

1 Unmasking the Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Towards a Critique of 2 the Conflicting Historiographies in Somalia

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7 **Abstract**

8 This article offers critical examination and explanation of the claim of ?clan cleansing? in
9 Somalia as was featured forcefully in the book by Lidwien Kapteijns on the 1991 Somali clan
10 convulsions. Upon the publication of the book, conflicting narratives of the Somali conflicts
11 were delegated from oral discourse to academic venture as the debate over who lost what, why
12 and where in 1991 and over who won, what, why and where has become both a politicised
13 project and an academic phenomenon. By re-evaluating the whole picture, the article casts a
14 new light on Kapteijns?s book (2013) and demonstrates how inaccurate simplistic statements
15 were used as a documentation of the clanised conflicts in 1991 Somalia. Blaming specific clans
16 and communities of complicity for ?clan cleansing,? when there is no reliable document and
17 real proof, is tantamount to igniting a new round of warfare. Drawing on long experience of
18 living and working in Mogadishu â???" the city this author was born and bred as well as the
19 site of the conflict itself â???" and also using interviews conducted with players and bystanders
20 of Somali politics across clan lines, the article argues that Kapteijns has produced the most
21 mythicohistorical work in Somali Studies. In addition to identifying the invalidity of partisan
22 and partial points, the article finds how Kapteijns lobbies for certain clans at the expense of
23 others. Thus, the critique goes beyond the cleansing, exploring wider issues of war and conflict
24 in Somalia.

25

26 **Index terms**— somali conflicts, clanised wars, clan narratives, historiographies.

27 **1 Introduction**

28 In January 1991, Somalia plummeted into clan convulsions, as a consequence of two decades of state terror
29 by the clan-military regime of General Mohamed Siad Barre that culminated in clanocide -that is, selectively
30 annihilating certain clans physically and politically. Ever since the Siad Barre, which ruled since 21 October 1969,
31 was removed from power on 26 January 1991 by the United Somali Congress (USC), led by General Mohamed
32 Farah Aideed, the proponents of the military regime have sought consistently yet contradictorily in restoring
33 their rule (Ingiriis, 2016: 3-34). The legacies of the regime led to clan convulsions where clans fought not only
34 against each other, but also within themselves. Once Siad Barre and his supporters fled Mogadishu, they sought
35 refuge and sanctuary in their clan areas as they felt there would be no any other safer place in Somalia. By
36 contrast, most other Somali clans and communities remained in Mogadishu and suffered the same atrocities that
37 came with the collapse of the regime. Which group whose truth is worth telling hinges upon where or which side
38 with which one affiliates himself or herself.

39 Drawing on long experience of living and working in Mogadishu -the city this author was born and bred
40 as well as the site of the conflict itself -and also using observations over the players and bystanders of Somali
41 politics across clan lines, this article critiques a flawed work on 1991 Somalia by Kapteijns (2013) and argues
42 that the book is the most mythico-historical work in Somali Studies. Kapteijns reiterates from the beginning to

2 A) THE NARRATION OF THE NARRATIVE

43 the conclusion that a "clan cleansing" had occurred in 1991. 1 After re-evaluating the whole picture by drawing
44 attention to the fact that Kapteijns has concealed a conflict of interest, the critique casts the light on the claim
45 of "clan cleansing" and demonstrates how inaccurate simplistic statements were used as a documentation of the
46 clanised conflicts. Charging specific clans and communities of complicity for "clan cleansing," when there is no
47 reliable and real proof, is tantamount to igniting a new round of warfare. Not only is Kapteijns's tendency a
48 sign of falling victim to one's own polemical proposition against previous scholars, it is also a political trajectory
49 concealed in what Sartre (1961: 7) would call "a walking lie." It is important to keep this walking lie at bay
50 and warn the learned and the laymen alike -those who are interested in Somali Studies -not to be hoodwinked
51 mistakenly by a mythmaking at work (Malkki, 1995). The atypical aspect of Kapteijns (2013) is that she does
52 not confine herself to offering clan-affiliated viewpoints of the clan convulsions She alleges and indicts -without
53 reliable reference -that a "campaign of clan cleansing" occurred in Mogadishu not just in January 1991, but the
54 whole 1991 and 1992, and, to her reckoning, it was the first time this occurred. This is the thesis that informs
55 her book from the perspective of a particular clan-group. In addition to identifying the invalidity of partisan and
56 partial points, this article shows how she lobbies for certain clans at the expense of others.

57 has concluded that Kapteijns's book is both a "controversial" and a "flawed". This was primarily because the
58 book "provides one clan, the D[ajarood, much more ammunition in its grievance narrative than others, and for
59 that reason will be heavily contested" (681).

60 Short of the culture of violence of the Somali society, Kapteijns fails to present a long durée historical
61 context of the 1990s Somali clan cataclysms other than one -strewn with exaggeration, advocacy, overestimation,
62 overemphasis and overstatements -that derived from histoire événementielle (Ingiriis, 2013b: 112-114). The
63 State-sponsored terror of the Siad Barre regime was first unleashed upon the Hawiye in 1972, second on the
64 Majeerteen/Omar Mohamoud from 1979-1985, the third on the Isaaq from 1981-1990 (even though Kapteijns
65 restricts the latter only in 1988, when the Hargeisa Holocaust became known to the world) and the third on the
66 Hawiye again in 1983 until 1990. In between those state terrors and clanocides were the unreported incidents of
67 Galgaduud, Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle massacres that persisted from 1983 to 1990 as well as the oppression felt
68 by the Digil-Mirifle or Rahanweyn (Reewing) and the Bantu/Jareer under the regime. 2 Kapteijns propagates the
69 1991 wars over fending off and fending against the Siad Barre by the Hawiye and the Daarood militias were "clan
70 cleansing" committed by certain clan against the other while what that certain clan had done to the other was
71 simply "violence against civilians" (Kapteijns, 2013: 242). 3 As the novelist Achebe (2012: 59) has noted: "The
72 [Africanist] writer is often faced with two choices -turn away from the reality of life's intimidating complexity
73 or conquer its mystery by battling with it. The writer who chooses the former soon runs out of energy and
74 produces elegantly tired fiction." This fiction is evident in the most recent studies that embraced Kapteijns's turn
75 and trajectory of clanistic interpretation by describing what followed Siad Barre's ouster a "clan cleansing" (e.g.
76 Horst, 2013: 228-245) or -as Menkhaus (2014a: 559) has most recently put it -"the ethnic cleansing campaign"
77 (also see Lewis, 2004: 503). 4 Indeed, "the best" and "the powerful" scholarly studies of war and conflict are
78 those averting "to reply on single-factor explanations" but seeks "to weave several factors into a more complex
79 argument" (Brown, 1996: 574). Since other perspectives are largely absent from the existing literature, this
80 critique pursues many-factor explanation to show that the new civil war historiography in Somalia views the
81 conflict as an insular and one-sided phenomenon.

82 2 a) The Narration of the Narrative

83 The "clan cleansing" proponents confer on individual responsibility more than institutions since the latter -because
84 of their sheer structural dimension -is often what dictates the former to act how s/he acted. Kapteijns (2013)
85 is concerned about the 1991-1992 Somali clanised wars, though elsewhere she extended the date to 1993 (2010:
86 46). The outset of the uncivil war in Somalia was for her in 1978, when the Majeerteen/Mohamoud Saleebaan
87 officers attempted to overthrow the Siad Barre's regime. Later on, she would cut one year and put the date at
88 1979, which was again when some of the coup instigators joined the Somali Democratic Action Front (SODAF)
89 and later formed the Somali Salvation Front (SSF), which -upon emerging out from two proto opposition groups
90 -became the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF). 5 In comparison, unlike Keen (2005), who conducted
91 ethnographic interviews with all sides of the Sierra Leonean conflict, Kapteijns (2013) has interviewed one side
92 of the two sides of the Somali clanised wars.

93 For those familiar with Somali politics, the choice of dates stands not only a political by purpose, but also a
94 concealment of what other clans and communities suffered under the two decades of clano-military dictatorship
95 by the Siad Barrer regime. Be that as it may, Kapteijns comes from these pages as a pro-particular clan and even
96 a pro-particular sub-clan within the clan-group by accusing the USC, which led the popular uprising that drove
97 the dictator out of the country, of "clan cleansing" campaign, while referring to the allegations of one particular
98 clan narrators in Boston, Los Angeles and Columbus in the United States. The information she drew from these
99 Diaspora communities would have beena quite distinct from the one from other clans and communities had she
100 employed triangulation in her work. Even the answers one gets in the same question from two rivals are varied
101 from one clan to another in the Somali case, for the answers themselves are subsequently derived from the type
102 of questions raised (Ahmed 1995b: ix-xiv).As such, what was poisonous for some could for (an)othercomes as
103 prosperous. White's (1983: 167) observation in Kenya that "[w]hat one group of prostitutes says about another
104 is not generally considered significant historical data" is more apt to this case. 6 Ironically, this bias affects her

105 own work as her informants and narrators fall into one category of clan closest to her, as well as clan-conscious
106 opinion makers who appear to be quick in picking up her work, only to justify their call for a retaliation over what
107 had happened in 1991. 7 Even if she draws on what some certain single narrators and clan-conscious informants
108 fed into her, Kapteijns travels to nowhere else to verify the claims made on the other side. By this controversial
109 claim wherein characterisations are congruent with what Diane Lewis calls "in-here" clans and "out-there" clans
110 (Lewis, 1973: 585), 8 Kapteijns has chosen "to fight fire with fire" (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 2). The fact that
111 she has not been "wary about becoming trapped within the mental categories of [her clan] informants" (Tosh,
112 2010: 321) led her to another fact that no single informant from other clans or communities was included in her
113 work as an informant, narrator or interviewee. Contra to her contention that the conflict has specific victors and
114 victims, centuries-old clan vendettas have been a defining feature in the pastoral nomadic Somali world (Lewis,
115 1961; also Bongartz, 1991; Brons, 2001; Hashim, 1997; Ingiriis, 2012a; 71-99; Simons, 1994, 1995).

116 Kapteijns does take into account valuable contributions by Hussein Adam on the long durée of the uncivil war,
117 Ali Jimale Ahmed on the causes of the uncivil war in an urban setting, Catherine Besteman on how it affected
118 on subaltern communities, Maria Bongarts on the most nuanced overview of the uncivil war, Lee Cassanelli on
119 the role of resource in the uncivil war, Isabelle Duyvesteyn on the comparatively Clausewitzean conception of
120 the continuation of the war by privatised means, Abdi Kusow on the different perspectives of the uncivil war,
121 Virginia Luling on how to recover from the uncivil war, Samuel Makinda on the role of clan politics in the
122 uncivil war, Roland Marchal on the role of Islam in the uncivil war and Anna Simons on what precipitated the
123 civil war. 9 For Kapteijns (2013: 266m6), substantial works by Somali scholars and authors who were on the
124 ground for fieldwork or were eyewitness to the events, such as Hussein Ali Dualeh, Mariam Arif Gassem, General
125 Jama Mohamed Ghalib and Rakiya Omaar, carry "half-truths and falsehoods," while her affiliated clan-oriented
126 narrators and informants like Abdiiaziz Nuur Hersi, Abdullahi Farah Hoolif and Abdiweli Ali Gaas (ibid.: 266n6),
127 present the "truth," for they charged rival clan members as guilty, pointing -more often than not -to the USC
128 leaderships, only to heap on memories of centuries-old clan-hate narrative. 10 As a result, Kapteijns (ibid.: 156)
129 so passionately pursues the 1991 with a partisan voice, while assuming that her work "may go uncorrected." 11
130 It is contradictory to commence her work that this "project does not try to bring all these divergent memories
131 and interpretations of the violence of 1991 into open. Nor does it try to simply 'correct' or displace them" (ibid.:
132 15). Yet, this was a statement to which she does not heed to follow. Right from the beginning to the end, she
133 displaces and dispels how other Somalis -except those with which she affiliated -viewed what had happened in
134 1991.

135 **3 b) Fabricated Notions and Narratives**

136 The new neologism of "clan cleansing" first surfaced in the early 1990s. If informants who acted as agents in
137 the conflicts succeeded to portray themselves as victims, the selective usage of sources warrants scrutiny. The
138 selective sources are not an issue limited to here and there. More awkward is the authenticity of the sources cited
139 as contemporary documents, such as "Concerned Somalis," "Mogadishu Massacre," and "Kismaayo Massacre"
140 (e.g. Kapteijns, 2013: 284). These are cited without a small grain of salt; the material as well as inconsistent
141 information given by clan-conscious informants are accepted credulously, while their allegations to others are
142 treated as reliable evidence as long as they reinforce the objectives of the work, which are to present the case of a
143 particular clan-held narrative as a valid point. It is thus unsurprising why Kapteijns does not incorporate these
144 documents into the infamous "Letter of Death" memo drafted by General Mohamed Said Hersi "Morgan", who
145 committed crimes against humanity as the "big man" or the "the butcher of Hargeysa" in the then Northwest
146 (present-day Somaliland). 12 With a peculiar and puzzle propositions abounding on the way, there are other
147 mythico-historical

148 The memo, which was sent and suggested to Siad Barre to wipe out the Isaaq clan group -since they constituted
149 the bulk of the SNM rendering a serious military challenge to the regime was one of the rare documents exposing
150 how the Siad Barre regime conducted the genocidal campaign of eradication in the then Northwest.

151 Kapteijns's informants decided not to talk about the fact that many Somalis have taken the risk of saving
152 each other in the midst of clan reprisals whereas some lost their lives in that very philanthropic course, a fact
153 which contradicts the claim of "clan cleansing". Even those credited with helping mediate between the rival clans
154 were not spared in her selective targeting. It comes as no surprise that what reinforces the "cleansing" claim is
155 the reinvention of the reality on the ground. A fabricated account given by one informant is illustrative of how
156 the claim has no empirical basis. This escapee of the 1991 clan convulsions, according to Kapteijns (2013: 145),
157 was en route to the Mogadishu International Airport during the height of the war when his host had received a
158 phone call. Needless to say that there were no telephone lines -let alone mobile phones -in war-torn Mogadishu
159 at the time, a testament that accepting fabricated stories without critical re-evaluation results in a walking lie. It
160 should be noted that the first telecommunications corporation in Mogadishu was opened in 1996 by the Olympic
161 Telecommunications Company owned by cross-clan Somali businessmen.

162 **4 Volume XVI Issue II Version**

163 I 15 (D)

164 tales (Malkki, 1995) such as the falsified mobile his-story, which does not confine to one single story. For
165 one more example, Kapteijns (2013) quotes one contemporary clan leader in Puntland about the "murder in
166 Baydhaba of local Majeerteen bank employees and a wealthy merchant [...] together with other men" at "the
167 tomb of Sheikh Uways." Apart from circumventing to record the other clan killings in Baydhabo, especially the
168 massacres meted out against the Digil-Mirifle (Reewing) clan-group, Kapteijns fails to take into account that
169 Sheikh Aweys's tomb is not located in Baydhabo, but in Biyooley, 12km from Tiyeeglow, a district administered
170 in Bay region. Not only is this another evidence of concocting stories under an academic veil, but also making a
171 new method of infusing clan-held mythical memories into scholarship. Recording a particular clan narrative with
172 the comparative versions of other clan discourses as an empirical fact to document the clanised wars is tantamount
173 to creating more contestation among the warring Somali clans. Sprinkled through the "clan cleansing" are such
174 myths and misconceptions prevalent as one single clan's narratives of the 1991 convulsions. Overall, the 1991
175 Somalia was an era that one British journalist reported from Mogadishu that "only the children can be trusted"
176 (Shields, 1991).

177 5 c) "Clan Cleansing" as Political Capital

178 Even if the politics of violence in the Somali clan conflicts is described single-handedly and anecdotal reporting,
179 there are other histories, other "clan" memories, other war traumas and other perspectives that have yet to be
180 written, which one could not consciously ignore. One is left puzzled how one could make misleading historical
181 claims by purporting a myth as a history on one hand and denying other clans and communities of their suffering
182 during the uncivil wars. If Kapteijns had glanced at the narratives and voices of other clans, a series of different
183 chains other clan convulsions would most certainly have been observed. This is a point that she finally notes.
184 Citing anthropologist Nigel Eltringham, Kapteijns (2013: 276n40) has commented that "[t]he oft-repeated insight
185 that a civil war is never just one war, but many wars and that (in Rwanda) each person has a unique 'genocide
186 story' is also relevant to the Somali case." But, this important insight, which was not heeded, does not stop her
187 rebuking other clan narratives, even if she recognised that many Somalis "have interpreted and continued to
188 interpret this violence from the narrow perspective of the victimization of their own clan" (ibid.: 44). Indeed,
189 a parochial perspective seemingly drawn from her informants is what (un)wittingly informs Kapteijns's study.
190 This is evident, when she admits that: "I also received direction. Given that the violence of the civil war has
191 so divided Somalis, I allowed myself to be gently guided toward what my friends and colleagues [...] considered
192 legitimate" (ibid.: 22, my emphasis). 13 Even though what "friends and colleagues" interpreted as "legitimate"
193 appears to be "illegitimate" to other Somalis, one could hardly dismiss the fact that her clan informants "were
194 the embodiment of the military regime and its only political and economic beneficiaries" (ibid.: 61).

195 The political expressions like ciribtir (extermination) or tirtirid (cleansing) were interchangeably used to
196 overemphasise the unexpected, ignominious defeat suffered by those who attempted to defend the Siad Barre
197 regime during the popular uprising in 1991.

198 Becoming a new byword and part of the stereotyped war categories afterwards, the "clan cleansing" claim
199 still serves as a "political capital" (Prunier, 2009: 3) Xasan, 2000). 14 However, their clan counterparts did in
200 no way attribute agency to a particular clan. Almost all other Somali and non-Somali authors who first-hand
201 witnessed and wrote about the 1991 war (e.g. Abdi, 2013; Alim, 2008; Afrah, 1994; Aroma, 1995a, 1995b; Caddow,
202 2001; Gassem, 1994) and those who observed it inside and reported from the warzone (Hartley, 2003; Henry, 1991;
203 McGreal, 1991; Perlez, 1991a, 1991b; Shields, 1991) or followed it from the outside (Adam, 1992: 11-26; Adan,
204 1994: 99-109; Bongartz, 1991; Brons, 2001; Bulhan, 2008; Dualeh, 1994; Ghalib, 2012, 1995; Hashim, 1997;
205 Kusow, 1994: 36-46; Luling, 1997: 287-302; Marchal, 2013: 331-354; Omar, 1992; Osman, 1996; Simons, 1995)
206 agree one main crucial point -that is, what happened in 1991 was far from These authors maintained the makings
207 they made up, yet they could hardly come out with reliable findings (for congruent critique, see Clifford, 1986: 6).
208 No wonder that -sharing a common clan genealogy, as all of them were -these authors took the task to dehumanise
209 those clan rivals they held responsible for ousting the Siad Barre regime. Put differently, they all reiterate the
210 claim attached with the "clan cleansing" catchphrase that a certain clan "cleansed" another. Of course, they have
211 no reliable evidence other than referring to each other to support their claims. "clan cleansing" on one single
212 particular clan. Rather, what happened was either collaadihii sokeeye (civil hostilities) or dagaalkii sokeeye (civil
213 war). These authors do not rebuke the fact that "some killings were clan-oriented revenge killings" (Besteman,
214 1996: 128), but reveal the structure that rendered these killings to occur. 15 The source that verifies the "clan
215 cleansing" claim is the Somalisaying "been badan sheeg, ha lagaa rumeystee" (tell too many lies until you find
216 one gullible individual ready to swallow). As Lewis (1961: 252) also acknowledged well before the conflict: "It
217 is always extremely difficult to discover even the immediate causes of a Somali feud; especially when, after the
218 event, many rival accounts are given." Reflecting on the wider African conflicts, particularly Rwanda and South
219 Sudan, wherein the former he had a first-hand encounter, Prunier observed:

220 d) The "Legitimate" and "Illegitimate"

221 If we take some of the largest African bloodlettings of recent times into consideration, neither the quasi-
222 genocidal war between northerners and southerners in the Sudan nor the Somali clan wars of the late 1980s and
223 early 1990s reached a truly genocidal stage simply because the killers were too disorganised and the killing field
224 was too big and uncontrolled. In Rwanda, all the pre-conditions for a genocide were present: a well-organised civil

225 service, a small tightlycontrolled land area, a disciplined and orderly population, reasonably good communications
226 and a coherent ideology containing the necessary lethal potential (Prunier 1995: 238).

227 Of a bizarre presentation, Kapteijns (2013) quarrels with those who have presented a distinctive perspective
228 from hers, particularly those who expressed an opposite view, berating award-winning journalists like Aidan
229 Hartley for not reporting and recording the "clan cleansing" so she could probably find an evocative quote. 16 As
230 her analysis is not based on ethnographic fieldwork research, she relies heavily on political works on the clanised
231 wars written by journalists and Italian diplomats, such as Mario Sica and Claudio Pacifico, who strongly favoured
232 Siad Barre and his regime. Their memoirs are sites to judge the armed opposition groups with a jaundiced eye.
233 17 Kapteijns does not compare those memoirs with independent Italian sources before accepting uncritically -and
234 wholeheartedly -the halfbaked story dished out here and there, not to mention the scandal of Fondo Aiuti Italiano
235 (FAI), where billions of Italian lire were embezzled by the Italian government officials in conjunction with Siad
236 Barre's regime. Many of her informants were allegedly participated in this embezzlement in multiple spheres.
237 Indeed, the long commitment of Italian authorities and diplomats in supporting Siad Barre and his regime for
238 expropriating international aid has been documented in detail elsewhere (Achtner, 1993; Bridges, 2000: 91-92;
239 Caddow, 2001: 78-126).

240 For the more than two decades that the Siad Barre regime ruled, the basic clan framework upon which his
241 regime was founded was the concept of the MODH coalition: the Mareehaan, the Ogaadeen, the Dhulbahante
242 clans. Throughout their struggle against the regime, the armed opposition groups were pointing out this clan
243 nepotism to show that the regime was basically for certain clan enterprise at the expense of other clans. Upon
244 misinterpreting the objectives of these opposition groups and not accommodating their perspectives, Kapteijns
245 (2013: 274n24) twists the MODH concept as Misrepresentation, Orchestration and Denial. Even though the
246 MODH coalition crumbled in late 1989 (after the Ogaadeen/Awlyahan uprising in Kismaayo), it suddenly
247 resurfaced in January 1991 as a strong clan strategy to counter the uprising against the regime after Siad Barre
248 called for his whole clan-group for solidarity to save his regime from rival clans. However, the MODH concept
249 -so crucial a base for the clan-dictatorial regime -was not "introduced" by the SNM, when, on the contrary, the
250 acronym was coined well before the front's formation. It was a common knowledge that Siad Barre's rule was
251 based on the MODH clan system prior to having been revealed in intelligence sources as late as 1977 (Africa
252 Confidential, 1978: 4; and Africa Confidential, 1984a: 7-8). 18 With the MODH system in place, the other
253 Somali clans and communities, even if they were not opponents, came to be considered as the "enemy clans" by
254 the regime. 19

255 6 e) Poetry: The Invisible Witness Account

256 The only important aspect in Kapteijns's work (??013) is an analysis of oral literature produced during the clan
257 convulsions. Generally employed in the Somali repertoire as a form of resistance in times of internal and external
258 intrusion (see Ahmed, 1996), poetry serves dual purposes: to heal and to memorise the conflicts. From hindsight
259 observation, one discerns that Kapteijns makes a serious misinterpretations on the contents of the poems she
260 explores without rigorous and robust learning about the context as well as the consequences. 20 Compounded
261 with a lack of nuanced understanding of the Somali word and world contributes to a further misinterpretation she
262 makes on selective poems with the aim of backing up her claims. With such a determination, the result paves the
263 way for a crude conclusion that leaves aside a vast and various (o)mision and makes more mistake than common.
264 In a spite of the coverage of poetry usage, including some clan hate-narratives, there are deliberate but strange
265 silences on other hate-narratives and/or hate-counternarratives as captured on video clips posted on Volume XVI
266 Issue II Version I numerous Somali websites. 21 Here, Kapteijns unfolds into a one-way street journey branded
267 as "the clan-hate narrative" (2013: 54) to target the serious compositions of particular poets and deliberately
268 avoid the exposition of similarly hostile clan-hate narratives or counternarratives from other poets, a subjectivity
269 that derails deliberately her supposed academic independence. Kapteijns's approach to putting the war poems
270 into the "clan cleansing" claim is persecutory. In discussing (an English translation of) a Somali poem called
271 "Disaster" (Musiibo) by the poet Mustafe Sheikh Elmi, she finds no proof of the case of "clan cleansing", yet she
272 berates the poet for negligence of not calling what occurred as "clan cleansing" (e.g. Kapteijns, 2013: 23-28). A
273 careful reading of the poem demonstrates that Mustafe chronicles the events in 1991 as a class rivalry and not
274 anything close to "cleansing." The other crucial pattern he proposes is the economic dimension of the war. To take
275 one example, when the poet states "even the soil" was looted, what he meant by "the soil" alludes to economic
276 resources, more specifically the economic aid granted by the international community but embezzled by the Siad
277 Barre regime and his Italian patrons. Kapteijns (2013) insists her misinterpretation and misconception of poetic
278 metaphors, perhaps because of lack of socio-cultural understanding of the Somalis beyond the tell-tale paradigm
279 of informants who seem to be stakeholders in the project. On the other hand, all poets to whom Kapteijns
280 refers have unanimously regarded clannism as the real root causes of the 1991 clan convulsions. This unanimous
281 conclusion contradicts -and to a larger extent, cancels out -her argument that the causes of the conflicts were
282 not clan and clannism, but "clan cleansing," as though the clanised wars were a consequence, but not as a real
283 historical cause for the war. A poem called "Aniga iyo Qabiil" (I and Clan), cited in Kapteijns (2013: 45), a poet
284 aptly charges clannism for what went wrong with Somalia, attributing to it one of the most serious predicament of
285 Somali suffering. First approaching us before the clan (not the vice versa, as Kapteijns writes), the poet stated:
286 Clan (Qabiil) and I had a discussion and disagreed with each other.

287 **7 I am without a nation (qaran) because of what you have**
288 **caused: collapse, flight, and disaster**

289 In the continents I reside now, I am naked because of you.

290 Do you not acknowledge that I have been set back a century and a half? 22 When Kapteijns finds no dietary
291 supplement in these poems for her "clan cleansing" project, she refers to the introduction of another poem by
292 the late poet Abdi Muhammad Amiin, who also noted that what happened in 1991-1992 was "clan retaliation"
293 (Kapteijns, 2013: 30). It goes without saying that, where there was a retaliation, there should have been a
294 preceding grievous action to be avenged. Amiin offered a credible explanation in his poem that what he had
295 observed in 1991 Somalia was clan vengeance versus clan vengeance -which is to say, clan reprisals. Instead of
296 taking this into consideration, Kapteijns selectively skims over this part of the poem, which suggests the opposite
297 of her claims. If Amiin and almost all other poets noted the war against Siad Barre in 1991 as a popular uprising
298 -note that Amiin's and Mustafe's poems reveal a class rivalry in the 1991 conflict rather than "clan cleansing"
299 -Kapteijns considers their poems not as a complement for her campaign and offers no discussion of the poets'
300 witness accounts. Drawing from poets who sided with either Siad Barre or the SSDF, Kapteijns (2013: 23)
301 contends presenting "mediations of violence." But mediation is confounded with meditation, as intervention and
302 arbitration could not be conducted by a mediator who is part of the conflict. As for oral poets (the so-called
303 "clan poets"), other authors who suffered from the same Kapteijns's flaws have similarly failed to mention the
304 other side of the oral discourse, such as Ali Elmi Afyare and Aden Abdi Ahmed "Toosi-Luquntaada," who were
305 the mouthpiece for the Siad Barre regime versus Geelle IsmailLiire "Geelle Faruur" and Khalif Sheikh Mohamoud
306 who stood the other side of the fence in using poetry to mobilise adherents for the armed resistance groups. 23
307 A closer examination of Amiin's poem exposes the political beneficiaries of the war, even when the crucial and
308 critical part of the poem was discarded in Kapteijns (2013) through copying and cutting. In his poem, Amiin
309 pointed out to "those who, in Barre's final hour, came to the failing dictator's help and proposed 'to let the
310 old man be'" (cited in Kapteijns, 2013: 33). One of those men to whom the poet was referring was none other
311 than Yusuf Osman Samatar (Barda'ad), a former post-colonial political party leader and the husband of Maryan
312 Muuse Boqor (Kapteijns's earlier co-author), who -after many years of a solitary confinement under Siad Barre's
313 regime -came as his spokesman during the rush hour of the clanised wars. ??4 Apparently aware of the claim of
314 "clan cleansing" and, as such, avoiding to fall into that trap, Lewis noted that Siad Barre's "pathetic appeals to
315 his Darod clansmen to come to his rescue only resulted in their being singled out for vicious retaliation and 'clan
316 cleansing' (as Somalis called it) in the ensuing chaos of Mogadishu" (Lewis, 2004: 503). The curious observer
317 would then ask: who were those who defended Siad Barre with tooth and nail for in his final hour? Many of
318 those to whom Lewis referred as "Somalis" were obviously men like Barda'ad who came to his rescue (Adam,
319 1992: 11-26; Aroma, 1995a).

320 Propagating the claim of "clan cleansing" have minimised the role of Siad Barre in triggering clans to commit
321 violent, brutal atrocities to each other long before his rule came to fall. Overlooking Siad Barre's calls for clan
322 cohesion to salvage his regime at a time he was packing his clothes out of the Villa Somalia (Ingiriis, 2012c:
323 27-28), Kapteijns (2001a: 28) contradicts herself, as she acknowledged elsewhere that Siad "Barre made his
324 security forces commit acts of violence against members of a certain clan (or clan family) falsely using the name
325 of another clan (or clan family)". 25 Here, it is unclear whether the targeted clan to which she alludes was the
326 Hawiye or the Isaaq, though it should be one of them. Kapteijns (ibid.: 13) maintains to highlight that "the
327 process of demystifying the Barre regime's manipulations of history is still in its infancy". The legacies of the
328 Siad Barre's regime affected not only history, but nearly each aspect of Somali society, politics and culture. In
329 fact, Siadism itself has become and proved to be a culture of sadism (Ingiriis, 2012a: 63-94).

330 **8 II.**

331 **9 Conclusion**

332 It would be hard for one to justify this culture and try to twist it by claiming claims of "clan cleansing."

333 The persisting cliché of "clan cleansing" is, *inter alia*, inherently dictated by the clannish tradition and
334 tendencies of the Somali politics. For example, the accusation that a person was killed by one individual is
335 conceived as a sign of weakness and pathetic. The person complaining has to point the finger at the whole clan
336 and say "that clan killed one of ours." It is not a clan culture to claim otherwise. It is a clan-held wide custom in
337 Somali settings to hear claims of "clan cleansing" and counter-clan "cleansings." If you ask, for example, someone
338 whose brother was killed by Colonel Abdullahi Yusuf's forces in 2007/2008 Ethiopian invasion in South-Central
339 Somalia who killed his brother, he would most likely say "reer hebel(that clan)," the clan of the Colonel. If you
340 ask a Colonel's clansman whose sister was killed in the 1991 clanised wars who killed her, he would most likely
341 say "reer hebel (that clan)." This phenomenon of making the whole clan accountable for killing, which suggests
342 that there is no individual guilty other than collective guilty, is something deeply rooted in the pastoralist Somali
343 culture and it warrants further research. In spite of -or because of -this, Kapteijns's book (??013) is constantly
344 used by clan propagandists to spread hatred and hostility toward certain clans and communities.

345 By connecting the boundaries of politics with the borders of culture, Kapteijns's (2013) overemphasis is on the
346 construction and invention of "clan cleansing" where the latter does not exist. While suppressing it to include

347 previous clanised wars during the dictatorial era in her analysis, influential historical accounts on clan violence(s)
348 produced have been left out (cf. Hanley, 2004 [1971]). With no cure for the war traumas, Kapteijns (2013: 50)
349 purports to understand "the clannist mindset of the Somali people", suggesting at the end of her book that the
350 treatment for clannism is to prescribe the Somalis "more of the same" of "such undiluted doses that it will either
351 cure or kill the patient" (ibid.: 212), which, in this case, would mean producing more clanistic narratives as
352 her work. This kind of simplistic and superficial misinterpretation has the potentiality to reignite hatred among
353 Somali clans and add more fuel to the yet unresolved perpetual and persistent conflicts still wreaking havoc in
354 most of Somalia.

355 Endnotes 1 The book fails to offer a backdrop on how the "cleansing" was evolved in the first place. Of all
356 the clanocides meted out by the military dictatorship to certain communities, Kapteijns (2013: 80 & 87, 90)
357 mentions just two "collective clan punishments." 2 The role of the Siad Barre regime in organising clan conflicts
358 was noted, but its agency on the Hawiye versus the Daarood wars was dismissed. It is here when Kapteijns leaps
359 from her own misinterpretation to persecutory statements that she falls down. She misleadingly maintains that
360 the military regime has been the subject of scholarly inquiry for "at least three major studies" (2013: 77). But,
361 she draws on only those studies that verify her aims. Missing (and ostensibly shrugged off) is the most nuanced
362 study that both historically contextualised and politically surveyed from the 1960s to the 1990s. The substantial
363 study of Simons (1995), which is an ethnographic work conducted in Mogadishu months before the collapse
364 of the dictatorship is missing in Kapteijns's discussion of literature on the fall of the regime. The only time
365 what something akin to clan cleansing occurred in the Somali milieu preceded 1991, given the magnitude of the
366 "Hargeysa Holocaust" in 1988/89 against the Isaaq, the Baydhabo man-made famine 1992-93 and the Ethiopian
367 invasion of southern Somalia 2006-2009. However, Kapteijns reduces the death toll in Hargeysa at 5,000, when it
368 was 50,000 casualties as confirmed by the Human Rights agencies in the U.S. and the UK. In singling out the Isaaq
369 clan-group who were subjected to a harsh punitive treatment that culminated in clanocide, Kapteijns (2013: 83 &
370 87) insists the regime-sponsored violence on them was warfare, the Hawiye more or less the same (ibid.: 99), while
371 the Majeerteen/Omar Mohamoud one was clan cleansing, even though the evidences documented by the human
372 rights organisations do oppose to the way she portrays. Perceived as monolithic, Kapteijns (ibid: 275n52) argues
373 that the British had favoured the Isaaq clan-group, a claim grounded in synchronic narratives, contradicted by
374 Langton Prendergast Walsh, the first British administrator of Berbera, who showed that the Isaaq suffered most of
375 the British policy of collective punishment, a policy of retribution against any villain's whole community (Walsh,
376 1910: 374-375). It is peculiar that Kapteijns assumes -without giving any source -that European colonialism "did
377 not so much elevate one group [clan] over another" (2013: 226). However, historical evidence says otherwise.
378 4 Elsewhere, Menkhaus (2006/ See, for example, <http://www.wardheernews.com/somalia-agovernment-failing-at-its-own-peril/> (retrieved on 17 April 2013); and <http://www.wardheernews.com/halting-the-divide-president-mahmouds/> (retrieved on 17 April 2013). For most recent commentaries about the claim of "clan cleansing," see
381 <http://www.wardheernews.com/codenames-clan-cleansing-gross-human-rights-violations-somalia/> (accessed on 8
382 September 2014); and <http://www.wardheernews.com/book-review-clan-cleansing-somalia-ruinous-legacy-1991/>
383 (accessed on 7 September 2014).

384 Kapteijns contacted via email, telephone and from a gathering in Garowe (e.g. Kapteijns, 2013: 246n16,
385 262n157, 264-265n40, 267n78, 267-268n81 and 269n100). On how Kapteijns became entangled and attached
386 to this particular clan members, see among others (Kapteijns 2001c: 719-722, 2001d: 10-18, 2000: 25-34,
387 1999: 27-47, 1992: 175-180). Kapteijns does not acknowledge her familial relations with her informants. By
388 failing to do so, she reproduces the reductionist literature against which she chastises in chapter 3 (2013:
389 146-158). 11 Eltringham's quote is cited in Kapteijns (2013: 240). 12 The complete letter is available
390 at: http://www.aburin.20m.com/letter_of_death.htm (accessed on 17 April 2013). The authenticity of the
391 document was verified by Dr Mohamoud Sheikh Ahmed Musa, a former Chief of Somali Supreme Court on 27
392 April 1987. For details, see Dunn (1987), 1-4. Indeed, Kapteijns could not hide her familial affiliation of General
393 Morgan, when praising him for how "against all odds he had regrouped, raised new funds, recruited fighters from
394 the refugee camps [in Kenya], and re[-]entered the war" (2013: 187). Rejecting to refer to first-hand war accounts
395 provided by other Somalis, Kapteijns offers no systematic contextual analysis except copy and paste references of
396 selective new reports from Kismaayo, General Morgan's then military base. Meanwhile, to make her case more
397 appealing, she makes sweeping accusations on several members only to be able defending other criminals. 13
398 This statement cannot negate the fact that her informants played their part of the 1991 consequences of the long
399 clan dominance and oppression as long as they partook their role of the civil war. 14 These books, booklets and
400 pieces were written by politicallyconscious authors who considered themselves as "victims" and hence advocating
401 for their clan-group. 15 Samatar (1990/1991: 138) wrote about "the clan massacres," "senseless cataclysm" and
402 "clan massacres" to make sense of what occurred in 1991. The 1990s wars were not simply between the Hawiye
403 and the Daarood. As one detailed study on Somali social order described: "After Barre's overthrow, the Daroods
404 were endangered by retaliation from other clan lineages" (Sorens and Wantchekon, 2000: 14n14). It should be
405 noted that the Daarood was not targeted as a Daarood, but as beneficiaries of the State. Since the Daarood
406 as a people became synonymous with the State, primarily because of clan affiliation with Siad Barre, they were
407 identified with his oppressive clano-military regime after the fall. Hence, clan reprisals started where nearly 4,000
408 Somalis across clan lines were killed in a tit-for-tat clanised war. Human Rights reported that most of those
409 killed were pro-Siad Barre supporters (Human Right Watch, 1992: 4). 16 Hartley (2003) has written about his

9 CONCLUSION

410 experiences in reporting from the 1991 clanised wars in Somalia in his memoir, The Zanzibar Chest: A Story
411 of Life, Love, and Death in Foreign Lands. 17 For example, Pacifico's meeting with Siad Barre is repetitively
412 reproduced (e.g. Kapteijns, 2013: 122, 126, 144 & 260). By pervading conjectural claims, the propagators of the
413 clan cleansing claim presumed a reincarnation of the Siad Barre regime in the early 1990s. 18 Other Somalists
414 would offer a unique insight into the MODH structure and grasp the gist of the concept if they could possess
415 with linguistic mastery of the Somali rather than approaching it from mistranslations by an interested third
416 party. For reflective poetical analyses on the conflict, see Ahmed (1996). 19 It is important to reiterate that
417 the term "enemy clan" was constructed, not after the overthrow of Siad Barre, but during his military rule.
418 Surprisingly, the so-called enemy clans were heralded at harsh condemnation in Kapteijns's (2013). 20 Kapteijns
419 carries war poetry, classified in her own individual judgement as "prestigious" and "nonprestigious" genres, with
420 preferences of the latter, which means not to shy away of clannism (Kapteijns, 2013: 53). 21 It is surprising
421 that Kapteijns also leaves out women's genre of poetry, Buraanbur. 22 On the misinterpretation of Kapteijns's
422 analysis on poet Mohamed Ali Ibaar's resistance to the Ethiopian occupation, see Kapteijns (2010: 57-64). 23
423 For example, Elmi (2010: 51) has pointed out to several poets from the opposition groups, but not to those on
424 the side of the military regime. ??4 Barda'ad was arrested in 1978 (The Indian Ocean Newsletter, 1984: 4).
425 Compagnon (1995: 347) put the date of his detention at 1975. Faarax (1990: 42) also claimed that Barda'ad was
426 detained nearly 20 years by the Siad Barre regime, but the truth was that he was in prison for not more than a
427 decade. In 1992, Barda'ad gave an interview to visiting American newsmen in Gedo, detailing his determination
428 to support Generals Siad Barre and Morgan, his clansmen. The interview to which is referred could be watched
429 here: '1993 General Mohamed Hersi "Morgan"', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z8DwaomdOU>(between
430 min 00:05 -02:34), accessed on 12 January 2015. 25 The thesis of my previous article on Siad Barre's last days
431 tackles Kapteijns's statement that "written analyses of Barre's tactics are still schematic, perhaps because no clan
432 group dares to denounce the perpetrators among its own ranks" (Kapteijns, 2001a: 28; cf. Ingiriis, 2012a: 63-94,
Ingiriis 2012c: 27-28).



Figure 1:

These veterans propounded a new neologism "qabiil sifeyn" (clan cleansing) or what others from the former Siad Barre regime called "tirtirid qabiil" (clan extermination) via memoirs (cf. Deyr,1997: 233; Dool,1995:62; also see Ahmed,2012; Ciise,1995; Farah,2000; Farah, 2007; Haid, 2016; Hassan,2004; Mohamed,1994; Issa-Salwe, 1996; Ismail, 2010; Keenadiid, 2012;

Figure 2:

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revenge killings, threats of violence, or actual attacks by whole sub-clans against other lineages come to play a central role in the advancement and protection of clan interests" (2014b: 561). Elsewhere, Menkhaus found that what happened in 1991 was "general chaos" (1996: 173). Again, he has recently acknowledged that what happened in 1991 was "communal violence" (2014b: 569). 5 "Response To David Laitin's Reflections On Clan Cleansing In Somalia." Available at: <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/-2013/11/14/response-to-david-laitins-reflections-on-clan-cleansing -in-somalia/> (accessed on 27 December 2013). Cf. Kapteijns (2001a: 11). 6 This does not mean to imply that what happened Somalia was an echo of Sierra Leone; on the contrary, Somali clan convulsions was nothing compared to Sierra Leonean wars. 8 Lewis has, nevertheless, employed these concepts differently in relation to alienation (1973: 581-591).

9 Cf. Adam (1992: 11-26); Aroma (1995a); Besteman (1999); Bongartz (1991); Ahmed (1995, 1995b; ix-xiv); Cassanelli (1996: 13-26);
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[Note: Duyvesteyn (2005); Kusow(1994: 31-46);Luling (1997: 287-302); andMarchal (2013: 331-354). InKapteijns's (2013), there is no discussion of such a civil war literature, particularly what triggers and sustains the Somali wars. For a theoretical explanation, seeElbadawi and Sambanis (2002: 307-334).10 Abdiweli Gaas, who is currently leader of Puntland mini-State and briefly served as Prime Minister (2011-2012) in President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's government, was an informant and narrator whom 7]

Figure 3:

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