspora groups in the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Another division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for Sub-Saharan Africa, also consults migrants from Sudan and Somalia in the elaboration of its foreign policies towards these countries, with the ideal of adopting 'a constructive approach to the peace process [...] that is inclusive of dialogue with their diasporas' (Sinatti et al. 2010: 19). Although carrying on the long-standing Dutch tradition of consultation with ethnic minorities on integration issues evoked above, consultations in the field of migration-development and on homeland policies nevertheless mark a significant shift in the contents of dialogue with diaspora groups. As observed by Østergaard-Nielsen (2001b: 274), in fact in the past active efforts were made on behalf of Dutch institutional actors dealing with political participation in the Netherlands to exclude homeland political mobilization, as this was perceived as a threat to integration objectives.

Supporting autonomous action Networking and policy consultation may not necessarily be associated with greater direct engagement of diaspora groups in official development. This, rather, is the explicit aim of initiatives providing financial support to projects implemented by diaspora organizations.

The Dutch policy memorandum declares a willingness on the part of the government to ensure that such funding is available: the 'Netherlands will consider whether or not the government can do more to increase migrants' involvement in the development of their countries of origin, for example by looking at whether migrant organisations have sufficient access to funding. If this turns out not to be the case, more funding will be made available through existing channels and/or migrants' access to such funding will be improved' (MinBuZa 2008: 54–5). Indeed, some financial support is granted directly from the government to diaspora organizations in the form of funding for specific projects, as well as more general medium-term thematic subsidies that are allocated to organizations working in the field of development cooperation.[11] The most important channel through which diasporas access project funding, however, is represented by the Linkis platform. Although this funding is open to all civil society organizations, in fact many participating agencies reserve a proportion of their budget for the projects of diaspora organizations on the basis of individually adopted internal regulations. Besides Linkis, other funding schemes providing smaller grants are open exclusively to diaspora groups.[12] Centres for Development Cooperation (COS) at the provincial level and municipal authorities in cities where large diaspora groups are established are also generous supporters of the projects of diaspora organizations.

This rich scenario of access to project funds has allowed certain diaspora organizations to secure relatively large amounts of funding, for instance combining grants from different donors for the same operation or breaking down longer-term operations into a succession of smaller projects. Some actors have in fact established long-lasting collaborations with selected diaspora organizations from the Horn of Africa.[13] The Ethiopian diaspora organization DIR, for instance, has a time-honoured ten-year partnership with Oxfam. The Somali NGO Hirda also manages large-scale projects in the fields of education, agriculture, peacebuilding, women's empowerment, food distribution and youth development through partnerships established with Oxfam Novib, the NCDO and Hivos, as well as a range of partners internationally.

Similarly the Somali diaspora organization Nedsom has invested in large programmes, for instance to revive the fishing sector and generate related employment in Somalia, which require investments over the medium to long term and thus largely exceed most available funding schemes. These and other diaspora organizations from the Horn of Africa have been encouraged to develop initiatives of this scale thanks to the willingness of Dutch funding agencies to provide continuous project support, for instance through an initial grant covering a pilot or first phase and follow-up grants to strengthen, broaden or replicate an action.

This disposition on behalf of mainstream development and peacebuilding actors can be seen as a collective strategy that has generated veritable alliances

between organizations and has largely facilitated the upscaling of selected diaspora associations over long periods of time. This is further testified to by the strategy adopted by Oxfam Novib when filing its application for periodic structural funding available to Dutch NGOs from the government, which was presented in 2010 in alliance with diaspora organization partners (Sinatti et al. 2010). Offering this kind of support over time has positively affected the legitimacy that a few migrant organizations enjoy in the Netherlands, where they are currently acknowledged as professional actors on the development and peacebuilding scene.

Diaspora empowerment In line with the upscaling that results from continuity in project funding, numerous activities of actors in the mainstream development and peacebuilding industry are explicitly designed to empower the diaspora and its organizations. Actions of this kind include professionalization through one-to-one support and capacity-building training to diaspora associations and individuals, and assistance in the establishment of diaspora umbrella organizations.

In addition to providing funding, the Linkis platform is also an important source of assistance for civil society groups in the development of their project proposals. Alongside support schemes open to all civil society members, development and peacebuilding organizations have set up specific programmes to empower diaspora groups, which take into account their particular needs. Oxfam Novib, for instance, has a dedicated budget devoted to building the capacity of diaspora organizations and provides tailored training to the leaders of such organizations on topics such as project management, financial literacy and management, fund-raising and lobbying. Dutch universities, think tanks and NGOs have also set up programmes with a specific focus on peacebuilding that aim at enhancing the engagement of diaspora individuals in this area.

Alongside capacity-building efforts, other attempts to empower diaspora groups focus on the establishment of umbrella or network organizations. Such an interest is explicitly mentioned in the policy memorandum, which reads: '[t]he government would like migrant organisations to set up their own umbrella organisation, or a similar construction [...]. It is prepared to offer them assistance in doing so' (MinBuZa 2008: 56). Diaspora fragmentation is, in fact, a key concern for many actors wishing to establish collaboration with diaspora groups, particularly when they originate from conflict settings (Horst et al. 2010; Sinatti et al. 2010). In such cases, they want to be assured that the legitimacy of individuals and organizations that are receiving support is recognized by the migrant communities they claim to represent (Horst 2008). Numerous diaspora network organizations have come into being in the Netherlands under the impulse of an active external commitment to support their emergence. In line with broader Dutch policies of 'civil society

construction', Cordaid has provided support to migrant networks through its 'Projecten Nederland Internationaal' (De Haas 2006: 48). A number of Somali diaspora organizations, for instance, came together independently under the unifying umbrella of NedSom. Other diaspora networks, such as the Multi-cultural Women Peacemakers Network (MWPN), the umbrella of Ethiopian organizations ENNOS and the Somali network SOMNGO, have emerged out of explicit objectives set by Oxfam Novib for the establishment of migrant-led networks of diaspora organizations with an ability to function as platforms for lobbying and advocacy, influencing policies and practices in the host and home countries, as well as promoting the visibility of their own initiatives. Inspired by common nationality or by a cross-cutting common cause, these umbrella experiences allow members to achieve more by organizing in larger structures (Horst et al. 2010: 36).

With a focus on professionalization or umbrella development, the aim of all these diaspora empowerment actions is of enhancing the organizational strength and improving the general skills required to work in the development field among diaspora associations and individuals. Empowerment, in fact, often also goes hand in hand with funding. On this point, the following statement from the Dutch policy memorandum is explicit:

> [i]t is also important that migrant organisations with the strength and capacity to expand are given the opportunity to do so. This is a long-term process. Funding will be made available for targeted investment in a number of organisations which meet the criteria. The objective is to enable a number of migrant organisations to grow into full-fledged development cooperation partners at country and thematic levels. (MinBuZa 2008: 84)

Empowered diaspora associations are therefore more readily granted access to funding and, in turn, funding is a means for further diaspora empowerment. As highlighted by other observers, in fact, only a few diaspora organizations are able to meet the criteria set by donors 'for project identification, for-mulation and implementation', and 'often only with the help of donors and traditional development NGOs' themselves (Nijenhuis and Broekhuis 2010: 261). This raises important questions not only about the independence of diaspora contributions to homeland development, but also about the ultimate meaning of 'partnering' with the diaspora and 'participation'.

Joint implementation The exchange, funding and empowerment initiatives described so far see diaspora groups and non-diaspora actors as separate entities collaborating in forms that largely require support flowing from estab-lished development and peacebuilding actors to the diaspora. These forms of interaction do not necessarily foster the involvement of diasporas as genuine partners in the activities undertaken by mainstream aid organizations (Groot

and Gibbons 2007). But this is the case on the relatively rare occasions in which these two sets of actors cooperate in the actual implementation of a policy or programme through partnerships established between organizations for this purpose. Partnerships for the implementation of development or peacebuilding projects, nonetheless, can still present varying degrees of actual diaspora participation, depending on who initiated the action and to what extent roles and responsibilities are shared, as is evident from the example of two projects favouring migrants' contribution to reconstruction processes through temporary deployment in their home country.

The IOM Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN) programme, active in Ethiopia and other countries, operated with a number of diaspora organizations as cooperation partners; the Diaspora Partnership Programme was based on a formal partnership agreement between CARE Nederland and the Somali diaspora organization NedSom. Both projects foresaw collaboration with diaspora groups at two levels: diaspora individuals were implementing partners through fixed-term missions to empower local government and civil society organizations in Ethiopia, Somaliland and Puntland; diaspora organizations were engaged as partners, largely to facilitate outreach and contact with the Somali and Ethiopian communities in the Netherlands in order to recruit qualified candidates for the deployments. The two projects, however, exhibited different degrees of effective participation on behalf of the diaspora in the initial phases of project identification and development, as well as in subsequent management and administration, showing that partnership can entail partial as well as full forms of participation. Concluded in 2008, the Diaspora Partnership Programme of CARE and NedSom provided this Somali diaspora association with an opportunity to implement a relatively large-scale project, and to access and manage a substantial grant coming from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and build its own track record as a professional development organization.

Staff recruitment processes and organizational mergers can be seen as yet another form of diaspora engagement, in which the boundaries separating diaspora and non-diaspora organizations disappear. Some Dutch development agencies have explicit recruitment policies, which aim at diversifying the ethnic and cultural background of their staff. Databases have also been created, making known and more easily accessible the profiles of qualified diaspora individuals (ibid.: 446). Thanks to these initiatives, professionals from the diaspora feature in key roles in important organizations in the development and peacebuilding sphere; however, concerns have been raised about the effects of the recruitment of diaspora members in the Dutch work environment on the independence of diasporas' own agendas (Essed 2002). Ultimately, evidence suggests that these measures, together with the diverse ways in which diaspora engagement is practised, have favoured the full entry

of relatively few diaspora organizations and individuals on to the playing field of the development and peacebuilding industry in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

By shifting the focus away from the immediate outcomes of diaspora engagement for the diaspora or for processes in the homeland, this chapter has been concerned with the effects of diaspora engagement on development and peacebuilding as a professional sector or industry. A few concluding considerations can be made on this issue that stem from the findings presented in previous sections. Network-building, policy consultations, support in the form of funding, upscaling, capacity-building, umbrella development and a limited number of fully fledged partnerships account for a rich variety of ways in which diaspora engagement is concretely practised in the Netherlands. The existence of a common migration-development policy framework, moreover, has favoured shared vision and coordination among different donor agencies, allowing the consolidation of long-term alliances that have been important in shaping collaboration between non-diaspora actors and diaspora groups. This has led to a dense web of relations, whereby a given diaspora organization may be listened to in the policy consultations of one actor, while also being the implementation partner of another, and the recipient of training or funding from yet another. Current diaspora engagement policies and practices are therefore embedded in long-lasting and close-knit interactions that have enhanced the visibility of a relatively small number of diaspora organizations (and individuals) and promoted their legitimization as reputable actors on the Dutch development and peacebuilding scene.

This scenario must be related back to the underlying principles originally inspiring diaspora engagement. I have made the point earlier that diaspora engagement is strongly rooted in the theoretical assumptions advanced by human-centred development and peacebuilding thought. In terms of approach, human development calls for development industry professionals to shift from being external experts to facilitators enabling local knowledge and capabilities. In the industry's practice, evidence presented in the previous pages shows that current efforts of diaspora engagement focus overwhelmingly on the empowerment of selected migrant associations, allowing them to gain the institutional strength and build the skills and knowledge needed to design and implement development and peacebuilding projects. The various tools and instruments introduced to enhance diaspora engagement described in this chapter recall some of the participatory methodologies that are associated with human development thinking and are commonly used in development and peacebuilding work.

Consultations, stakeholder validation, community empowerment and capacity-building have become widespread methods, but they have also been

heavily criticized. Participatory approaches are in fact strongly intertwined with normative assumptions about citizenship and democracy, and with an understanding that the latter are 'good' for development. Participation also implies sharing power, an issue that tends to be overlooked by practitioners. Civil society is assumed to be a power-free entity and participation a power-free process that is seen as ultimately beneficial for development and peace. In their seminal book, Cooke and Kothari (2001) suggest that when it fails to take into account such power dynamics, participatory development runs the risk of being narrowed down to the adoption of participatory methods as a merely technical approach. The evidence provided in this chapter suggests that it is also important to understand how participation relates to established power structures and political systems. This is essential to avoid the participation of diaspora groups becoming a mere hierarchical donor–recipient relation, thus confirming Western development assistance as charity in favour of resource-poor actors. Diaspora engagement, in fact, may be as much about supporting the entrance on to the playing field of new actors as it is about promoting the participation of diaspora groups in development and peacebuilding.

In involving diaspora groups in development and peacebuilding, moreover, donors tend to apply a strict, Western-based blueprint that sets admission criteria and forms of collaboration (Nijenhuis and Broekhuis 2010: 261). Diaspora actors who are invited to participate are thus expected to familiarize themselves with already established language, methods and rules. The focus on professionalization and the selection of partners who meet required criteria reveal differing expectations on behalf of mainstream development actors about what the exact role of diaspora organizations in promoting homeland development might be: independent development and peace promoters, development and peacebuilding professionals, brokers between their home communities and development professionals, or simply direct beneficiaries of the latest stream in the evolution of development thinking. In addition, encouraging the establishment of professionalized diaspora actors entails the risk of hampering, in the long run, the independence of diaspora initiative and the added value of their supposed status as members of 'local' home communities and holders of 'local' knowledge and skills.

This chapter ultimately questions the idea that current diaspora engagement policies and practices represent a significant shift in development and peacebuilding practice. Rather, tight coordination between mainstream actors in the development and peacebuilding industry and the establishment of long-term inter-organizational alliances has favoured the institutionalization of diaspora involvement for a restricted number of diaspora actors. Rather than their being participants in homeland development and partners for the development industry, diaspora engagement efforts risk simply absorbing migrants as additional 'mainstream' (rather than 'new') actors within the industry.

Notes

1 Funded by the EU and jointly implemented by UNDP in association with IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA and ILO; www.migration4development.org/.

2 Data were collected in 2010 and consist of eighteen in-depth interviews with governmental and intergovernmental actors, NGOs and diaspora organizations, in addition to documental analysis of policy documents, project reports and publications, and observations conducted at public events discussing development and peacebuilding attended by diaspora and non-diaspora actors. Although these data focused prevalently on diaspora groups originating from the Horn of Africa, a broader reading of diaspora/external actor relations required the use of case material relating also to other diaspora groups.

3 See Warnecke (2010) for a broader discussion of the relation between development and peacebuilding, as well as an overview of activities initiated by the diaspora from the Horn of Africa that favour peacebuilding in the region.

4 This term indicates people who were either born overseas or with at least one parent born overseas, in contrast to Dutch *autochtonen*. *Allochtonen*, who may even hold Dutch nationality, were an estimated 3.4 million people in 2011. Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) population statistics.

5 In 2011, the Somali diaspora in the Netherlands was made up of 31,237 people, the Ethiopian of 11,547, and the Eritrean of 1,628.

6 In particular, the following thematic divisions are relevant for development cooperation, peacebuilding and/or migration-related issues: the Security Policy Department (DVB), the Human Rights and Peacebuilding Department (DMH) and the Consular Affairs and Migration Policy Department (DCM). The Sub-Saharan Africa Department (DAF), in contrast, is concerned with issues pertaining to the geographic area of the Horn of Africa.

7 Eight organizations are currently admitted to the LOM, representing migrants originating from the Caribbean, China, Morocco, southern Europe, the Moluccas, Suriname, Turkey, and migrants with refugee status.

8 Some of the participating organizations have a key role in diaspora engagement. In particular, further reference is made in this chapter to Oxfam Novib, Cordaid, Hivos and the NCDO.

9 See Horst et al. (2010: 49) for further details on the history of Cordaid's relations with diaspora groups.

10 Greater insight into these consultations and their impact on policy formulation is offered in Groot and Gibbons (2007) and Ionescu (2006).

11 Known as Thematische Medefinanciering subsidies.

12 Whereas up to €100,000 per project can be obtained through Linkis, programmes such as the annual *ideeënwedstrijd* contest (promoted by Cordaid with other partners) reward the most promising project ideas with €10,000.

13 See Warnecke et al. (2009) and Warnecke (2010) for an overview of these organizations and their peacebuilding-relevant activities, which include awareness-raising campaigns, lobbying, relief and development projects.

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9 | Norwegian collaboration with diasporas

Rojan Ezzati and Cindy Horst

Introduction[1]

This chapter analyses the ways in which European (non-)governmental actors engage with diasporas in policies and practices geared towards their country of origin by focusing on the Norwegian experience. First, it should be mentioned that by 'diaspora' we are referring to both individuals and organizations. Secondly, the 'policies and practices' we are particularly interested in are those involving humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding initiatives. This is what in the Norwegian context is referred to as 'engagement politics', which is the term we will use to refer to these processes in this chapter.

The notion of engagement politics has over the years become increasingly important as part of the Norwegian national identity, as well as an international brand characterizing Norway (Lunde et al. 2008: 152–6). Generally speaking, engaging with humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding is seen as important by both the Norwegian state and the average Norwegian. This is, for example, evident in the large sums allocated to financial aid,[2] an expense which is largely acknowledged as important among the Norwegian population.[3]

However, initiatives for engaging Norwegian citizens who are the most directly affected by the areas requiring humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding initiatives have only recently started to be explicitly acknowledged as important. These initiatives target Norwegian citizens with ties to areas in need of engagement politics, often referred to as 'diasporas' (as defined in the introduction to this book). The late development in engaging such citizens in engagement politics is partly due to the relatively recent immigration history of Norway, as the 'new immigration' to Norway started only with the first labour migrants in the late 1960s/early 1970s (Brochmann and Kjeldstadli 2008: 267). Nevertheless, this alone cannot fully explain why progress has been so slow. Thus, our main focus in this chapter is a discussion of some of the factors that impede progress in using diasporas as a resource, as well as providing possible examples of ways of dealing with the issue.

The rise of 'diasporas'

The recent developments in the aim to include diasporas in engagement politics are not an exclusively Norwegian trend. Across Europe, an increasing

number of activities targeting diaspora populations are being developed. These activities aim at increasing the participation of diasporas in humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding initiatives. However, they largely focus on knowledge creation on the topic, and capacity-building support to the individuals and organizations involved. As we will describe in greater detail below, there are numerous good reasons for European governmental and non-governmental actors to wish to raise diaspora participation in activities aimed at their country of origin.

The main motivation for doing so is rarely an acknowledgement of the fact that diasporas are genuine stakeholders in development cooperation practices and foreign policy initiatives in their country of settlement. With their background from, and transnational links with, their country of origin, they have interests at stake in the context that the European authorities and civil society are trying to shape. While their interest in the country of origin is largely acknowledged, their contributions in engagement politics as members of their societies of settlement are often overlooked. This has considerable implications for how 'diaspora initiatives' are given shape, which is an obstacle that slows down progress in engaging with diasporas in engagement politics.

 The transnational engagements of migrants with their countries of origin have been of interest to European governmental and non-governmental actors in informal practices for quite some time. However, this interest has boomed Europe-wide over the last ten years with debates focusing on the migration-development nexus and the role of diasporas. This can be seen, *inter alia*, in the ongoing Global Forum on Migration and Development and various initiatives by the European Union.

One of the key explanatory factors for the sudden rise in interest, and a central element in the debates in Europe, is the growth of remittances (Castles and Delgado Wise 2008). Remittances have attracted considerable attention and are being recognized as a major source of finance for states as well as households in the global South, surpassing Official Development Aid (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) (De Haas 2005; Maimbo and Ratha 2005). The fact that remittances from migrants to developing counties are 70 per cent higher than the financial aid allocated to those same countries (Lunde et al. 2008: 157) explains the increase in the interest in this field.

Return is another area that is of great interest to European governments, as 'migrants from the South (especially low-skilled workers and asylum seekers) are perceived as a problem – even a threat – to security, stability and living standards in the North' (Castles and Delgado Wise 2008: 3). Return migration is often presented as a win-win-win situation, as it is seen to address issues of 'brain drain' as well as migration-related concerns of Western governments, while simultaneously allowing migrants to make better use of their own resources.

The recent increase in interest in facilitating the transnational engagements of migrants does not imply that such engagements themselves are new or that they exist only when facilitated. Both diaspora actors and European governmental and non-governmental actors engage in activities aimed at improving conditions in conflict and non-conflict areas independently of one another. On top of these independent engagements, each side is trying to engage with, facilitate or develop synergies and cooperation with the other. European actors develop activities that aim to increase participation of diaspora members by focusing on knowledge-building, capacity-building, supporting the establishment of diaspora development and peacebuilding projects or increasing the inclusion of diasporas in 'mainstream' activities. Diaspora individuals and organizations simultaneously engage in advocacy, lobbying and networking with a variety of intergovernmental, state and non-state actors (Horst 2008).

Stakeholders on paper

In the Norwegian context, the importance of including diasporas in engagement politics has been acknowledged in several recent government documents. In White Paper 13 (2008/09),[4] and White Paper 15 (2008/09),[5] the Norwegian government highlights the importance of including diaspora groups in development cooperation and foreign policy. The documents acknowledge that the resources of migrants have been utilized too little and that this needs to change for the benefit of both Norway and the individuals involved.

The documents list a number of resources that diaspora groups bring with them when engaging in development. First, diasporas possess valuable knowledge about culture, language, society, history, religion and politics (MFA 2009a: 101). Secondly, diaspora resources include networks in the country of origin: 'Both individuals and organisations have good contacts with key milieus in their own or their parents' country of origin' (ibid.: 101; see also Norad 2009: 19). Thirdly, migrants are seen to have advantages as bridges between societies, and they are also seen to be able to play a key role in transferring social knowledge (ibid.: 19).

Another government initiative that is relevant for diasporas is the *Refleks* project launched by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2007. A resulting report published in 2008 (Lunde et al.) makes explicit that although Norway, as one of the wealthiest nations of the world, aims to contribute to worldwide poverty reduction, peacebuilding processes and the fight for human rights, it also has its own interests at stake in terms of maintaining world peace and building international alliances in the era of globalization (ibid.: 154–5). The report recognizes that 'we' help 'them' for the sake of helping, but also for the greater good of 'us'. This is an important acknowledgement, as it opens up an alternative way of addressing engagement politics, creating space for diasporas to be actors in the process.

The above approach is also linked to the notion of 'a new and larger "we"', which has been stressed as of great importance in 'the New Norway', where an increasing proportion of the population is of immigrant origin.[6] A more inclusive approach to engagement politics, then, would not only be a reflection of 'the New Norway', but also function as the link between the transnational actions that migrants engage in anyhow and their integration into Norwegian society. Many diaspora members are highly engaged in issues related to their countries of origin, which requires and enables them to interact more with Norwegian actors in this field.

Within the MFA, the on-paper inclusion of diaspora contributions in policy documents is considered to be far more important than in-practice achievements. While the migration-development project led to a number of concrete outputs, including a site for remittance price comparison[7] and Pilot Project Pakistan (Erdal and Horst 2010), the political milestones are valued the most, because this enables mainstreaming in the future. An informant explains this as follows:

> When trying to mainstream a certain issue, there is the same sequence one needs to go through. First of all, there needs to be a policy, there needs to be political will to go ahead with something. Second, this political will needs to be expressed in practical terms. The political objectives need to be specified in concrete targets, objectives. Third, a timeframe needs to be added – for example, the question 'how far will we have gone on this in 3–5 years' needs to be posed. Fourth, the policy then needs monitoring. If a certain unit does not meet the target, they will feel shame, it will reflect badly upon them [...] All actors involved, including diasporas, civil society and international bodies, can now engage in a monitoring role towards the government, because these policies are in place.

Whereas this is an important observation, there are counter-streams within the ministry, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the NGO sector. As the practical implementation of the policy largely does not lie with the ministry but with either Norad or the non-governmental sector, complications arise. Diaspora individuals and organizations approaching the ministry or Norad are often referred to NGOs operating in their country of origin. But the question is how willing and able these NGOs are to assist them. The level of scepticism can be quite large among NGOs generally, and employees faced with the task of implementing diaspora collaboration more specifically. As an employee of a large NGO states when discussing Pilot Project Pakistan:

> It seems that this was a pet project to a number of individuals or organisations. For Norad, it fitted well into their principle 6, for politicians it enabled them

to tick a box. Norad does not necessarily follow up everything they launch, and this has been a very political project from the beginning.

Norway has a very active civil society life consisting of small-scale voluntary initiatives, and places great value on solidarity initiatives by Norwegian citizens spread across the vast country in often quite isolated areas. Smaller, solidarity-based organizations similarly often start collaborating with diaspora organizations or individuals. These smaller organizations are often started up by Norwegians after getting to know refugees or migrants from poorer areas who come to Norway and talk about the conditions in their home country. Solidarity-based organizations, then, share interests with diaspora organizations and cooperation is mutually beneficial – which leads them to search for solutions to existing difficulties more eagerly.

The larger Norwegian NGOs, on the other hand, face difficulties fitting diaspora participation into their operations for practical reasons: some of these organizations indicate that they commonly implement programmes through local civil society partners, whereas others stress that they do not work through (local or transnational) civil society, but implement all programmes directly. Those organizations with national and international departments furthermore struggle to fit the transnational engagements of migrants into either of these departments. Only a few individuals see clear advantages, and have convinced their organizations to experiment with the issue:

> Within our organization there is a lot of thinking on this, and the Somalia programme is a bit of a laboratory. Our interest stems from pragmatic rather than ideological reasons: this [by hiring diaspora Somali staff] is how we get access, and are able to operate there. A colleague of mine some years back argued that if Western organizations do not do something soon, they will become irrelevant – they are not greatly appreciated in the places where they work, and local organizations are developing the capacities to do the same but have greater legitimacy.

While cooperation thus is understood as a difficult and complex process, employees of the large organizations are in doubt about the actual benefits of diaspora participation. Informants find questions on the value added by cooperating with diaspora organizations very difficult to answer. Some can understand the advantages of cooperating with diaspora members and organizations in theory, but remain doubtful about how this plays out in practice. Others do not see advantages but only problems from the viewpoint of their organization, as is clearly illustrated by this informant's remarks on 'value added':

> This is a big question. I guess it has to do with their resourcefulness. But the question is how their engagement has any added value for our organisation.

For diasporas, they are in a new country, they can be doing something for the home country. There is a clear benefit for them. But how we can engage with them is another issue altogether. There are so many agendas involved with diasporas groups – what are their driving forces?

A challenge in practice

While policy documents recognize diasporas as resources and stakeholders both 'here' and 'there', in practice one of the challenges lies in not just seeing them as users, but also stakeholders in engagement politics. The importance of this is well illustrated by a quote from one of the participants in a Nansen Peace Centre initiative. The Nansen Peace Centre is one of the few NGOs that have engaged in small-size initiatives to involve (young) diaspora members in its programme. The participant really appreciated the approach taken, and indicated: 'This is the first time somebody from a Norwegian organization is actually interested in us. Interested in us not as refugees, as people who need help. But as a resource, as people who want to do something for their country of origin.'

In European terms, and considering its relatively recent migration history, Norway has, on paper, quite advanced policies. Formulations like 'We must recognize that the identities of the future will extend beyond the national ones and that many people will have strong ties to several countries and communities' (MFA 2009b: 70) are a clear example of this progressive thinking. But these recent policy developments will likely take longer to implement in practice. For example, individuals with an immigrant background are hardly represented in many of the governmental and non-governmental institutions in the field of engagement politics. Drawing on the example of Norad, which is placed under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and works the most directly on diaspora issues, one of our interviewees referred to the 'reality of snow-white Norway'. In addition, three challenges to the implementation of diaspora involvement in engagement politics were identified by employees of the Norwegian MFA and NGOs: a lack of capacity among diaspora organizations; great differences in organizational culture; and the biased nature of diaspora involvement.

Capacity-building needs

A main concern mentioned throughout our interviews and observed during events is that diaspora members are not necessarily 'natural born development workers' and that their deficient knowledge of development work is an important hindrance to cooperation. This mantra in some ways relates to the fact that engagement politics is currently the domain of ethnic Norwegians, as it removes attention from the fact that many of those engaged with their countries of origin are highly qualified people. Furthermore, diaspora benefit from language skills, contextual and current affairs knowledge, a great degree

of commitment and the experience of having lived through or having family who lived through many of the situations those assisted face. An employee at the MFA makes an important point in this respect:

> There is a general fear that these kinds of projects will lead to a herd of incompetent people calling. But the focus should not necessarily be on the incompetent, but it should be on the top people. Recruitment is very important in the whole picture, and a far more proactive approach is needed there. It is about the fact that talent is not seen, but also about the fact that there are very few applicants with a migrant background and those who do apply are not qualified. Again, this is partly to do with migrants choosing other subjects [...] But it is also partly to do with the ministry not having done enough to attract them.

From the perspective of governmental and non-governmental actors, the lack of capacity in attempts to engage with diaspora organizations cannot be denied. Engaging with diaspora organizations requires time and effort that some of the actors just do not have the capacity for. At the same time, diaspora organizations are in most cases run by diaspora members on a voluntary basis, which usually means that their engagement in this is in addition to a full-time job, as well as family and other commitments. Consequently, the time and resources they have available for this work are very limited (Horst 2008). Additionally, there may be great variations between diaspora organizations in terms of experience in the field, organizational skills and knowledge of relevant structures in the country of settlement. This is why capacity-building of diaspora individuals and organizations is, and has been, a main priority among European actors; and the Norwegian case is no exception.

Some governmental and non-governmental actors do have capacity-building as part of their official mandate. One example is the Norwegian Development Network (*Bistandstorget*), a resource and competence network with capacity-building activities targeted at its member organizations, which are civil society organizations and other actors in the field of development cooperation. From 2009 to 2010, the network organized several series of weekend classes referred to as 'the Development School' (*Bistandsskolen*). The target group was diaspora organizations, as well as small Norwegian voluntary organizations, and the aim was to enable participants to develop project ideas in collaboration with partners in the South, apply for funding for the project, and implement it in practice. A welcome additional outcome of the course was that it created increased respect between the different groups, and allowed for network-building.

Many of our interviewees requested more arrangements of this kind, for example a resource centre with tailor-made initiatives for diaspora members, in order to help them develop project plans and apply for funding. Today, capacity-building of other organizations as part of one's own organizational

mandate remains a rarity. In the majority of cases (especially for the smaller NGOs), this adds an extra workload to an already hectic working day. Although one would like to help, the lack of resources makes capacity-building a recurring constraint for many of the NGOs we spoke to. One umbrella organization providing funding to its member organizations on a project-by-project basis, for example, explained how they had to invest quite a bit of time in helping their members develop the project proposal to a level where it could be submitted and stood a chance of being funded.

While the lack of knowledge of Norwegian development and humanitarian aid practices among diaspora organizations is a hindrance for collaboration, it is important to acknowledge the fact that capacity-building is not a one-way engagement but occurs in both directions. Developing a more reciprocal understanding of capacity-building may be vital in avoiding 'cloning effects'. The concept of 'cultural cloning' was initially used to problematize the systemic reproduction of white, masculine homogeneity in high-status positions (Essed 2002; Essed and Goldberg 2002). The concept can also be used more broadly to indicate the common practice of selecting and thus reproducing what is most familiar to us.

Incompatible differences?

There might be a further reason why diaspora professionals are not finding their ways into 'mainstream' development cooperation, humanitarianism or peacebuilding projects. Greater diversity in staffing and cooperating partners is likely to also lead to greater diversity in values, principles and practices. A number of informants point out that they have had considerable disagreements on certain topics that are well established in Norwegian circles, such as gender issues and the importance of local participation. Whereas these are actual disagreements that employees have to face, often merely assumed differences similarly cause difficulties, for example common perceptions on gender relationships between Muslim women and men (Razack 2004). In fact, if the resources of diaspora individuals and organizations are well used, they could contribute to exploring such pre-assumptions and allowing a bridge between different communities.

In our interviews, governmental and non-governmental actors mentioned differences between the approach of diaspora organizations and (non-)governmental actors in terms of 1) working on a professional/voluntary basis, 2) expertise in conflict/first-hand experience of the conflict, and 3) knowledge of 'how things work' in the country of settlement/origin. Interestingly, all these apparent differences can complement each other. Instead, however, they often become the source of frustration on both sides. Some of our interviewees acknowledged the fact that it is about learning how to work with each other. As they deepened their knowledge of the context in the country of origin they

were operating within, they got to know the diaspora and, not least, their partner organizations in Norway better. As a consequence, they found that misunderstandings and misconceptions were more easily avoided.

Based on the descriptions given, it seemed that the starting point often was a lack of trust, or a certain scepticism at best, from both parties at the outset. One issue mentioned by some of our informants was that in the beginning they had the impression that diaspora organization members saw them only 'as a bank', a matter of formality required by the funders, rather than as true partners. On the other side, diaspora members were concerned that the European actors wanted to monitor and restrict their work. A leader of a small NGO described the importance of trying to establish a friendly relationship before addressing the challenges:

> So I began by telling about myself, about my background. It was important for me to tell them about my missionary background. Then, I made them tell me about their families and their lives. We spent the entire day doing that. They were very surprised by that. But we didn't want to be seen as a bank, but as a partner. It was pretty clear that they looked at us as a bank which would give them money, and they would take care of it themselves. But it became clear straight away that they did not have the technical abilities needed, so we had to train them on that along the way. What I felt was exciting was that they started to trust me; they understood that I only wanted what was best for them. That I wanted to be their partner did not mean that I wanted to be the police controlling them. Most local NGOs get money, and they do whatever they please, and then they adjust the criteria to the Western demands.

As the two parties got to know each other better, and gradually started to trust each other, they also 'learned how to work together'. In Norway, however, the pressure to act is great, not always leading to fruitful engagements. As an employee expressed it, 'It takes so much time to build a common platform, but it is so crucial. There is pressure from diasporas, there is pressure from the MFA and Norad to scale up – but it is crucial to be careful.'

The examples illustrate that a lack of trust is a bad starting point for collaboration. Building a relation based on trust and true partnership is possible when time is invested, although this does not exclude all challenges throughout the partnership. Like any partnership, collaboration between diaspora organizations and Norwegian NGOs or governmental actors requires compromises and the willingness to learn from each other. Often, both parties learn that the variety of perspectives that is gained through this kind of collaboration is an asset for them. However, there is a risk of expecting the exact same input and output from everyone involved in a certain project, which easily leads to this diversity in perspectives being lost. To some, different approaches to things can be seen as proof of incompatibility. Others acknowledge diversity as an

opportunity to learn from one another and understand the greater variety of perspectives to draw on as an asset to their organization.

A biased and fragmented actor

A third challenge mentioned by our informants is the issue of fragmentation within diaspora communities, which is seen to potentially lead to biases among the individuals and the organizations they represent (Sinatti and Horst forthcoming). A very common concern that external actors voice in this context is that engaging with diasporas is difficult because they can be religiously or politically motivated, 'fragmented' or generally 'biased'. Interestingly, however, in Norwegian civil society working on development and humanitarian aid there are many faith-based actors. This part of their organizational identity is seldom seen as bias-creating. So the question is what makes diasporas, or the way we perceive them, different?

One of the issues identified is that the existing fragmentation is not appreciated in the Norwegian context, and that opposing communities are expected to work together. An employee of a faith-based organization expresses it like this:

> Another challenge is that within these groups the persons are very different, and want different things, so keeping people together and making them cooperate can be difficult. For example, in [their country of origin], people are used to having separate organizations based on the different clans and languages. But in Norway they are meant to come together in the same congregations and work together, which is not always that easy.

Consequently, some Norwegian NGOs might avoid cooperation with diaspora groups altogether. Others might have tried but stopped because they found it too complex. From the (non-)governmental actors' perspective, diaspora organizations need to join forces in a specific project in order to achieve a greater impact, rather than working on the same thing separately. As a representative of an umbrella organization explains: 'Last year I received three different invitations from Somali organizations to events linked to the International Day against Female Genital Mutilation. I try to explain that collaboration might lead to a more far-reaching effect externally.'

The problem is that many of the lines of fragmentation run very deep, and in the case of refugees may be directly related to the conflict in the country of origin (Horst 2013). As such, expecting people to work together without substantially addressing underlying causes of fragmentation is unlikely to succeed. In fact, dialogue meetings – such as those between a number of Somali clans, and those facilitated by the Nansen Peace Centre – are a necessary but time-consuming step towards greater cooperation. At the same time, working with diaspora organizations might give deeper insights into the roots and forms of conflict, which can be of great importance to the project at hand.

While forcing collaboration is indeed a problematic approach, self-chosen collaboration can become very successful. Since peacebuilding is so politicized in its character, enhancing collaboration based on thematic interest and professional links is a route to success, as exemplified here by an umbrella organization employee:

> However, every now and then cooperation does occur. Last autumn we supported an event linked to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, organized by three different Somali organizations. This was the first time they collaborated with each other, but it turned out to be a big success. Now they have been talking about collaborating with each other again.

Another aspect of fragmentation relates to the concerns raised about issues of representation. Norwegian NGOs and government actors often express unease about not being able to tell whether the diaspora organizations or individuals they relate to 'represent' the wider community. As an employee of an NGO working with the Somali community pointed out:

> It is difficult for me to judge the different actors. M [individual] always says she has a lot of women behind her, but where are they? During meetings, nobody appears [...] R [individual] came to my office and told me 'the problem with M is that she says she represents her clan, but within that clan she represents a sub-clan and even there, she does not have full support'.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have argued that the gap between policies and practices on diaspora cooperation in Norway is caused by the fact that diasporas are not seen as genuine stakeholders in Norwegian 'engagement politics'. Norway has developed quite progressive policies on diaspora inclusion in development cooperation and foreign policy. A number of central documents clearly acknowledge diasporas as stakeholders and resources in these two fields. But while this is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient one, and the practices that should guarantee the implementation of the policy are far less advanced. Rather than focusing on how written documents can get in the way of actual practices in a certain field, by creating the illusion of work being done (Ahmed 2010), we have focused here on the concrete concerns that those expected to put the policy into practice have with its implementation.

When it comes to how the gap between policy and practice could be narrowed in Norway in the future, we suggest that, first, it is important that greater trust and cooperation are established between the MFA, Norad and the civil society sector. Whereas it is important that policy documents are in place and there are a number of government employees dedicated to the topic, great scepticism exists among those expected to effect implementation.

NGOs consider the process problematic as they feel they have not been given the resources and tools, or that those developing the policy are idealists who have no sense of what is going on on the ground. Meanwhile, they are the ones engaging with the issue and facing real-life challenges.

Secondly, cooperation between Norwegian NGOs and government actors will simply take time and cannot be rushed. Research in the Netherlands (Sinatti, this volume) illustrates how the success there was partly related to the long history of involvements with migrant organizations of the Dutch government and civil society sector. Lessons from the Netherlands and elsewhere suggest that it is important to build trust and a common platform first, and this takes a considerable amount of time and resources, but that it is worth the effort.

Thirdly, it is important not just to focus on voluntary commitments by individuals and organizations, but to invest at least as much in involving diasporas more in Norwegian engagement politics professionally. The issue is not about assisting non-qualified migrants in small projects, along the lines of Pilot Project Pakistan, it is about acknowledgement of, and inclusion in, mainstream Norwegian initiatives. It is important to have more voluntary diaspora organizations, many of which will already be actively engaged in projects in their countries of origin, with the capacity to compete in regular schemes. Larger Norwegian NGOs could cooperate in that, by sharing their knowledge. But a lot may be gained simply by acknowledging a wider range of activities, including remittance-sending practices and fund-raising within migrant communities, as part of Norwegian engagement politics, and by focusing on recruitment practices and the mechanisms that exclude Norwegians with migrant backgrounds.

The challenges that Norwegian NGOs and governmental actors identify, as illustrated in this chapter, are similar to those of other actors in Europe, and include capacity-building needs and biased approaches among diaspora organizations and individuals, as well as differences in approaches between Norwegian and non-Norwegian organizations. The realities of such challenges must be acknowledged in order to be able to allow for fruitful collaboration. At the same time, in order to implement the underlying purpose of the advanced policy documents in Norway, it is important to move one step farther. This requires us to understand diaspora organizations and individuals not only as stakeholders in their country of origin, but also in Norway.

Migrants and children of migrants who run what are known as diaspora organizations are part of what the Norwegian foreign minister calls 'the new and larger we'. They are citizens (or long-term residents) of Norway, with a particular interest in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. In this sense, they have a lot in common with the many non-diaspora civil society organizations in Norway. The Norwegian MFA stresses that

Double allegiances, multiple identities and experiences from war and conflict have so far not been identified as a resource, but rather as a social challenge [...] We must recognize that the identities of the future will extend beyond the national ones and that many people will have strong ties to several countries and communities. (MFA 2009b: 70)

If all this is truly incorporated in collaboration efforts between diaspora organizations and others, at some point we will in fact stop understanding such organizations as 'diaspora' since their contributions are civic contributions rather than contributions by migrants to their countries of origin. Understanding diaspora individuals and organizations as stakeholders in Norwegian engagement politics does three things. In itself, it contributes to more and better communication across different groups of actors (governmental, non-governmental or individual organizations). Secondly, it encourages collaboration on peacebuilding and development activities in the country of origin, by formalizing and facilitating a lot of the work that they are already doing. And thirdly, it is of importance to the integration process. Participating in public arenas is important for this, and civil society can function as such an arena. At the same time, such participation can contribute to a stronger sense of belonging to Norwegian society.

Notes

1 The chapter is mainly based on data collection for DIASPEACE in Norway on interactions between (non-)governmental actors and diaspora organizations in engagement politics. The data were collected between April 2009 and June 2010, starting with a mapping exercise of all potential governmental and non-governmental actors. Based on the initial mapping, we conducted fifteen in-depth interviews with government, NGO and CBO employees, as well as one focus group discussion with government employees and one with diaspora organizations benefiting from a pilot project on stimulating diaspora involvement in development cooperation in Pakistan (Pilot Project Pakistan). Additionally, document analysis of twenty-eight policy documents, speeches, annual reports and field trip reports produced by governmental and non-governmental actors was carried out. Finally, fifteen events were observed or extensive reports of events analysed. Although the case studies within the DIASPEACE project have been focusing on the Horn of Africa, the initiatives we are interested in are so recent and so rare in the Norwegian context that we decided to expand our data collection beyond this geographical focus. Therefore, in this chapter we address the Norwegian approach to engaging with diasporas in general, rather than focusing on specific diaspora groups.

2 The sums allocated to financial aid reached 1 per cent of the Norwegian gross national product in 2009.

3 In a longitudinal study carried out by Statistics Norway in 1972 it was found that 72 per cent of those asked were in favour of Norway providing financial aid to developing countries, a percentage which had increased to 90 per cent by 2006: www.ssb.no/ssp/utg/200702/04/.

4 White Paper 13: Climate, conflict and capital: Norwegian development policy adapting to change.

5 White Paper 15: Interests, responsibilities and possibilities: Main contours of Norwegian foreign policy.

6 The concept of 'a new and larger we' was first introduced in a speech by the minister of foreign affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, in 2006.

7 Site for price comparison: www.finansportalen.no/Sende+penger+hjem/Sending+money+home.

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Afterword

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and Mariko Sato

The three sections of this volume portray the multiplicity and multilocality of transnational diaspora activities in the Horn of Africa region. These range from engagement in the regional home countries to involvement in host countries and transnational communities alike. This volume has aimed at filling the gap in the literature regarding the role of diasporas in conflict, peacebuilding and development in particular – all immensely important themes for the whole international community. Each chapter separately portrays the context-specificity of different countries, conflicts and diasporas. When brought together, they bring a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics and processes shared by transnational diasporas even beyond the Horn of Africa.

The term diaspora efficiently captures the nature of a transnational dispersed community which over time forms within itself a 'third dimension' of identities and actors, alongside that of an international system organized on nationalities and nation-states: the country of origin and the country of residence. This dimension is pivotal for global governance. Even as the term diaspora has become common in academia and the transnational activities and networks of diasporas have become an increasingly popular subject of research, especially in relation to conflict and peacebuilding, the question of whether diaspora activities promote peace or conflict remains open. Do diasporas cause tensions in conflict-ridden areas and internationally more than they advance peace? There are no straightforward correlations between diaspora activity and peace or conflict. This volume suggests the incorporation of a multidisciplinary approach and attention to context-specific features. The advantage of this approach is that it provides an instrument for shedding light on the myriad of transnational actors, levels of activity, time-span and forms of agency. The ability to grasp the different sites involved in transnational diaspora activities is equally vital, yet often ignored. Ideally, transnational diasporas should be investigated utilizing various theoretical approaches accompanied by multi-sited field research.

Multi-level governance (MLG) provides one model to grasp the reality of diaspora presence, direct and indirect influence. In addition to local, trans-national and global levels, in the Horn of Africa regionalism challenges the Westphalian nation-state-centred assumptions of how identities are formed, developed and maintained.

Apart from methodological issues, it is important to take into account the contextual element of diaspora activities. Conflicts are different, as are diaspora relations to them and their original home countries. Understanding these varying contexts remains a challenge – how do these contexts mould diaspora communities and how in turn do diasporas affect fragile communities and societies? Host societies and governments have also developed different ways of engaging with their transnational diaspora communities. The most central questions concern remittances and 'remote politics', i.e. taking part in homeland politics from afar by lobbying abroad, being active in, for instance, online discussion forums or raising funds for political parties.

Diasporas can become politicized and organized in their host countries and in their original home countries as well as within their transnational communities. For instance, in the context of the Horn of Africa region, Islam has historically been a trans-boundary form of political practice. Religion can be an important resource for diaspora members and communities, providing much-needed stability and helping people to survive materially and spiritually. But as is well known, it can also aggravate conflicts when used in power struggles to identify and mark divisions or to mobilize extremist movements.

Diasporas are also involved in spreading secular and liberal ideologies and civil rights by transferring and supporting democratic values. Many diaspora practices, such as remittances and other resources, support systems of multi-party democracy and civil society. On the other hand, return migration can be a valuable avenue for spreading good practices and capacities, and bringing about new livelihoods and investments on a grassroots level. These effects can be further amplified by the fact that return migration seems to be more circular and/or continuous by nature, rather than being a singular act of 'returning home'. Furthermore, those migrants who have had the opportunities and means to integrate within their host society, especially in terms of employment and education, seem to be best equipped to reintegrate in their original home countries. Education and experiences abroad can bring about new perspectives and potential for peacebuilding and development. Successful integration can be especially useful for organized forms of diaspora activity – education and work experience can aid diaspora members to form associations, obtain funding, and work with officials. These mutually reinforcing ties between host country integration, transnational activities and eventually even successful return migration still require careful further investigations, but are surely an interesting point for policy discourses on immigration.

Overall, it is becoming more and more evident that diasporas are not merely one-dimensional immigrant communities or simply representatives of their original home countries. Rather, they are globalized actors who are able to act through but also beyond traditional mediums and spheres of organization. Diasporas take part in conventional forms of development aid and peacebuild-

ing work, but their transnational networks enable them to transcend these forms of action to work with communities in their original home countries in an autonomous and self-directed manner as well. The resources, capabilities and networks on which diasporas draw in their transnational activities are often themselves formed within a transnational context and therefore require a careful study if they are to be understood and explained. For instance, the mediums of communication and resource transfer, not to mention frequent circular travel of diaspora members, have already become a subject of interest for many scholars. For further research the aim should not be to reach a conclusion on whether transnational diaspora activities are 'good' or 'bad', but rather to recognize these activities as an important dimension of conflicts, peacebuilding and development. This dimension carries with it its own advantages and difficulties and needs to be as closely explored and scrutinized as any other activity in those fields.

The purpose of this book has been to bring new approaches and points of view to the discussion concerning diaspora. This has been done by presenting context-specific cases from different countries of origin in the Horn of Africa, as well as various host countries in Europe. More methodological discussion and context-specific research is needed, not only in the Horn of Africa, but elsewhere as well. In addition to separate context-specific studies, it is necessary to correlate multi-sited case studies from different time-spans on a more general level of analysis in order to be able to further problematize the dichotomous approach of being 'for' or 'against' transnational diaspora engagement in global governance.

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