Revolts and Political Regimes:
The Enduring Perils to Established Political Orders

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Abstract

This paper delves into the profound impact of societal uprisings, fueled by a complex interplay of politico-economic factors, in reshaping or toppling political regimes. It becomes apparent that violent opposition to a regime often arises from the calculated maneuvers of dominant political elites, who adeptly wield various tools to stoke a fervent desire for political liberty among the populace, challenging the existing order. This phenomenon was starkly evident during the oppressive reign of Siyad Barre, where segments of Somali society were mobilized from grassroots levels, driven by a collective yearning to break free from the shackles of tyranny and repression. The revolts of that era shared a common goal: either dismantling the dictatorial machinery or compelling its abandonment, while simultaneously advocating for the establishment of a democratic system that would empower individuals to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed rights. However, even in the absence of overt repression, revolts against entrenched systems often persist, driven by underlying political agendas that could potentially be pursued through non-violent means. This paper further examines a recent uprising in Somaliland, drawing parallels from historical revolts witnessed during Siyad Barre’s regime, where power consolidation and fear tactics were employed to maintain control. These uprisings typically unfold under the orchestration of political elites who have played pivotal roles in Somalia’s political landscape since the early 1980s. During this period, certain Somali politicians defected from the Siyad government, rallying their constituents for armed resistance against dictatorial rule. While the circumstances surrounding these revolts may vary, they share commonalities that warrant thorough exploration. However, it’s essential to note the diverse motives driving each uprising. Some seek to completely withdraw from the existing system, while others aim to force reforms or remove those in power altogether.

Keywords: Revolts, Elite Manipulation, Self-serving, Grievance, Conflict.


Introduction: Understanding Political Upheavals in the Somali Context

With the beginning of the Enlightenment, Western thinkers challenged divine rule in search of socio-political metamorphosis, advocating for a substantial departure from entrenched governance structures dating back to the late 18th century. Since then, there have been developments and debates concerning the models of statehood best suited to govern the governed. Through a Marxist lens, the imperative dissolution of the capitalist apparatus, which has historically favored the bourgeoisie, emerges as pivotal to ushering in a just order prioritizing societal equity (Escude, 2021). Yet, the proposed methodologies for achieving this end may seem abrupt and violent, a perception viewed with enduring skepticism by conservative political theorists. In contrast, liberals perceive political upheavals as avenues for asserting individual rights against oppressive regimes (ARENDT, 1973). While this liberal viewpoint may seem pertinent to early political tumults in certain Somali regions during the 1980s, the fundamental drivers of
Somalia's political upheavals onset from post-barre era often stem from elite manipulation, rather than a genuine pursuit of justice. Political theories delineating upheavals and their intentional initiation underscore the justification and motivations behind their occurrence, often reflecting the desires of the masses. For instance, disparities in resource allocation leading to economic inequities can catalyze mass protests against regimes mismanaging public finances, thereby exacerbating wealth gaps. However, the articulated grievances underlying such upheavals—whether aimed at dismantling or reforming ruling regimes—are absent within the Somali context. This absence does not imply that Somalis have wholly benefited from their political regimes, nor does it negate the existence of wealth gaps, human rights violations, or oppression. Typically, violent aspirations against political regimes are not perceived as means to institute a superior system but rather as reactions to prevailing injustices. The gamut of political ideologies from Marxism to Post-Colonialism fails to exclusively encapsulate the complexities of Somali political dynamics shaped by clan affiliations and socio-cultural elements. The idiosyncratic Somali political landscape necessitates meticulous examination beyond conventional theoretical frameworks.

The Somali syndrome defies easy categorization within existing revolutionary paradigms, primarily due to its incongruence with socio-economic changes advocated by these theories and the absence of widespread awareness regarding individual rights. While political mobilization may ensue in response to authoritarian repression, as witnessed during the Barre regime, the unique Somali context demands multifaceted scrutiny.

To grasp this context fully, one must transcend existing revolution theories and consider a myriad of socio-economic and political factors interwoven across locales. Primarily, Somalis lack a collective vision of their best interests, with governance comprehension severely limited, if not entirely absent (Gaariye, 2021). This deficit often results in a simplistic direction guided by political elites rather than informed by broader societal needs.

The dominance of political elites over ordinary citizens' perspectives poses a grave threat to inclusive systems, fostering social division and animosity. Recent uprisings, such as the one in Las'ano, indicate a potential for more extensive subversion than previously acknowledged. Former President 'Farmajo' has expressed concern over ex-political elites' efforts to regain power and manipulate conflicts indirectly, highlighting the substantial risks they pose to political stability. This statement, made by Farmajo during a courtesy visit to Kenya, underscores the substantial risks posed by these political elites to the stability of political regimes, as they persistently work against them.

In the Somali context, political upheavals stem not from grassroots movements but from the short-term goals of political elites, who pivot their strategies once objectives are achieved. This volatile nature not only imperils existing systems but also exacerbates social divisions. The future of Somali statehood remains uncertain, particularly as political elites perpetuate opposition for opposition's sake, hindering progress and stability.

While external actors may instigate political upheavals through local politicians (Elmi & Bariise), the ultimate toll is borne by civilian lives. The focus should not solely rest on the outcomes of these revolts but on understanding the manipulative tactics employed by elites to foment conflicts. Addressing local grievances exploited by these manipulators is crucial to mitigating conflict and fostering genuine societal progress.

The significant political upheavals in Somalia can be categorized into three revolts, each orchestrated by elites and intellectuals aiming for predetermined outcomes. Despite differences in their nature and scope, these revolts underscore the pivotal role of influential figures in mobilizing society and shaping its trajectory. Yet, the unique grievances and dynamics of each revolt highlight the complexity inherent in Somalia's political landscape, resisting neat theoretical categorization.
The Anatomy of Somali Revolts

The nature of the revolts in Somalia, which have occurred since the post-colonial era, has been diverse. Starting from the failed coup attempt in 1961, where the northern regions at that time sought to regain its independence relinquished to the Mogadishu administration, this revolt have taken on distinctive characteristics (Nur, 2018). Primarily, they have been shaped by a combination of factors, including a sense of political marginalization and the diminishing stature of the government established on June 26, 1960. The 1978 revolt holds two interpretations. On one hand, it aimed to oust the Siyad regime, while on the other hand, those primarily involved in its planning believed that the last democratic civilian government, overthrown by Gen Mohamed Siyad Barre, rightfully belonged to them (Aroma, 1999). Consequently, there was a determination to reclaim it. The absence of deeply-rooted grievances against the dictatorial regime played a crucial role in their struggle, ultimately leading to the failure of their efforts against the Barre regime.

In the early 1980s, the social uprising in the northern regions represented the third occurrence of violent revolt, and it stands out as the most significant one. This revolt not only succeeded in weakening the Barre regime but also played a role in reshaping Somalia's politico-geographic landscape. Analyzing the uprising against the Barre regime reveals multiple perspectives, yet it was characterized by a unified and purposeful intent. The individuals involved in this revolt drew upon a variety of accumulated justifications, with numerous factors fueling their resistance. Even political elites and intellectuals, later on, leveraged these factors to rally against the regime.

The mobilization and uprising of the predominantly Somali population in and around Mogadishu in the mid-1990s were noteworthy. Unlike previous revolts, this uprising was not premeditated but rather a spontaneous resistance. People, primarily residing in the central regions and Mogadishu itself, were informed that the Barre regime now only controlled their land and, therefore, should be ousted from their city, Mogadishu. To some extent, the mobilization and incitement of these people can be attributed to external influences, particularly the northern rebel group SNM. The SNM had attempted to remove the regime based in Mogadishu, but due to their limitations, their capacity fell short. The elites in this region, Mogadishu also took advantage of the economic hardships imposed on their civilians during the final days of Barre's government. As the regime faced severe financial crises, the red berets, a paramilitary force, resorted to extorting and robbing the citizens of Mogadishu (Ingiriis, 2016).

In December 2022, a well-coordinated uprising unfolded in the Lasano and Sool region, instigated by the elites of a particular Somali clan family (Gaas, 2023). This event had distinct reasons and followed a systematic process, leading to a devastating war that spanned over eight months, involving over 4,000 casualties on both sides—Somaliland, claiming authority over the city, and the civilians and clan militias confronting it. The primary motivation behind this revolt was the local populace's desire for a member state under their control, even though they did not meet the constitutional requirements for federal member states. However, a more significant, longstanding political agenda surfaced a month prior: the subversion of the Somaliland government, which had declared secession from the rest of Somalia to become an independent state. Politicians from Somalia and beyond supported this struggle as they believed it would weaken Somaliland's status and diminish its chances of international recognition.

Revolts and Their Impact on Political Orders

Revolts are organized attempts by a group of people to achieve change, often by force, against existing socio-political structures. Numerous factors can cause revolts, including political (lack of political representation, oppressive regime, corruption), economic (poverty, economic inequality, unemployment), and social (social injustice, sense of disownership and exclusion) (Passarelli & Tabellini, 2017). In the Somali context, revolts often arise from real grievances on the ground, which are articulated by elites in a highly exaggerated manner. It is not an initiative owned by the masses but rather orchestrated by the elites. Nonetheless, political order refers to the structured arrangement of political power within a society. It encompasses the institutions, laws, norms, and practices that define how power is distributed,
exercised, and regulated (Hay, 2004). Political order is crucial for ensuring stability, security, and the effective functioning of governance systems. The armed revolts, whether directed at dismantling governance systems or removing the incumbent political executives, have diverse effects on the political orders of the respective countries where they occur. According to Francis Fukuyama, political order holds importance as it forms the foundation of the state, ensures adherence to the rule of law, and establishes the principles of democratic accountability (Fukuyama, 2015). In the past, the revolts in Somalia during the dictatorial rule were not primarily intended to dismantle the political order. However, in the pursuit of removing power from the regime, unintended consequences arose that had lasting effects. The enduring statelessness has become one of the severe consequences resulting from the early revolts back in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the recent Laasano incident has not only transformed the politico-geographic landscape but has also had economic repercussions felt across the entire territory of Somaliland. While the anticipated magnitude of effects, as envisioned by those who instigated this conflict, has not fully materialized, the impact on the political, economic, and status aspects of Somaliland cannot be dismissed. Despite the fact that the political order persists, the Laasano case has undeniably left lasting effects on various fronts in Somaliland.

Revolts occurring worldwide, which may manifest in non-violent ways, sometimes may not significantly impact the political order, except for inducing reforms compelled by the existing regime. However, if employing peaceful methods, such movements can potentially catalyze a redistribution of power. This redistribution offers an opportunity for those who perceive an unfair power-sharing arrangement though what incites the revolts may not only be a concern over power perhaps be other things. It is noteworthy that reform touches upon some, or perhaps all, of the governmental dimensions. Individuals with concerns about political regimes consider it important to address their grievances through such reforms. Siyad Barre became reluctant to heed the voices of the Isaaq people and their leaders, who requested him to overhaul the bureaucrats operating in the northern regions and Include local officials who are familiar by the community (Gaboose, 2020). They felt that both the political leaders and bureaucrats governing their areas posed a significant challenge regarding the service provision. On the other hand, this would become the catalyst for negotiations between the SNM and the Siyad government. However, when Siyad Barre met with his Ethiopian counterpart, Mengistu Haile Mariam, he opted to employ military measures to quell the social uprising in those regions. Nevertheless, by rejecting mere reforms in the control of governmental institutions over these regions and alleviating the pressures imposed by various security institutions on the people, Somalia’s government found itself significantly weakened by the SNM in 1988 and the primary cause was that Siyad Barre regime doesn’t care about any negotiation to engage with SNM. This irreparable weakening marked the commencement of the collapse of the dictatorial rule and the lost of the political order.

In Somaliland, a parallel situation unfolded when President Bihi voiced his opposition to implementing the Khaatumo agreement, sparking unease among the residents of the eastern regions. Even had the government proceeded with the agreement, simply addressing the Lasano issue would have fallen short of enacting substantial reforms. Lasano’s roots extended beyond a mere local grievance; it represented an externally instigated uprising with the explicit aim of erecting a new administrative structure reminiscent of the clan-based fiefdoms found in Somalia (Garaad-Jama, 2014). Some individuals lent their support to this movement with the ulterior motive of undermining Somaliland’s standing and impeding its quest for international recognition. While this revolt may not have significantly disrupted the political landscape of Somaliland, given the peripheral nature of the affected regions, its reverberations are palpable in numerous other dimensions, leaving a lasting impact on the social, economic, and diplomatic front.

The grievances held and articulating by those seeking to challenge established systems represent an opportunity for governments to proactively address concerns, thereby preventing these societal grievances from being exploited for counterproductive ends. Failure to address or exacerbate such grievances can fuel social unrest and ultimately lead to revolutions or uprisings. Throughout history, countless examples attest to the transformative power of social grievances, from the French Revolution to the Arab Spring. In response societal grievance, people may organize protests, strikes, or even armed resistance to demand change and justice.
Typically, grievances are issues that can be resolved through constitutional amendments or adjustments to government policies in line with public concerns. However, when grievances are rooted in ideology, the challenge becomes more intricate. In such cases, the incumbent political leadership must tread carefully to address ideological-based revolts through dialogue and consultative deliberation. Previous revolts against the Barre regime often arose from a mix of social grievances like inequality, injustice, marginalization, political repression, and unfair resource distribution. These were combined with ideological opposition to the regime, with demands for the reinstatement of a democratic system.

Consider the rebellion in northern regions, which capitalizes on social grievances felt by the population in central regions. The revolt reflects a desire to regain independence from the southern regions, whose political underestimation of the significance of these once-independent territories fueled resentment (Congo, 2016). While some argue that this sentiment wasn’t initially present and that Ali Mahdi’s self-selection has played a role in its emergence, anyway the common ideological thread among rebels fighting against the Siyad Barre regime was the dismantling of authoritarian rule and the restoration of the democratic political tradition of the 1960s.

Despite this, the Barre regime refused to negotiate with the rebels on these ideological grounds, opting instead to confront them militarily. This approach ultimately led to the collapse of the political order. The case of Lasano is notably intricate, entwining both grievances and a deeply entrenched ideological foundation that surpasses typical political ideologies fought for by Somalis. On one hand, Lasano has endured marginalization and exclusion from Somaliland's political system, leading to successive governments’ failure to address these issues. This neglect culminated in Lasano’s recent absence from parliamentary elections, except for the Aynabo district, resulting in a palpable sense of alienation from Somaliland. Consequently, Lasano perceives itself as a clan dominated by other clans.

On the other hand, there are additional societal grievances, notably the prevalent assassinations which Somaliland has inadequately addressed (Qaranimo, 2022). Organized networks perpetrate these killings, targeting individuals affiliated with the Somaliland system or various political parties. Ideologically, the region also embraces unionist politics, viewing itself as part of the former Somali Republic, presently the Somali Federal Government. Furthermore, they contend that merely having a member state is sufficient to foster a sense of ownership, a challenge stemming from Somalia’s clan-based federalism.

One notable myth that now seem to be taking an ideological ground is that those who even educated well are spreading that the people from this region are superior than those ruling them historically, and that they were part of the largest nationalist movement that Somali owned ever in the modern history of Somali people what is known the Dervish movement. The clan superiority may justify its actions by appealing to notions of historical superiority or cultural purity, portraying themselves as the rightful rulers.

This narrative mirrors the one propagated by both the general populace and elites from the central regions of Somaliland during the era of the Siyad Barre regime, where they referred to themselves as Durayda and claimed descent from Ahlu Bayt. Such an ideological premise is inherently perilous, fostering a climate where every Somali clan seeks to assert superiority over others and vehemently opposes the idea of being governed by a different clan.

The ordinary Somali individual often does not concern themselves with their ancestral background or delve into the traditional tribal history documented by foreign explorers or colonial powers. Rather, it is the self-proclaimed Somali intellectuals who propagate such narratives, displaying a level of intellectuality ill-suited to accurately interpret these historical complexities.

The assertion of tribal-based aristocratic supremacy and the refusal to accept the authority of other Somali groups pose significant long-term challenges to the political stability of Somalia and Somaliland. However, the fundamental question remains: who constitutes the plebeians subjected to the dominance of the aristocracy? While this narrative holds some validity among Somalis, it presents a grave threat to the existence of Somalia's or Somaliland’s statehood.
The Root Causes of Revolts in Somalia/Somaliland: Political Instability, Socio-Economic Challenges, Clan Dynamics, and External Forces

There is never a public outcry against an established system without substantial reasons. However, it is not always the case that the reasons people rely on to reject a political regime necessarily align with their best interests. Those responsible for mobilizing them, often referred to as elites, interpret the grievances of the people according to their own agendas (Goldstone & Weyland, 2012). Generally, individuals resorting to violence to overthrow a government or liberate their territories from its rule are aware of explicit reasons driving their actions. These reasons do not necessarily indicate an inherently aggressive mentality but rather challenge the accepted norms of political governance maintained by those in power which may be inappropriate. The revolts confront the functioning and legitimacy of the established order. However, there are also implicit motives behind such revolts. Those who manipulate and orchestrate these uprisings may have hidden objectives, aiming to achieve long-term goals as a result of the struggle against the political system, but they do not openly declare these implicit agendas. These hidden agendas, known only to the political elites orchestrating the conflict, not only prompt the systems to respond vigorously both politically and militarily but also may demoralize civilians coerced into fighting against the regime. Since these justifications serve the interests of the elites, they remain implicit, known only to them. Moreover, there are various dimensions to the factors fueling revolts, incorporating both social grievances and ideological beliefs. However, these can be summarized as follows.

Mostly, the self-serving implicit factors are political, although some are partially evident to civilians, primarily concerning the weaknesses and unjust rule of the established political regime. This forms the fundamental and most significant reason inspiring and fueling revolts. During the Siyad regime in the early 1980s, the overarching theme of all movements was that authoritarian rule was no longer suitable for the Somali state apparatus. To achieve democratic governance, it was deemed necessary to overthrow this rule. This sentiment holds political significance and serves as the foundational principle of the struggle, garnering support from all Somali people who feel a sense of fear and lack of freedom under this military regime.

However, there were self-serving political agendas in the south, where leaders of the movement sought power following the regime's downfall or aimed to replace the Siyad regime. In the north, there existed a different underlying political agenda, primarily concerned with the withdrawal from the union. Nonetheless, achieving consensus among the political elites orchestrating the end of the Barre regime proved difficult due to their conflicting political agendas and external interference. Even what make very difficult the restoration of the political order in the post-Barre era is the conflicting political interest among those overthrown the Barre from the power. Various external actors attempted to reshape Somalia's state-building process and maintain the status quo to safeguard their geopolitical interest.

However, the recent Laasano conflict primarily aligned with a unionist perspective politically. The underlying agenda driving it suggested that it could further bolster and promote the prevailing unionist viewpoint among Somalia's political elite, rather than being solely a struggle to establish a new federal member state, thus, this evolves into a self-serving implicit political agenda, where the explicit aim of establishing a member state remains unfulfilled. The government of Somalia turns its back on the aspirations for which the people in this region have been fighting while endeavoring to prevent evoking feelings of animosity among the people of Somaliland. Another significant challenge facing Somalia's government is its reluctance to grant recognition to certain regions, primarily due to concerns regarding federalism and clan-based administrations, which hinder the state-building process in Somalia. If the Somali federal government were to designate this particular area as a member state, it would join the ranks of states that have already hindered the effective functioning of the federal government of Somalia. Additionally, there are other regions aspiring to establish clan-based administrations but have not met the requirements outlined in the provisional constitution to become federal member states. Therefore, if this proposed SCC-Khatumo entity were granted member state status, regions like Hiiiraan, Gedo, Maakhir State, and others would also seek recognition from the Somali federal government. However, the Somali federal government is hesitant to proceed with such recognition due to concerns about further fragmentation and balkanization of the country.
The intersection of social and economic factors contributes significantly to widespread dissatisfaction with the established system, particularly among those who feel socially marginalized or oppressed by or under hegemonic political structure. This underlying discontent has been a driving force behind numerous revolts across the continent. The ongoing crises in Ethiopia, for instance, stem from the monopolization of power by certain ethnic group, which excludes the majority of Ethiopians from positions of authority (Tronvoll & Hagmann, 2011). This hegemonic political structure is not only being challenged by those actively seeking to disrupt the status quo but also by individuals who lack majority representation but still strive to undermine the existing system. Similarly, in Somalia, a long-standing tradition of clan dominance has perpetuated a cycle of power struggles, with each clan vying for control while resisting influence from others within the system. In order to fully grasp the essence of the socio-economic factors underlying revolts, it is essential to comprehend the intersectionality of power, privilege, and resources. This understanding sheds light on how these dynamics perpetuate unjust political structures and contribute to the emergence of political upheavals, particularly among disadvantaged groups living under such rule.

According to critical theory, particularly within the framework of Marxist-Feminist perspectives, those who maintain privilege have the ability to influence state institutions to serve their interests, thereby perpetuating their power (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Moreover, structures and systems that prioritize the interests of privileged society over marginalized groups play a significant role in unequal resource distribution within society. This intricate socio-economic relationship serves as the primary mechanism for sustaining the cycle of power, privilege, and resources, further exacerbating the disproportionate disadvantages faced by marginalized communities.

In the Somali context, privilege within the state system is predominantly held by only certain Somali clans, which has become a normalized political norm known as Curfi Siyaasaddeed. This norm remains invisible to even those who benefit from it, as it has become ingrained in societal political norms. Meanwhile, marginalized communities living under this system are not prioritized in efforts to break this cycle. Those in power control resource distribution, determining who gets what and when, thus consolidating their privilege within society. Conversely, access to resources can enable individuals aspiring for power to attain positions of authority. However, Somalia's political landscape, as described by Kissinger a tough politics, characterized by a combination of socio-economic factors that perpetuate unjust rule and ongoing upheavals.

Two notable scenarios illustrate how socio-economic factors precipitate the dismantling or subversion of political orders. In one scenario, some Somalis organized along clan lines attempt to reform existing systems. However, if these systems fail to produce meaningful change or maintain the status quo, these organized clans may choose to withdraw completely from structured state institutions. This withdrawal reflects a realization that changing the political norm is unattainable, prompting a rejection of the status quo. Conversely, in the recent Laasano case, the potential to influence the existing political order is minimal due to democratic systems that emphasize majority rule; thus, they decided to completely withdraw from that system.

It's important to recognize that the ongoing power struggle, which is inherently unjust in the manner it unfolds among Somalis, is influenced by a combination of factors those who are unable to compete within the state systems, which favor those holding privileged social statuses established by political norms, may seek alternative avenues to attain political autonomy. This involves managing their affairs independently, free from the control of the privileged ones.

Moreover, the complex social dynamic is often portrayed in exaggerated terms by many intellectuals, who attribute conflicts, impasses, chaos, political instability, revolts, and devastating wars over the past half-century to it. However, it's essential to recognize that the clan system isn't solely responsible for all these issues but rather a multifaceted social entity that can be viewed from various perspectives. While urbanization following post-colonialism and the establishment of the modern state have altered its traditional symbolism as a mere representation of lineage ties, the clan has evolved into a significant tool shaping politics and conflicts. What was once confined to pastoral rural communities, revolving mainly
around issues like water and pasture, has now transformed into politically motivated conflicts, exacerbated by the use of sophisticated weaponry since the inheritance of the modern state from colonial rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Nature of Conflict</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-independence</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Pasture, Land and water resources</td>
<td>Not much destructive</td>
<td>Traditional conflict resolution mechanism</td>
<td>Clansman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-independence</td>
<td>Politically Motivated</td>
<td>Power, governmental resources, political ideology</td>
<td>Much destructive</td>
<td>Undefined</td>
<td>Political Elite</td>
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Source: Compiled by the Author

It is noteworthy that social revolts are not spontaneously started but come as a result of well-orchestrated actions by elites. They arise when conflicts among political elites, both those in power and those seeking to take over power, start at higher-level. It is more likely that those who are not in positions of power are defeated, and when they feel that the higher-level conflict isn’t benefiting their interests, they attempt to decentralize it. What happens is what is referred to as conflict localization. Political elites typically resort to tactical approaches when they feel defeated or powerless according their counterparts. They often seek to localize conflicts, taking them down to the grassroots level, where they evolve into revolts that challenge the existing political order. These revolts can escalate to a point where they either lead to the breakdown of the political order, resulting in its collapse, or prompt significant reforms aimed at appeasing those who are challenging it. Between 2020 and 2021, a conflict erupted between the Farmajo government and the opposition regarding the mode of the election scheduled for February 2021. Farmajo insisted on conducting elections not similar to those that brought him to power, while the opposition rejected any election not broadly agreed upon by different political stakeholders. As the deadlock persisted and Farmajo's presidential mandate expired, the opposition decided to localize the conflict, creating what they termed as Badbado Qaran (Hassan-shekh, 2021). They not only mobilized ordinary citizens against the Farmajo government but also involved the Somali National Army, encroaching upon the vicinity of Villa Somalia. This conflict localization risked the fragile political order that had been nurtured since the recognition of the permanent transitional government. Lastly, President Farmajo surrendered when he saw and feared that the political order was on the brink of collapse, which necessarily meant a state collapse.

The underlying cause of the various issues hindering the smooth functioning of the political systems is not the clan itself, but rather how it is exploited as a tool by political elites to sow discord among their affiliated clans. Many Somalis lack knowledge beyond traditional norms and life experiences, making it difficult for them to discern right from wrong in the realm of statehood, politics, and governance. Consequently, they often fall prey to the manipulative tactics of greedy politicians. The clan has become a platform for politicians to pursue their power aspirations, exacerbating political upheavals and fostering unrest. Surprisingly, revolts organized along clan lines often achieve predetermined outcomes, with clans typically prevailing over governmental forces due to the strong sense of morality and unity among clan members engaged in the conflict. Grievance articulation is a significant strategy employed by politicians to rally support from clans. They highlight various injustice issues that are genuine and observable, then suggest ways these issues could be rectified, often urging the clan to take up arms to address these grievances. However, politicians not only seek satisfaction through the resolution of these issues but also anticipate the benefits or outcomes they will gain from the ensuing struggle, leveraging the control they have over the clans.
It's crucial to recognize that those who incite civilians to take up arms often exploit the situation, particularly when those in power are unwilling to renegotiate or address the clans' grievances politically. When the SNM began in the early 1980s, the clan it purportedly represented wasn’t entirely committed to supporting and fighting alongside it. However, pressure from the Siyad government on the clan associated with this movement compelled them to offer full support and participate in the conflict. However, it's evident that political elites from one of Somalia's major clans who are active members in Somalia's politics notably Kenya and Ethiopia exploit the grievances held by the people in the eastern corner of Somaliland, which are genuine and apparent, and have succeeded in inciting them to take up arms and fight against Somaliland. This process has gone through all stages of grievance articulation, ultimately leading people to uprising.

Is the clan itself a societal problem that inherently sparks revolts to dismantle an established system, or is it a tool wielded by those seeking to undermine a system while capitalizing on the grievances they harbor against the ruling regime? This does not imply that every community should tolerate unjust rule and refrain from seeking their rights through available means. Rather, it highlights the fact that those typically responsible for challenging existing systems often lack the intention to rectify matters. It is obvious that as long as the clansman have listening what the typical politicians who pursuing their interest are telling to them the revolts that come as a result of the elite manipulation will continue.

Movements that escalate into violence often lack success unless they receive external support from other states. Following the decolonization of Africa and the broader Third World, newly established states found themselves subject to influence from global forces, primarily the Western bloc and the Soviet Union (Gifford, 1991). The escalation of the Cold War led to proxy wars and interventions, where each superpower sought to oust regimes aligned with the opposing side, intensifying conflicts across various regions. The blood that fuels revolts is the support they receive from states aiming to advance their geopolitical interests. In the context of Somalia, Ethiopia has been the primary external sponsor of revolts within Somalia/Somaliland over the past four decades (Hassan, 2024). It is evident that the recent violent uprising in Laasano has been supported by Ethiopia, which provided limited armaments manufactured by its weapon industries. These weapons have been transported through Jigjiga from Ethiopian armaments industries. The reason behind Ethiopia’s support for this insurgency is its ambition to dismantle the administrative systems of Somaliland to gain access for its forces to enter Somaliland, similar to its presence in south Somalia. The next revolt they were planning to sponsor directed to the people of the Awdal region refusing to submit to the rule of Somaliland. However, it appears they have shifted their previous strategy and instead opted to pursue a new approach, which involves entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland. China is another significant player that aided the eastern factions in displacing Somaliland forces from their territory, although there are no explicit indications of the type of support provided. However, suspicions exist, especially considering that leader from Lasano and Buhodle have reportedly met with the Ambassador of China to Somalia.

The Perils Faced by Established Political Orders

Political order can either be strengthened or weakened by multifaceted factors, which those in positions of power need to aware. Francis Fukuyama, in his book "Political Order and Political Decay," emphasizes the importance of strong institutions in maintaining political order. He argues that political order is sustained through the development of state capacity, rule of law, and accountable government institutions (Fukuyama, 2014). On the other hand, Huntington, in "Political Order in Changing Societies," discusses how institutions need to be adaptable to maintain political order. He believes that political stability depends on the ability of political institutions to cope with social mobilization and economic change (Huntington, 1968). When institutions are rigid and unable to adapt, they may fail to manage new demands and pressures, leading to disorder. The presence of political order in a nation necessitates the existence of socio-political administrative structures that uphold its functionality and endurance. Essentially, where there is a robust systematic political order, there typically exists a multitude of institutional regulatory frameworks and adherence to the rule of law that safeguard its continuity. In many developing countries,
the political order has not fully matured, and in the Third World, the presence of significant political order is often lacking due to the absence or weakness of crucial institutional systems (Herbst, 2000). In Somalia, during the Siyad regime, political order was maintained through coercion. In recent times, as the international community has assumed responsibility for state-building in Somalia, the absence of political order persists, with its limited existence resulting from oversight and control by the international community. In Somaliland, a semblance of political order has been established, albeit lacking a robust foundation anchored in the rule of law and institutionalized governmental bodies. However, there is a discernible exercise of legitimate authority by the elected political executives. However, in situations where there is a notable absence of political order, even a slight semblance of it is jeopardized by revolts manipulated by dissatisfied political elites who oppose the regime and its exercise of legitimate authority. These revolts pose constant threats to established systems, as they have the potential to plunge society into chaos and prolonged unrest, ultimately leading to the collapse of the state itself. However, it remains undeniable that social grievances, which political elites often exploit, persist. Nonetheless, the onus falls on those in power to endeavor to address the concerns of the populace before they escalate into violence, thereby ultimately impacting the country's political order. In the case of Somaliland, opposition parties, previously barred from participating in upcoming presidential elections, have now been granted permission to do so (GBH, 2023). This decision stems from concerns about the fragility resulting from the Las’ano conflict and the opposition's vocal dissatisfaction with the current political regime. There is a fear that if steps are taken in this direction, Somaliland's stability will be compromised, and its already tenuous political order will crumble. The typical response of opposition parties to the incumbent government may precipitate events that pose a threat to the state.

Assessing the Resilience of Political Structures

The revolts can have a significant impact on the broader political system, especially if they escalate into violent confrontations between the government and opposing factions. However, the effect on the political structure is typically determined by two main factors: the location of the revolts, whether they occur in peripheral areas or at the center. These two types of revolts may not have a similar effect on the resilience of the political structures. Peripheral revolts, arising in regions away from the center of power, can severely damage the government's reputation and legitimacy if it fails to address the underlying causes adeptly. Conversely, revolts that take place in the center may lead to regime change or collapse, posing a more immediate threat to the political structure. Another significant factor is the ideological foundation that fuels social uprisings. If the political elites manipulating the people resort to arms with the intention of dismantling the existing political structure, their motives can profoundly impact the political order if they manage to penetrate the center where state power resides. The critical question now is how resilient Somaliland has been in the aftermath of the conflict in Lasano. Politically, the turmoil tarnished Somaliland's reputation, leading the international community to turn away from ongoing debates concerning its status. Pressure from the international community has demanded the withdrawal of Somaliland forces from the area, with diplomatic backing primarily coming from Somalia. Economically, the conflict has inflicted severe damage, draining millions of dollars daily for logistics and armaments, pushing the government toward bankruptcy (Shire, 2023). Despite this, the economic repercussions of the Lasano unrest persist. Notably, the resilience of the political system following Somaliland's setback, marked by an unstrategic withdrawal, includes a cessation of opposition parties the condemnation against the incumbent government. This is due to an agreement that elections will proceed on schedule, coupled with the government's acceptance of recommendations proposed by traditional leaders as the ultimate solution to the electoral impasse.

However, assessing the resilience of the political system in light of the recent revolts requires both qualitative and quantitative measures. Due to a lack of available data on the strengths, adaptability, and durability of political institutions, it becomes necessary to provide a brief overview rather than an in-depth analysis. Typically, the magnitude of revolts against a political regime determines the resilience of the political system.
In the case of the Barre regime, the impact of revolts varied. The SSDF revolts in some parts of the Mudug and Galguduud regions, as well as the SNM invasion in Buroa and Hargeisa, differed significantly in influence on the regime. The latter proved more impactful due to the strategic importance of the cities invaded – Hargeisa and Buroa were the second and third largest and most populated cities after Mogadishu – and the scale of the conflict in these areas. The Barre regime keenly felt the repercussions of these revolts on its endurance and functionality.

According to one former prisoner released from Barre’s solitary confinement prisons in 1989, Barre himself acknowledged the devastation of Hargeisa and Buroa during a meeting with the released prisoners (Baruud, 2012). Barre admitted that the Somali National Army was also devastated, suggesting they remain in Mogadishu as their cities were no longer habitable. This confession highlighted the severe repercussions his government faced due to the SNM rebels, previously assumed to be manageable through military means following an agreement with Mengistu Haile Mariam, the dictator of the Ethiopian Derg regime.

The effects of these revolts on the Barre regime were profound. The chain of command within the security sector was disrupted, leading to widespread defections among soldiers and an inability to address security issues in Mogadishu. Organized gangs and robbers emerged, contributing to a sense of insecurity among the city’s inhabitants. Economic hardships worsened, to the point where the government couldn’t afford logistical support for army units stationed in Hargeisa and Buroa. As a result, the government sought assistance from traders in Mogadishu to provide basic necessities for the Somali National Army deployed in these regions, all in an effort to maintain Somali unity (Gurguute, 2023).

While the SNM movement’s revolt may have seemed peripheral at first glance, it effectively reduced Barre’s regime to what is commonly termed a “rump government” – a symbolic government with nominal power. However, it was the USC rebels whose focus on seizing state power at Villa Somalia stripped Barre's regime of even this nominal authority. It is evident that revolts orchestrated and plotted by political elites, regardless of their underlying motives, are initially perceived as inconsequential by those in power at the time. However, these revolts have a devastating impact, compelling those in power to flee the country out of fear of retaliation from individuals they had previously underestimated.

Consequences of Persistent Revolts on Governance

The enduring impacts of the violent clan-based revolts on Somali governance have been extensively accounted. In Somalia's case, the aftermath of the social uprising against the Barre regime has led to a range of consequences, including collapse, civilian massacre, warlordism, displacement, famine, statelessness, and widespread Somali refugee crises across the globe (Mohamoud, 2002). However, the aftermath of the recent social uprising, where the people of Laas,ano rejected the Somaliland government, has not been identical to previous events. Nevertheless, similar scenarios have unfolded to some extent, including displacement, loss of life, food shortages, and the disruption of social services provided by governmental institutions operating in the district. Regarding the state of Somalia under Siyad Barre and his affiliated clansman, the collapse primarily affected them, resulting in a loss of their privileges. This indicates that while the suffering of the broader Somali population was profound, those in control of the regime experienced it acutely. Additionally, apart from the collapse of state institutions, the clan-based political culture expanded and evolved as a consequence of these events. Later on, the efforts made by the international community to establish the Somalia central government ultimately failed. Despite subsequent United Nations missions focusing on political aspects, none progress was achieved in altering the situation (Britannica, 2014). However, the humanitarian aspect of these missions made valuable contributions. The enduring aftermath of the Laas,ano revolts is evident in Somaliland’s loss of territory, significantly undermining its assertion of self-determination. Furthermore, the once formidable Somaliland military forces, equipped with superior weaponry compared to other Somali armed groups, have been severely weakened. This has led to a considerable decline in their reputation, with their
exclusive access to large military equipment now shared with clan militias. Consequently, Somaliland forces no longer maintain the upper hand on the battlefield.

**Challenges to State Building and Nationhood**

Somali society has struggled to establish a unified state that adequately represents the diverse tribes, interest groups, and aspirations of its people. There is a lack of common agreement among them, making it challenging to form a robust social contract that serves as the foundation for state-building and garners consensus from all societal elements. It's crucial to acknowledge that the widening political divisions, hindering collective agreement among Somalis, are often manipulated by political elites from various Somali tribes.

Presently, some elites in Mogadishu aim to amend and finalize what is known as Somalia's provisional constitution, believing it serves the interests of the Somali people at large to amend certain articles within the constitution (SN, 2024). Conversely, elites from Garowe, representing the interests of their respective clan, oppose constitutional amendments, finalization, and approval. They insist on inclusive consultations among Somalis, including those who previously lived under the collapsed state, including Somaliland.

Their demand doesn't stem from a desire or affinity for the people of Somaliland. Rather, there are two primary reasons for their stance. Firstly, they are wary that amendments could jeopardize their future political influence. Secondly, they fear that if Italian Somaliland were to agree to a constitution, it could lead to a new reunification with Somaliland under new terms and conditions, posing significant risks to them.

It is obvious that various forms of social division, misunderstanding, and political conflicts are often instigated by political elites pursuing their interests. If these political conflicts persist, they tend to decentralize and escalate into armed confrontations at the grassroots level within society. Additionally, the responsibility for the state-building process primarily falls on these elites, rather than on society at large, although the latter may play an informal role in the process. However, if politicians lack sincerity in the state-building process, and it is they who are primarily responsible for it, the success of the state-building endeavor becomes highly challenging.

**Analyzing the Endurance of Revolt in Somalia/Somaliland**

Political upheavals experienced by governments are phenomenal, characterized by their repetitive and chronological nature. They stem from a complex interplay of factors, primarily revolving around injustice and hegemonic power structures. These upheavals represent significant challenges for regimes, as they often involve widespread unrest and demands for change. As long as misunderstandings and conflicting interests persist among political stakeholders aligned with clan affiliations, the revolts that threaten political regimes will continue. The primary reason for this is that when political elites are unable to reconcile their conflicting interests, those who perceive themselves as lacking power to implement their own interests often decentralize the conflict to the grassroots level, leading to the evolution of social revolts. Colonel Abdillahi Yusuf, known for prioritizing the interests of his sub-clan or occasionally his larger clan, found himself in a situation where his rival, Ade Muse, employed similar tactics against him, mobilizing a revolt against his authority with his associated clansmen. During a speech in Gaalkacyo, he highlighted that the so-called opposition often garnered more attention from the people than the government did (Yusuf, 2023). Throughout his tenure as President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), he expressed concern about certain officials within his government who were undermining the system. The situation in Somaliland’s revolts can be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, it relates to the issue of prolonged tenure seen in presidents who attain power through free elections. However, these revolts primarily aim to legitimize the incumbent government and are mostly non-violent. On the other hand, the recent revolt in Las,ano was primarily driven by deliberate attempts
to undermine Somaliland's separatist ideology and promote unionist perspectives prevalent among elites in Somalia's mainstream political circles.

**Conclusions**

The discontent with established systems does not arise spontaneously; rather, it is often the result of carefully crafted strategic plans devised by certain elites pursuing their own political agendas. Sometimes, conflicts that political stakeholders fail to resolve within existing legal frameworks lead to decentralization within society, causing harm to those who perceive themselves as successful. The essence of this study is not merely to criticize societal resistance against unjust rule, but to emphasize that political revolts are often orchestrated by short-sighted elites who prioritize their own interests over the well-being of the masses, who bear the brunt of the conflict's consequences. The systems themselves often contribute to the problems that prompt people to rise up and resist. Typically, revolts stem from the government's mishandling of public affairs, including issues related to service delivery, social justice, freedom, and the exercise of power. It's important to note that political elites cannot foment revolt against the government without significant grievances already present among the populace. According to the Westphalian system towards modern statehood, where each community recognized by colonial powers is compelled to establish itself as a sovereign nation-state, Somalis face the imperative of creating a functional system. However, numerous challenges persist, largely stemming from the legacy of elites inheriting the modern state in Somalia and the issues left behind by past dictatorial regime. The imperative for Somalis to successfully construct a functioning nation-state is undeniable, whether pursued separately or collectively (Somalia, Somaliland), though this remains a subject of debate. Nevertheless, the responsibility falls upon those who hold power, including elected political leaders and high echelon bureaucrats. Nevertheless, elite reconciliation is essential to prevent the collapse of the political order. Strengthening institutions capable of addressing societal grievances before they evolve into conflicts and revolts is necessary. Legitimacy must be sought from the people, and the government should obtain their consent, as political order is often jeopardized by the overstay of power. The study recommends that researchers develop a context-specific theoretical framework that broadly captures the multidimensional societal conflicts. The theoretical orientations in this field are inadequate for understanding the multiplicity and complexity of Somali conflicts. Grounded theory is required, utilizing broad-based empirical data to explain in great detail and capture the multivariate interplay of factors that fuel revolts.

**References**


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