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Understanding the Connections between the EU Global Strategy and Somali Peacebuilding Education Needs and Priorities: A Study Grounded Within a New Barbarism Framework

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Abstract

This paper examines the connections between identity politics and European Union (EU) aid effectiveness in peacebuilding education in Somalia. It engages with a severe educational challenge, which is that a lack of capacity in rigorous educational design and/or implementation across Somali Ministries in the South Central Zone, Somaliland and Puntland has led to the importation of multiple foreign curricula into the country simultaneously that do not address Somali history and contemporary conflict drivers and that frequently clash with local values as well as with each other. We critique this from a New Barbarism perspective, arguing that Somali voices and educational priorities have not been provided a sufficient space for expression in the EU debate on the global and therefore also the national development agenda.

Key Words

NORMATIVE POWER, EU POLICY, PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION, PEACE EDUCATION, NEW BARBARISM, SOMALIA, SOMALILAND.

Introduction

Since the collapse of the Somali state under Siad Barre in 1991, the Horn of Africa has become mythologised by the international community as a chaotic and ungovernable region: a quintessential failed state (Umaña, 2013) or 'the most failed state in the world' (Jones, 2013). Most Western literature on the subject begins by noting in some capacity that the Somali case offers 'the longest-running instance of complete state collapse in postcolonial history' (Menkhaus, 2007). Meanwhile, Somaliland-based authors are quick to point out the stability of their unrecognised state within Somalia, distancing themselves culturally and historically from their Southern Somali neighbours (Ali, 2013), underscoring Somali violence through the politics of difference (Winn & Lewis, 2017). In short, there is a large body of literature concerned with highlighting the interconnections between violence, politics and identity in Somali context. It has been advanced by some authors that the Somali conflict is so entrenched that it can only be resolved by 'external intervention, and even possibly occupation, until all hostilities can be brought under control and a state of order is established' (Kimenyi, Mukum Mbaku, & Moyo, 2010), all of this while acknowledging that: 'protracted state collapse [bedevils] the best humanitarian, diplomatic, development and peacekeeping efforts of the international community' (Menkhaus, 2004). A transition from an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to a UN peace-keeping mission is also sometimes advocated (Mosely, 2015). Taken in isolation, many readings on the Somali crisis are sophisticated, nuanced and informative: but, combined, their collective presentation is deeply problematic, contributing to a barbarisation and othering of Somali culture in academic literature, international policy and the global media, as well as a homogenisation of intrinsically diverse Somali socio-political landscapes (Duffield, 2007). The message reads: all Somalis are the same, and Somalia is a homogenous territory that is entirely lawless. The message is simply untrue, but it has led to the advancement of peace education by United Nations (UN) and

European Union (EU) bodies as a solution to the Somali problem, a method of overwriting the culture of violence with conflict-resolution skills targeted at the mobilisation of Somali youth as future agents of peace.

Commonly, education design and delivery in conflict follows one of four tracks:

1. Conflict-promoting education, which deliberately generates a culture of war;
2. Conflict-blind education, which delivers curricula without engaging critically with conflict dynamics;
3. Conflict-sensitive education, which is aware of the problematic relationship of education with conflict and strives to minimise damage caused in its application (e.g. this may include education that deliberately avoids teaching conflict so as not to aggravate hostilities); and,
4. Conflict-targeted education, which seeks directly to engage with and redress the causes of conflict.

The last of these, conflict-targeted education, as it relates to building critical engagement with education in conflict, is the focus of our research. As a category, conflict-targeted education includes peace education (which teaches students about peace and how to be more peaceful), and peacebuilding education (which aims to critically engage with the position of education in a country's socio-political and economic landscape in order to address the ways in which the structure, systems and content of education impact on violence in society). The history of educational systems in Somalia is well documented (Abdi, 2010, 327-340). The EU is the largest education donor to Somaliland and since 2012 has co-financed 41 new schools as well as the foundation of the Hargeisa Teacher Training Institute, while also providing education funding to Somalia (European Union, 2017). Its policy towards the Horn of Africa is predicated on risk containment of problems as they impact on the continent of Europe, and is normally conflict-sensitive or conflict-targeted. From an EU perspective, targeted risks include terrorism, radicalisation and, in particular, migration. The European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003) emphasised the projection of EU norms, human rights and good governance into the European Neighbourhood as well as the European Near Abroad including the Horn of Africa (ESS, 2003), where such norms projection is translated into peace education. The EU's policies assume that regions contiguous to Europe should develop internal resilience to develop their own affairs politically and economically. Indeed: 'The EUGS … proposes "principled pragmatism" as a new operating principle in its foreign policy' (Juncos, 2017, 1). From an education standpoint, EU engagement with education as an issue area in Somalia and Somaliland is limited and targeted at specific projects, particularly the building of schools or enhancing teacher training capacity. This is in line with Commission priorities to target niche areas of non-security-based development in the Horn of Africa. This is not to suggest that the EU is not responding to development needs in education: 'In recent years, external funding has increased to help support education in Somalia. Of recent note is five-year funding from the European Union…The EU funding is particularly welcome because it provides longer-term support [for educational initiatives in Somalia]' (Williams and Cummings, 2015, 430). However, the real priority in EU strategy towards the Horn is security, in which peace education plays a role.

Education for peace is thematically distinct from peacebuilding education, which aims to understand how education delivery can be redesigned to make societies more equitable and just, rather than as a tool to make people less violent by changing their minds and behaviour (Novelli, Cardozo & Smith, 2015). However, societal impacts of education on peacebuilding are slow to develop and difficult to measure, while peace education can be represented numerically by the number of people registered and trained in conflict-resolution skills, making it more appealing to donors like the EU. Individual case

studies on peacebuilding and peace education abound, but there are few toolkits for the analysis of curriculum and pedagogy for peacebuilding impact that engage with repositioning education within a broader context of learning in conflict. This makes the analysis of curriculum in individual cases slow, complex and non-exportable. Thus, for the international community 'most education programmes tend to adopt, single-issue approach[es]' rather than engaging with 'how education can support such political, security, economic and social transformation processes' based on explicit theories of change (UNICEF, 2011, p. 43). This means that much of the focus on the EU side of education support has been on promoting peace education for global citizenship and liberalism, drawing on literature that advocates for the use of education as a force that fosters forgiveness and reconciliation (Nassera *et al*, 2014), as a promoter of healing and socialisation (Dupuy, 2008), as a platform that fosters dialogue (Parker, 2016), as a discipline through which to learn about citizenship and democratic participation (Parker, 2014), and as a process that is 'perceived to involve working with children and youth on peace education programmes for personal development, inter-group contact and conflict resolution techniques' (UNICEF, 2011).

Taken in isolation, the potential impacts of peace education look promising, but the EU and UN are not the only agents engaging in education delivery in a context such as Somalia, where educational responses take place in an environment with high numbers of out of school children, high numbers of children in non-formal education, and areas in which multiple contradictory curricula operate simultaneously, owing to the contested and deeply politicised design of education in conflict. According to the Africa Educational Trust, there are now at least 17 distinct curricula being taught in Somali schools, and this figure includes only those educational institutions of which we are aware at the international level (2017). Diaspora funders, faith-based groups, private companies, private individuals, radical Islamic education actors (including Al Shabaab), Middle Eastern donors, American charitable organisations, and multiple others are all currently delivering education to Somali students alongside the EU, UN, USAID and Somali Federal States, where the diversity of provision is a product of low state capacity and high demand. This leads to competing readings of Somali society from school to school, and sometimes from classroom to classroom. The impact of these competing narratives on Somali peacebuilding have yet to be understood, but some ideological clashes are emerging within and between communities due to antagonistic curricula. Teaching radical curricula, for example, is a method of Al Shabaab recruitment. In Somalia, the graduates of liberal peace education programmes must interact with members of a wider society educated to opposing values, and this can lead to violent contradiction if common values based on Somali identity and culture have not been incorporated into standardised peace education programmes. There is a danger that peace education divorced of cultural adaptation and societal wide reform and transformation through peacebuilding education, may actually aggravate violence in the short term, as will be argued.

In order to begin to unpack some of these processes, we examine the EU involvement in peace education in Somalia, using a New Barabarism lens to critique the representation of Somali culture as a conflict driver in much of the international response to regional violence: we compare and contrast Somali and Western literature on the subject, in order to argue that the space for international Somali leadership on resolving the conflict has become restricted in a political dialogue where donor voices dominate and set the agenda for development.

We hope that this paper will have significance by beginning to shed light on the underlying causes of Somalia's peacebuilding education challenges, which we find to be buried in harmful conceptualisations of Somali culture and competing priorities for its transformation. While we advocate for continued international and EU investment in education, which is important to fostering development and providing much needed knowledge and skills for young people to improve their future earning prospects, we also encourage greater self-reflection in order to critically assess, from a

peacebuilding perspective, the impact of EU interventions in education and peacebuilding, which must be investigated as part of the entire education landscape, and not just on a project by project basis.

Barbarisation in Development Policy

Current EU strategies for security and development in the Horn of Africa are fed by contemporary texts that underline the assumption that conflict is a natural manifestation of Somali culture. After all, theories of conflict causation suggest that 'the use of violence' in cases of protracted war or their aftermath 'is being fed and sustained by something more than political grievances' (Steenkamp, 2007). Local authors also point out that:

> The violence Somalis inflict on one another exceeds the usual frequency and intensity of groups fighting over ideology, power, or material gain. For when conflict erupts among Somalis, the violence each group unleashes upon the other is as destructive as if each wanted to eliminate the other from the face of the earth (Bulhan, 2008, p. 8).

However, the current conflict is a distinctive event. As Abdi Ismail Samatar writes: "At no time in the recorded history of Somalia has nearly one-third to one-half of the population died or been in danger of perishing due to famine caused by civil war" (1992). Nor have the levels and duration of violence that have prevailed since 1991 ever been witnessed before in the Somali territories. Nevertheless, conflict in Somali society is being normalised by external and internal observers, leading to a barbarisation of Somali culture – an assumption that perhaps the Somali people are somehow inherently violent.

Sheikh Farah (a Boroma religious leader) argues that challenges to peace in Somali society are aggravated when people are divided through education, when they are separated into different educational camps based on English-language, Arabic, or Somali educational delivery, in which Somali education based on local cultural values is perceived by parents and students as the weakest quality education[1]. This undermines the value of Somali language education and by extension Somali knowledge, including, according to Sheikh Farah, those traditional forms of conflict resolution that may have previously kept violence under control. The view has been echoed by Abwan Guure (poet) and Hussein Jamal (Mogadishu City University Professor), who argue that dominant education practices do not allow space for teaching of Somali culture, literature and history: they believe that integrating Somali literature in a cohesive way across national state curricula would help minimise the teaching of "harmful" war poetry and promote positive/transformative pedagogies that explore the romanticisation of peace in Somali culture[2]. This would necessitate standardisation through significant external support for contextualised education design, which has yet to happen in an environment where it is often easier for donors to open their own schools than to reform existing ones. Again, while the Africa Educational Trust is currently encouraging curriculum consolidation with EU funding (2017), significant expansion of this type of project would be needed to access students in non-state schools, particularly in the form of empowering Somali education Ministries to monitor, regulate and reform education provision across existing schools. This requires a peacebuilding education approach that examines the inequities and inequalities created by the education system as a whole, rather than a peace education approach that looks to making individual schools more liberal and individual students less 'violent'.

The peace education approach, with its focus on making people more 'peaceful' is a symptom of the securitisation of education through external donorship (Novelli, 2017): in particular, this has led to a Western preoccupation with 'Islamic' radicalisation and a corresponding funding focus on education and development as weapons in the War on Terror (Ibid). It has situated counter-radicalisation for the

international community as a war of ideas, in which 'the "war on terrorism" [is] fought principally (ideally) against the myriad components of the Salafi-Jihadi culture (Salafiyya Jihadiyya) that birthed al-Qaida's campaign against "far" and "near" enemies' (Cozzens, 2006, p. 2). Unsurprisingly, in this war of ideas, education becomes a strategic resource, where 'winning will entail … gaining the upper-hand in a moral, narrative duel' (Ibid, p. 3). The war will likely be won or lost in schools, and so the purpose of schooling has been critiqued and contested in Somalia by organisations like Al Shabaab as a neo-colonial and anti-Islamic initiative.

The securitisation of education can be read from a New Barbarsim perspective: with relation to Europe, New Barbarism is intended to frame external crises by 'providing a popular explanation for the growing insecurity and political turmoil in the marginal areas of the global economy, conditions often encapsulated in ideas of "internal" war or "failed states"' (Duffield, 2007). Duffield writes that:

> In describing the external crisis, New Barbarism has tended to emphasise … racial discourse. That is, the innate, age-old and unreasoned aspects of cultural and ethnic identity. For New Barbarism, the anarchic and destructive power of traditional feelings and antagonisms are unleashed when controlling forms of governance or economic regulation collapse. (Ibid)

The solution is the construction of new institutions that regulate the offending cultural antagonisms, based on pluralist politics that are explicitly concerned with sharing representation but that are often paradoxically blind to existing power relations. This approach is not new: the blending of Western governance systems with Somali culture, politics and identity began in the colonial era, resulting, as Bulhan summarises, in the construction of an auto-colonial state and societal architecture that persists to the present day (2008). However, the logic of intervention based on Western values continues to form part of the European response to Somali conflict.

The values integrated into EU engagement in Somali conflict stem from international law and treaties, and are based on Westphalian concepts of power and order (Bluth & Winn, 2013), prioritising respect for human rights, democratisation and capacity building, aimed at reducing the threat that Somali insecurity poses to the rest of the world, including the West and neighbouring Middle East and North African states (Stevenson, 2007). This is inadvertently done through an erasure of Somali identity. A recent survey conducted by one of our investigators of university students in Hargeisa, for example, found that most students had little to no knowledge of the role of the Guurti in Somaliland society, even though the Guurti play a fundamental role in controlling legislative reform and negotiating the state's power-sharing agreements. Its role was not covered by the Somaliland curriculum. EU responses to the Somali conflagration prioritise the incorporation of Western normative values into Somali governance mechanisms in order to fix the European construct of a 'Somalia' that operates as a singular unified country, but do not necessarily allow for sufficient critical exploration of Somali conflict-management context. A unified national consensus-based curriculum is pushed on paper, but in practice this translates into complete freedom for each sub-national level to reinterpret this curriculum and publish its own textbooks. Additionally, teachers and communities compensate for what they perceive as political shortfalls in curriculum content by teaching their own versions of events to children, often based on poems that promote clan warfare by teaching historical grievances to new generations. Somali education ministries have little capacity in curriculum design, meaning that most curricula taught in non-state schools are imported from donor countries or from Ethiopia and Kenya, even when they have a Somali stamp on them: schools either have no clear strategy for addressing conflict, do not teach Somali history, or inadvertently aggravate conflict drivers when teachers promote division or violence.

The New Barbarism framework criticises international policy for assuming that 'Barbarians cannot develop independently; they can only imitate, plunder and destroy', as aiming to join 'Western civilisation' by 'imitating civilisation [as] the first stage' (Kagarlitsky, 1999). Barbarisation is nefariously dangerous because it is a two-way process that begins when the Western diplomat investigates the steps that the Somali needs to take to become 'like us', and ends with the Somali politician, as well as the average Somali on the street, looking at Western development and asking 'Why am I not yet like you?' In this sense, New Barbarism is a tool for understanding engrained contemporary orientalism and the power relations implicit in how we interpret the violence, politics and identity of developing nations, and, in this case, how these processes inform curriculum design and content selection. This paper argues that some of these assumptions are visible in EU policy towards the Horn of Africa, which are in turn based on European understandings of normative power and are translated into European approaches to education. We argue that greater criticality and significant further research is needed on situating EU-backed education provision within a broader context of Somali peace and conflict. We *do not* advocate for a complete delinking of Western and Somali politics: taking, rather a post-orientalist approach predicated on the assumption that any movement that advocates emancipation through acknowledgement of difference remains problematic precisely because it maintains the binary classification of 'self' and 'other' (O'Hanlon & Washbrook, 1992), this project conceptualises Somali culture as having evolved and been transformed through interaction with Western politics and society, a reality that feeds into the nature and manifestations of contemporary violence and is aggravated by the failure of the education system to engage critically with peacebuilding and identity.

The New Barbarism framework allows us to analyse EU conceptions of Somali education and highlights that Western-imposed conceptions of Somali society are uncritical and potentially damaging to the peace-building aims of education in Somalia.

The Evolution of the Somali Conflict

Somalia is divided into three prominent administrations: Somaliland, Puntland and the South Central Zone (SCZ), with Somaliland claiming independence from Somalia, and further smaller administrations variously competing for greater autonomy, such as Awdalland, Galmudug, Jubaland and Khatuumo. Each of the larger three – Somaliland, Puntland and SCZ – has its own ministries, governance mechanisms, and levels of institutional capacity, with SCZ being at once the home of the internationally recognised Somali Federal Government (SFG) and the territory that has been most severely affected by conflict. The political fragmentation of Somaliland from Somalia leads back to the colonial period, when the two territories were governed as a British protectorate and Italian colony, respectively, and the 1980s when tensions between the two turned violent. Further subdivisions across Somalia have been produced by the long civil war, which began in 1988, leading to the collapse of the Somali state in 1990. They are the product of competition over land, resources and political representation that has become mirrored in national politics by the emergence of predominantly clan-based rival political parties.

Somali state structures and capacities are weak. Thus, clannism offers alternative social hierarchies and relations, including sources of self-help and community support, based on patrilineal descent (Elmi, 2010). There are 'six main clan divisions in Somalia' (the Digil, the Rahanweyn/Mirifle, the Hawiye, the Dir, the Isaaq, and the Darod) (Anderson, 2010, p. 6). Clanism offers the basis for social interaction across much of the country, rules of conduct, and a sense of religious and cultural belonging. It codifies values and social laws through *xeer*, and effectively taxes clan members to provide social security and insurance to those in need, with blood money paid out in cases where one clan harms another. The system is not perfect or fair, with significant penalties especially affecting

women's access to clan justice (Walls, Schueller & Ekman, 2017), but it is 'to this day a continuing and pervasive system, permeating all social relations' (Bulhan, p. 9). Grant summarises: 'Given that Somalia is considered to be relatively homogeneous in ethnic terms (which is uncommon in comparison to other African states), it follows that the most pertinent identity grouping during a crisis and subsequent extended period of insecurity is that of clan identity' (2012, p. 65). As such, clanism is central to much of Somalia's political system, though the complexities of the system are generally ignored by curricula, leaving large portions of the population in the dark as to the intricacies of how the tensions between clannism and political leadership are managed in state and sub-state entities. This contributes to tensions on the ground if any one clan is perceived by outsiders as gaining too much political power in Somalia. Clan histories are passed down by families and clans, which leads to stereotyping and distrust of the other in cases where such diversity is not acknowledged or respected by imported curricula. Thus, war promoting poetry is often passed down to children by families, but it is not countered in classroom learning by poetry that romanticises peace as a traditional Somali value[3]. In this context, the politicisation of clan identity by state politics has been a continuing trigger for violence.

Somali writers, including Samatar and Bulhan, blame Somalia's elites for the contemporary conflict, pointing to the systematic politicisation of clan identity during and after the colonial period as the root causes of current instability. Such politicisation began in the 1880s, when European colonial powers gained entry into the Horn of Africa. However, it was further problematised when the Italian administration created a Western-styled Government in the South that established a hierarchical system giving some clans political power over others. This 'launched a process whereby outsiders and Westernised elites tried to create new, modern institutions that completely ignored traditional societal norms and relationships' (Kaplan, 2008, p. 146). Samatar argues that while pre-colonial Somalia could be considered to be equalitarian and relatively democratic, 'The imposition of colonial rule on stateless societies, the new dynamics of social relations, and the transformation [or commercialisation] of the pastoral economy' generated 'fundamental modifications of pre-colonial tradition' that led to competition (1992, p. 627). Societal transformation was underlined and entrenched through the use of Western-style education, as will be argued in the next section. Due to the centrality of clans in Somali culture (Elmi, 2010), politicians exploited clan-based divisions between groups to mobilise support for their parties, leading to elite competition that trickled down to the community level. Though Somalia functioned for several years as a multi-party democracy before the collapse of the state, in the 1960s a 'misuse of public resources by some politicians and government employees, the abuse of political power by some people in positions of authority, and incompetence at higher levels of the public services' stalled state development and generated a long-standing legacy of mistrust in state legitimacy: this has since meant that citizens worry about rival clans gaining too much power in the Government, as channels of corruption follow clan-patronage (Samatar, 2016, p. 128).

The dominance of clan-narratives in the conflict has led, according to Samatar, to the assumption that 'the trouble with Somalia is the nature of its culture, grounded in the clan system, with cruel individuals proving divisive for projects of modern nation-building' (1992, p. 629). The view is echoed by Anderson: 'The notoriety of' state failure in Somalia, he argues, has 'led to Somali social institutions, culture and religion being viewed in negative terms – each being stigmatised as in some way causally related to the downfall of the state' (2010, p. 5). Here it is always the culture, rather than the shape and nature of institutions or the training of individuals, that is blamed as the core driver on instability. However, as Mamdani argues, in postcolonial African contexts of conflict, we must 'recognise that the process of state formation generates political identities that are distinct from cultural identities' and that there is a need to 'differentiate between cultural and political identities, so as to distance oneself

analytically from a growing culture-coded racism' (2001, p. 20). That the institutions of political power have allowed for corruption and exploitation of political elites, and that this exploitation has been interpreted through clan-based divisions, does not mean that clannism and Somali cultural identity offer a convincing explanation of the conflict.

In the post-collapse system, international on-lookers and EU funders have sought to solve violence through the institutionalisation of a power-sharing system, founded on clan-based representation through participation quotas, and through the teaching of liberal and democratic values. Hesse writes: 'Representation in the parliament is evenly divided amongst four main clan groups', including 'the Darod, Hawiye, Dir and Digle-Mirifle plus five minority constituencies' (2010, p. 252). However, conflict continues because representatives have little legitimacy beyond the capital of Mogadishu. Once leaders are removed from their constituents to act in Mogadishu, they lose their grassroots level legitimacy (Walls, 2017). Traditional Somali governance is based on an oral system of local debate and negotiation: leaders who are not present at the local level to hear village and regional elders discuss day-to-day politics are not trusted to act as advocates for their communities (Ibid): simply moving representative leaders to the centre has not resulted in meaningful adaptation of Western institutions to the local context.

Duffield notes that: 'While the increasing occurrence of conflict related emergencies' worldwide is 'held to represent a new challenge for aid agencies, perceptions and responses have largely relied on restatements of existing Eurocentric assumptions and established practices' (2007). He deems this to be a manifestation of 'cultural functionalism', in which 'harmony is taken as the normal state of the world' and conflict is 'extraordinary and unsustainable'. Here, the solution to conflict is multiculturalist policy that promotes understanding 'based on the significance of difference and plurality'. A direct manifestation of this is the Somali 4.5 power-sharing mechanism, aiming to give representation to the four major Somali clans, as well as to minority clan groupings, in the Somali Federal Government that operates out of Mogadishu. Based on 'the reasoning that power-sharing among majority and minority clans will lead to forming a national government whose writ extends to all parts of the country', the 4.5 mechanism conveniently ignores 'achievements of leaders who spearheaded successful, locally conceived reconciliation efforts in Somaliland and Puntland' (Ahmed, 2016). This move results in a 'conflation of cultural and political identity in such a way that complex political and social processes have been reduced to a single variable, the clan' (Samatar, 2016, p.215), seeking to transform the clans into political parties as a shortcut to adapting Western-style institutions to local context. This approach has been heavily criticised for building mistrust and accentuating divisions between clans by transforming horizontal structures into vertical ones that determine national access to state resources (Ahmed, 2016) and for 'reify[ing] sectarian differences among Somalis' (Samatar, 2016, p.215), but it can be read as a very European power-sharing arrangement, aimed at fixing the Somali conflict by super-imposing a modern Western state onto a divided territory and advancing a Normative Power Europe solution (as will be expanded). Mamdani explains that 'To understand how' socio-cultural constructs like '"tribe" and "race" – like "caste" – got animated as political identities, we need to look at how the law breathed political life into them' (2001, p. 20), or, in this case, the nature and structure of institutional-power-sharing arrangements. In light of emerging challenges, Federalism has been advanced as a way of improving the 4.5 system, but not as a means of redressing it (Mosely, 2015): yet it carries with it the same core assumptions – that the challenges of Somalia's social make-up can be politically managed by transferring clan-based representation to the nation state. In the International Relations literature, European values are mostly couched from the inside-out in Western universalist terms, especially as they relate to Africa (Staeger, 2016). Somali students learn about these changes mainly from the media, which is often polarised and partisan, but are not afforded the opportunity to reflect in a structured manner on this in the classroom.

A Brief History of Education and its Politicisation

This paper has thus far explored the centrality of Somali identity in international narratives of the conflict, and the ways in which these perceptions have validated Westernised approaches to governance and education reform. In this section, we look more specifically at the historical processes that have driven the politicisation of education as it represents to culture and identity.

In pre-colonial Somalia, education was informal, oral and based on communal interaction. It involved the teaching of 'manners, family and clan history, and skills necessary for survival in the particular environment of the Somali peninsula' (Hoehne, 2010, p. 14). However, some more structured Islamic educational institutions had begun to take shape before European occupation (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2004, p. 93). The colonial powers formalised the system only after the 1920s, but in the South 'The Fascists considered the Africans to be racially inferior', so that minimal educational development was 'considered necessary' only by 'subsidized Catholic mission schools' (Dawson, 1964). Religious values transferred through schools were aggressively un-Islamic and the requirements that schooling placed on children – such as an abundance of free time and a fundamentally static existence – were antithetical to the nomadic lifestyle of large segments of the population. Schools were limited in their quality and capacity, and had essentially been designed for the purposes of colonisation and religious conversion. Thus, early uprisings against occupying powers have been linked to a violent Somali rejection of the conversion of local children that was taking place in colonial schools (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2004, p. 93). Yet this rejection of Western education did not last once Christianity was phased out of schools. With the exception of violent Islamic Fundamentalist groups such as Al Shabaab, who continue to attack educational institutions, the legitimacy of schools has increased, but Western influence on their design has not subsided.

Along with the acceptance of Western-style formal schooling came further calls for Western-facing development and modernity. Maxamed Siad Barre, who controlled Somalia from 1969-1991, supported modernisation by building 'hundreds of schools, training tens of thousands of teachers … and successfully implementing nation-wide literacy programmes' (Abdi, 1998). However, Barre's secular, socialist agenda lacked legitimacy among many of Somalia's religious leaders, who continued to teach communities in a semi-rival Quranic education system (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2004), establishing a tradition of alternative provision. Following an erosion of the education budget during the 1977 Somali-Ethiopian, or Ogaden, War (Lewis, 2014), many children had stopped attending state schools entirely, but continued to attend community madrassas. By 1990 'only 600' formal 'schools remained open, enrolling 150,000 children' (Ibid). Over 90% of these were destroyed in the Somali war that began in 1991 (Ibid). The politicisation of education through these and other historical trends is a legacy from which Somalia has yet to recover.

Much of the Somali education sector is now funded by the international community. While Somali communities and the diaspora are a key source of support to Government Ministries (especially for Somaliland, which lacks external sovereignty recognition (Hoehne, 2010, p. 10)), much of the formal education budget comes from the EU, DFID, USAID, DANIDA, the Norwegian Embassy, Turkey, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and the Government of the Netherlands (Ministry of Human Development and Public Services, Directorate of Education, 2013, p. 25). International influences have meant that the language of human rights and Education for All feature prominently in the strategic development agendas of all three zonal administrations. It has also meant the importation of foreign curricula, taught in English, by UN and affiliated organisations, with the vast majority of secondary schooling being delivered in English. Challenges to equity persist, with variation in quality and levels of delivery between zones, between safe and unsafe areas, between urban and rural, and central and

peripheral areas, between static and nomadic communities, and between genders. Where safety prevents state schools from opening, private, charitable and other groups provide non-state schooling. Schools that emerge from these processes are often unaccredited, unmonitored, and non-standardised, reflecting competing ideologies of those who open them.

Somalia's educational priorities are determined by Ministerial policies in the three zones, as well as by the Somali Compact for 2014-2016, which establishes broader humanitarian and development pathways for the region, but in cooperation with donors. The Compact is the result of a prolonged consultative process between the international community and the Federal Government of Somalia, which excluded at the time Somalilanders who consider themselves a separate country, and minority clan groupings that do not have a powerful voice in the state assembly. The Compact acknowledges that a key component of building peace in Somalia will entail generating 'opportunities for young people that are positive alternatives to participating in violence and conflict', including education and employment (Federal Republic of Somalia, 2013, p. 9).

Today, Somali 'groupings within the polity of the nation-state are in constant struggle for supremacy and to influence the structure of the state to be had' (Ahmed, 1996, p. 3), which leads to continuous fluctuations in clan-based identities, as well as the continual realignment of clans, sub-clans and sub-sub-clans within the broader political order. Opportunistic outsiders and insiders both take advantage of the need for private and charitable education delivery to help implement curricula that will represent their values and allegiances in this context. With very little monitoring and high levels of diaspora contributions to new schools, these curricula often advocate the development philosophies of the communities and sometimes the host countries in which Somali refugees are based internationally. Lack of monitoring has an impact on quality. Therefore, 'Despite notable improvements in recent years, educational provision, participation and completion in Somalia are among the lowest in the world. It is reported that, across Somalia, the estimated Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for primary education stands at 38% (and only 25% for girls)' (EEAS, 2016, 1). The EU development strategy in Somalia, meanwhile, which is analysed in the next section, is based on Western aspirations for global citizenship, but it cannot be read as existing in isolation from this complex socio-political Somali educational space, in which multiple projects are being implemented by different donors simultaneously.

Normative Power Europe and EU Foreign Policy

To counter drivers of Somali conflict, the EU has invested €30 million into the Education Sector Development Plan, targeting multiple levels of education development, including; primary, secondary and higher education, as well as vocational training, through policies that link curriculum with peace promotion (European Commission, 2017). They have supported plurality of inclusion in discussions around consolidated curricula in state schools alongside the teaching of generic peace skills. The international approach has integrated generic peace education into programming, because such education is 'concerned with analyses of factors that allow war to be considered normal', so as to 'enhance people's consciousness of the mechanisms supporting a war culture' and to help them 'to challenge those mechanisms through empowering people for transformation' by supporting learning that includes conflict resolution but not conflict analysis (Burns & Aspelsagh, 2013, p. 7). Such strategies are useful in contributing to development (Becker, 1964; Robeyns, 2006), but their impact on conflict is limited because school-based Somali education does not currently address such factors as they relate specifically to the Somali socio-political space. There is currently no unified teaching of history or citizenship across the three administrative zones of Somalia, or across the multiple school systems within each zone. Beyond this, while educational quotas are provided for ensuring gender

parity in EU-funded education projects, these do not look at other forms of social division that are harder to track, such as clan-based segregation in education, or clan-based preferential marking on course work (problems that are spoken about openly by Somali students but that do not reach the ears of foreign donors and policymakers). Thus, education design is not sufficiently catered to or critical of power structures that influence local context, and education delivery is often complicit in antagonising the grievances that perpetuate conflict.

EU engagement in the Horn of Africa can be read to be founded on the principle of Normative Power Europe (NPE), a term in European integration studies that derives from constructivist International Relations theory. It is rooted in Western univeralist conceptions of individual and human rights. Neo-realist and institutionalist approaches to IR theory emphasise materiality whereas constructivism emphasises ideas and the fact that ideas are constructed into policies. The NPE debate closely relates to the European Union (EU) as a Kantian political project based on universal values derived from the human condition: the universality of human rights, civil liberties, legal rights before the law, property rights and so forth. Ian Manners (2002) conceives of NPE as being the ability to define and shape the normal of norms in international relations. In this vein, the EU is conceived of as being the key proponent in international society of Kantian ideals, and societies that do not conform to those archetypes are Barbarised or othered. According to Manners (2002: 242) one can identify five 'core' norms from the body of EU law and policies: peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. He suggests that four additional 'minor' norms can be derived from the *acquis communautaire*: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance (Niemann and de Wekker, 2010). The concept of NPE is about change and is closely allied with the concept of soft power (Nye, 1990) and civilian power (Duchêne, 1972) but focuses more on the ideational and cognitive aspects of international relations. The education of societies is key to achieving these ideals, as it helps to teach them the importance of liberal peace, but individuality and cultural distinctiveness are sometimes sidelined in policies engaging with this process and pushing the idea of a new global village (Yankuzo, 2014).

A neo-realist critique of normative power advanced by Hyde Pryce (2006) has commented that the EU does not necessarily operate according to the principles of NPE, but instead the EU member states use it as a cloak to push their material interests, including securitisation. Others have argued that NPE in practice means Western liberal values and Europe (as in colonial times) has sought to impose those values from the outside on developing states and territories as a matter of course. It also follows that the EU does not necessarily live up to those vaunted Western ideals (Bicchi, 2006), and that NPE focuses too much on the internal aspects of European values being projected onto the outside world. Thus, we see that EU engagement with education in Somalia is limited and targeted at specific projects, particularly the building of schools or enhancing teacher training capacity: for example, the EU-funded project, 'Horumarinta Elmiga', now implemented in Somaliland is said to use 'an all-inclusive and harmonized approach, focused on promoting community cohesiveness in providing education for empowerment', but in practice this translates to literacy education and skills training (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2016).One might term NPE to be Eurocentric or ethnocentric depending on one's point of view, and this interpretation aligns interestingly with Duffield's work on New Barbarism. Staeger has stated in relation to Africa that the now decade-long debate on NPE:

> has shaped Africa–EU relations considerably, especially since the founding of the AU (African Union). Yet while the EU aspires to be a post-imperial, normative power, this postcolonial critique suggests NPE is a neo-Kantian, Eurocentric discourse that reinvigorates an outdated European moral paternalism (Staeger, 2016, p.981).

This is set against a broader EU approach to Africa that emphasises good governance, human rights, stability and democracy promotion which in itself could be construed to be Eurocentric (Bicchi, 2006) denying the cultural identities of host populations through Western-facing education design,

incorporating Western values and even Western exams, accreditation and assessment. Indeed, the EU has been accused of using democracy promotion as a smokescreen to promote its vital economic and political interests in Africa (Crawford, 2013) in a neo-realist fashion. NPE has variously been described as: a force for good providing necessary guidance to developing countries (Sjursen, 2006); a force for the empowerment of African states through their inclusion into negotiations concerning, for example, the Kyoto protocol on climate change and the International Criminal Court (ICC) (Scheipers and Sicurelli, 2008), otherwise known as 'partnership in ownership' designed to empower states to take control of development (Pirozzi, 2009, p.41); or a suitable mentor to the African Union, implying that the EU has a broader norms and rules-based educative role (Haastrup, 2013a). Here, the EU is at least trying to instil transformative change in EU-Africa relations through active partnership, equality and local ownership of policies, even though there is clearly a long way to go in achieving any such objectives (Haastrup, 2013b, 64). Yet NPE has also been criticised as: a conduit for the public legitimisation of EU geopolitical interests and commercial gains in its relationships with African states (Langan, 2012; Langan 2015); a method of maintaining asymmetric donor-recipient power relations with African atates (Helly, 2013); or an embedded imperial mechanism imposing policy choices on African states through a hierarchical centre-periphery model defined by discrimination, manipulation, coercion and exploitation (Sepos, 2013),. Criticality on these ideas has not trickled coherently into education design in Africa: though EU support for the new Sustainable Development Agenda implies greater respect for the incorporation of education with peacebuilding, the role that cultural identity should play in education design (if any) has not been featured strongly in emerging debate. From a political economy perspective, the EU continues to project its neo-liberal trade-oriented form of regionalism onto sub-Saharan Africa shaping local conceptions of regionalism (Buzdugan, 2013), thereby projecting the EU's geopolitical vision in Africa (Bachmann and Sidaway, 2010) and encouraging global citizenship over cultural adaptation. Indeed, Biscop has hypothesised that the EU has a three-tiered set of priorities in its foreign and security policies according to its own self-defined needs: (1) stabilising Europe's neighbourhood, including prevention and intervention strategies; (2) contributing to global maritime security; and (3) contributing to the UN collective security system around intervention, prevention and multilateralism (2015). These security priorities translate into education delivery, where the continuing operational focus for much of the international community is on single-action programmes, designed to make individuals more peaceful through the promotion of peace education (UNICEF, 2011).

EU approaches to Somalia have been largely predicated on a liberal peace-building agenda, which is top-down and ignores organic, indigenous local structures (Oksamytna, 2011, 97), as well as cultural adaptation of international security and development agendas. Yet owing to the historic and cultural complexities of the Somali context, and the protracted politicisation of education over time detailed in previous sections, solutions to security, governance and development issues in Somalia will only have legitimacy if they are seen to come from local communities themselves and not necessarily from the EU and the West (Ehrhart and Petretto, 2014b, 197-194). Such solutions can come about only if Somalis are educated about their past and their present in an open and critical manner.

In the end, the EU guides its policies towards Somalia through several pillars: humanitarian aid, development cooperation, political dialogue, and crisis management (Ehrhart and Petretto, 2014, 179-194). The narrative in all EU policy documents revolves around the need to intervene in Somalia from the outside to improve the security, governance and development chances of the territories comprising the Horn of Africa. EU normative power – however well-intentioned or otherwise – projects European conceptions of political institutions, the market economy, and human rights as being "normal" and universally "desirable" for what are in essence African clan-based communities. This technocratically-led top-down approach effectively side-lines the bottom-up needs of organic, indigenous local particularistic structures and communities, which in turn reveals much about European élite attitudes, values and norms towards Somalia in particular and Africa in general. These approaches are reflected in support for an education system that fosters and reflects respect for

English-language, Western-facing schooling as representative of quality education, at the expense of Somali knowledge, literature and identity, which are side-lined in schools that are under-funded, unregulated and discredited.

Conclusion

Carbone argues that the European Commission's supranational coordination of national aid policies has resulted in reduced local ownership of policies and increased asymmetrical dependence on the EU by African countries due to self-interested EU priorities and policy incoherence (Carbone, 2013). Indeed, the EU has a contradictory set of normative and material objectives towards Africa, which often makes its policies lack coherence (Sicurelli, 2016). It is clear that since recent terrorist attacks in Europe the EU has been pursuing development policies towards Africa that are focused on EU internal and external security priorities rather than African development *per se* (Castillego, 2016, 26), a process based on supressing cultural values and identities deemed threatening. This approach is also reflected in the new "principled pragmatism" of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (European Union, 2016). Increasingly, `…the main focus of European strategy across Africa appears to be containment. The EU used to emphasise its credentials as a peacemaker; today its members often appear more concerned with suppressing terrorists, strengthening [their own] borders, and limiting migration [into Europe] than with addressing the political [social and economic] sources of the conflicts that underpin these problems [in Africa]' (Gowan, 2017, 7). These tensions are then played out in African (and particularly Islamic African) states through a juxtaposition of Western-funded, Western-facing education against radical-funded predominantly religious education, creating societal divisions that feed into national conflicts between liberal and conservative groups.

Specifically, in the Somali case, there is an assumption in much academic writing (and in EU policy documents) that the territories comprising the Horn of Africa require outside interventions to "make them work normally"; "normally" being defined as having a market economy, Western style institutions, the rule of law, and individual conceptions of human rights according to the Western model of society. Normal functioning implies the creation of normal people, through education that over-writes or ignores intrinsic Somali "barbarism". There is an assumption in the West and the EU that Somalia is an empty box that needs to be filled with new content (Ehrhart and Petretto, 2014a, 211-212). This externally-driven approach to development and security excludes local concepts, ideas and efforts. Indeed, EU policy in the Horn of Africa is driven more by power politics and interests than it is by norms and values (Ehrhart and Petretto, 2014a, 211-212). EU and international interventions in the Horn of Africa have focused in recent years on stabilisation through development. At their core, these interventions have aimed at correcting Somali behaviour to reduce violence and shore up Western-style solutions to Somali problems through governance reforms that promote Westphalian democratisation, and parallel education initiatives that promote liberal thinking. However, these reforms have not taken into consideration the unique problematics and opportunities presented by the Somali case, and they have failed to conceptualise the delivery of education as an aggravating factor exacerbating conflict. In order to promote genuine societal transformation, we need to be moving away from peace education delivery that aims to make people less violent or less Barbarian, towards peacebuilding education that aims to question the critical role of education in society in order to overcome social injustice. Such education should not only question the impact of culturally distinctive structures like the clans on the peace process, but also the role of the internationally community in propping up, formalising and legitimising the inequalities caused by these structures. Ultimately, however, it should move away from understandings of EU values as being universal or culturally neutral towards a strategy that critically assesses the role of all educational actors regardless of identity in order to promote the development of a peacebuilding educational strategy that is relevant to and respectful of Somali society.

Significant EU funding has now been channelled into creating a unified curriculum for a unified Somali people. Yet this has not translated into consolidation of the education sector as a whole, and will not lead to unification as long as competing school systems have freedom to choose whether or not to adopt the curriculum. Key to understanding these complexities is a broader analysis of the political realities of the context and the competing interests vying for political power through education. As long as the EU continues to be perceived as a political actor in this space, its curriculum will not be accepted as neutral or universal.

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Endnotes

[1] From a set of interviews collected by Nasir M Ali and Mohamed Isaaq, through a project led by Dr. Tejendra Pherali and co-authored with Dr. Alexandra Lewis in 2016 and 2017.
[2] Ibid.
[3] From a set of interviews collected by Nasir M Ali and Mohamed Isaaq, through a project led by Dr. Tejendra Pherali and co-authored with Dr. Alexandra Lewis in 2016 and 2017.