

HYBRID AND ‘EVERYDAY’ POLITICAL ORDERING: CONSTRUCTING AND CONTESTING LEGITIMACY IN SOMALILAND

Louise Wiuff Moe

Introduction

Consensus is growing, within academia as well as within policy circles, that prevailing western and liberal peace and state building frameworks have not had the desired effects in terms of creating legitimate state institutions, development and peace in post-conflict settings in Africa, and more broadly in the Global South.¹

¹ The ‘liberal peace’ refers to the prevailing practise of peace building, which is supported and promoted by the most powerful states, together with leading international organisations, including monetary organisations. The strategies and aims underlying these interventions are justified with reference to liberal-democratic governance ideals, and ideals of market-led economic growth. As noted by MacGinty:

the concept of the liberal peace is a broad umbrella, as it takes account of the ideology of peacemaking, the socio-cultural norms of peacemaking, the structural factors that enable and constrain it, its principal actors and clients, and its manifestations (MacGinty 2010: 393).

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The explanations of the limitations are divided. Yet, a number of scholars and policy observers have pointed to two major, and closely related, problems of the international project of implementing and advancing liberal democratic statehood and peace in Africa. First, the limited engagement of local populations and non-elites with state and peace building projects, and second, the considerable tensions between international fixed standards of state legitimacy and ‘good governance’, on the one hand, and local experiences and perceptions of what constitutes efficient and legitimate governance on the other hand (Andersen et al. 2007; Bellina et al. 2009; Boege et al. 2009a, 2009b; Brown et al. 2010; Chandler 2005; Debiel and Lambach 2010; Richmond 2010, 2011; Taylor 2009).

Current policy discourse has moved away from previous optimistic democratization scenarios, and instead emphasises ‘difference’. A recent OECD report on legitimacy and state ‘fragility’, for example, notes that “state-society relations in non-Western states, *compared* to Western states, are more likely to be influenced by informal, unwritten rules (rooted in custom and traditional social practice) as *opposed* to formal, written, legal rules” (OECD 2010: 17, emphasis added), and that, “people’s ideas about what constitutes legitimate political authority are *fundamentally different* in formal, rule-based Western states and non-Western states” (Ibid.: 3, emphasis added).

By way of solutions, some advocates of liberal state and peace suggest that “more of the same” will eventually have results (Roberts 2011: 410). From this perspective the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction are typically understood through the lens of ‘state fragility’. A number of critics, on the other hand, seem to have arrived at the conclusion that liberal state and peace building is fundamentally unsuited, and illegitimate, in post-conflict communities in the Global South (Paris 2010).

The discrepancies between the ‘image’ (Migdal and Schlichte 2005) of the sovereign liberal-democratic state and the practices and de facto enactments of governance and political community on the ground in many so-called fragile post-conflict settings in the Global South are real enough. Legitimate state monopoly of violence is the exception rather than the norm and the appeal of rights and obligations associated with being a citizen of the state coexists with other, often stronger, ties of loyalty vis-à-vis local non-state groups (civic, ethnic, tribal, customary, religious, neo-patrimonial etc.).

Yet, despite these discrepancies, neither the challenges of political order and peace in Africa, nor the prospects for future developments (and possibilities for

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facilitating more inclusive governance), are necessarily best examined through invoking notions of sharp polarities or disjunctions between ‘liberal/Western’ versus ‘communal/non western’ political order – or, by extension, ‘ideal type state’ versus ‘fragile state’. Rather than radical disjunction, historical developments testify to dense and intricate processes of exchange and shaping, even if far from equal, between Western-style state based practice and order, and forms of political community and ordering rooted in different regions in the Global South.

Post-colonial and post Cold War political ordering in the Global South has been characterized by powerful dynamics of both disintegration and reconfiguration of power and authority (Villalon 1998; Clapham 2000). In different contexts, local and domestic dynamics of ordering, security and conflict management present “real life alternatives” (Andersen et al. 2007: 5) to, or selective re-appropriation of, Western-liberal frameworks of governance and government and prevailing notions of order and disorder. Such reconfigurations can pose obstacles to peace and stability, but they can also be creative and generative.

In recent years a number of scholars have pointed out that the most promising, if contentious, forms of contemporary political ordering and peace building in fact take place exactly in the interstices, contestation and ‘hybridization’, between state-based and liberal practice, and local customs and ‘everyday’ life (Mac Ginty 2010; Richmond 2010, 2011; Boege et al. 2009a, 2009b; Brown et al. 2010; Clements et al. 2007; Darby 2009; Debiel and Lambach 2010; Kraushaar and Lambach 2009; Moe 2012; Roberts 2011). As argued by Richmond, analysis of the tensions and accommodations between these different sources of order and authority in the ‘everyday’ of post conflict settings, may reveal “a range of hitherto little understood local and contextual peace building agencies (...) which renegotiate both the local context and the liberal peace framework, leading to local-liberal hybrid forms of peace” (Richmond 2011:i).

The aim of this article is to examine the potential and limits of such a hybrid approach to advancing peace and political order, taking Somaliland as a case study.² The article in particular engages with the largely uncharted issue of how

² The analysis of the paper is shaped by my four months of fieldwork in Somaliland in 2008. During the fieldwork I was based at the Academy for Peace and Development (APD), as a visiting scholar. APD is a local action research institute driven by Somalis and based in Somaliland’s capital Hargeisa. My colleagues at APD helped me to gain access and arrange interviews, and were of

political legitimacy is constructed or undermined, in the context of post-conflict hybrid political orders.³

So far post-colonial scholarship and critiques of liberal state and peace building have demonstrated conceptual appreciation and awareness of hybridity, and of the significance of ‘everyday’ practices and approaches to peace, but have shown limited empirical application of these concepts (Roberts 2011).⁴ This article contributes to an empirical anchoring of the concepts of hybridity and the ‘everyday’ through the case study of Somaliland, and specifically through the exploration of issues of legitimacy. It also demonstrates how this speaks, more broadly, to the liberal peace critique and post-colonial appeals for new approaches to peace and political order that may succeed better in harnessing domestic legitimacy.

great help for my research in terms of discussing ideas and insights. The fieldwork comprised a number of key-informant interviews (individual interviews and focus group discussions), as well as participation observation and exploration of the challenges and achievements of ongoing local initiatives aimed at promoting complementary relations between different structures of governance and authority. Due to security precautions and limited funds the fieldwork was conducted only in the region of Woqooyi Galbeed/Maroodi Jeex, and mostly took place in the capital city of Hargeisa. Somalis from other regions and from the rural areas are therefore not represented in my interview sample. Moreover, the fact that I do not speak Somali was a limitation in the interview situations. As a former British protectorate and given a large diaspora-population many Somalilanders speak English. During interviews Somali colleagues, or friends/acquaintances of the interviewees, provided translation when necessary.

³ In dominant state and peace building discourse, domestic political legitimacy has largely been seen as secondary to the issue of state capacity or, perhaps more precisely, as something that would automatically follow from state capacities and effectiveness through, for instance provision of services and public goods. This negates the highly political nature of state formation. Issues of legitimacy are directly linked to questions of power and authority, and hence are intrinsically political. Bringing legitimacy to the forefront therefore means to acknowledge the political character of state formation.

⁴ The small number of existing empirical analyses of hybridity have, in turn, tended to focus on description of local order, while not engaging with broader post colonial discourses and the liberal peace critiques.

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The article first introduces the concepts of hybridity and the ‘everyday’. It discusses how these concepts have been applied and developed within post-colonial theory and liberal peace critiques. This provides for the theoretical footing and contextualization of the case study.

Drawing on my fieldwork in Somaliland, the subsequent sections focus on the developments in Somaliland from 1991 to the present. These sections examine how hybrid governance and government arrangements were constructed, and how they developed and transformed in the context of very low international intervention. The article demonstrates how the coupling of state authority, customary leadership and everyday practices of self-securing helped to legitimise and strengthen political order in Somaliland. It also attends to a number of tensions that have occurred as a result of such hybridization between different sources of legitimate authority.

This case study analysis represents legitimacy as an *issue* that entails ongoing contestations and adaptation between different forms of authority, rather than a *status* or a resource of state institutions that can be achieved simply through capacity building and elections (see also Roberts 2011). The concept of hybridity in this context helps to emphasize the significance of political process for crafting and maintaining political order.

Following the analysis of the largely unplanned process of internal hybridization of state authority and customary authority in Somaliland, the article proceeds to discuss how international actors are drawn into dynamics of hybridization.

Through an examination of a specific international-local initiative of peace dialogues and community policing in Somaliland, the article discusses possibilities for deliberately ‘facilitating’ and building upon hybridity – understood as positive mutual accommodation between different forms of (state and ‘non state’) legitimate authority and everyday agency – to advance local peace and security provisions, in the context of international intervention.

Hybridity and ‘The Everyday’

Hybridity, and the significance of everyday life has long been the topic of anthropological and sociological research, but has only recently started to inform analysis of peace and state building interventions in post conflict settings (DIIS 2010; Mac Ginty 2010).

An emerging body of scholarship on hybridity in the context of peace and state building addresses a number of key issues and lines of critique of the liberal peace, and also provides an outlook on possible new pathways for peace building support. One strand of analysis within this body of scholarship focuses primarily on the internal dynamics of ordering in post-conflict settings, in particular the coexistence and interaction of state institutions and a multiplicity of ‘non-state’ actors and sources of legitimacy (see in particular Boege et al. 2009a, 2009b; Clements et al. 2007; Kraushaar and Lambach 2009). Another strand directs more attention to how external international donors and agendas interact, contest and merge with local actors and dynamics of ordering (see in particular Richmond 2010, 2011). These two strands of literature on hybridity overlap and supplement each other. They coalesce in a critical rethink of both the nature of post-conflict political orders and the role of international intervention in these contexts (see also Darby 2009; Mac Ginty 2010).

The concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ has been proposed as part of the critique of the label of ‘fragile state’ (Clements et al. 2007 – for later elaborations of the concept see Boege et al. 2009a, 2009b; Brown et al. 2010; Kraushaar and Lambach 2009). The concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ focuses on the nature of political ordering within post-conflict settings. It strives to move beyond definition through negation (non state, failed, illiberal etc) – that is, definitions that point to what is ‘lacking’. Instead the concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ offers a starting point for comprehending the ‘existing’ – that is, the empirical, formative, processes behind political community within these so-called fragile settings. Boege et al. point out that “hybrid political orders is not an ‘ambition’”, not a goal to be reached and not a better alternative to the rational legal state model. Rather, they argue, “it is *what is the case* in many so-called fragile states and situations” (Boege et al. 2009c: 88).

In ‘hybrid political orders’ diverse and competing authority structures, sets of rules, logics of behaviour and claims to power co-exist, overlap, interact and intertwine. They combine elements of introduced western models of governance and elements stemming from local indigenous traditions of governance and politics, with further influences exerted by the forces of globalisation and related societal re-making or fragmentation (for example ethnic, tribal, religious) (Boege et al. 2009b: 24).

Concepts associated with the theme of ‘fragility’, such as informalization, clientelism, and neopatrimonialism also entail forms of hybridity, in terms of the merging of different spheres and governance logics. Yet, these phenomena are still

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evaluated against the yardstick of the formal ‘ideal type’ state. Recent analyses of hybridity in the context of peace and governance building seek to move beyond these juxtapositions so fundamental to political science, and instead make the blending of these spheres the explicit focus.⁵ These accounts acknowledge that the coexistence of multiple structures of governance and authorities often imply contradicting logics and clashes. They flag, however, the need to also account for the more constructive features of socio-political arrangements beyond (or in interaction with) the state (Boege et al. 2009a, 2009b; Brown et al. 2010; Richmond 2010, 2011; Clements et al. 2007; Mac Ginty 2010). Mac Ginty argues there is a need for reassessing the negative interpretations of hybridity within International Relations theory (IR) and prevailing policy discourse to also note “the creative energies that hybridity often produces as well as the pacific and enduring results it produces” (Mac Ginty 2010: 407). Similarly, Boege et al. make the case that some structures of non-state power and customary authority can be viewed as “assets and sources of solutions that can be drawn on in order to forge constructive relationships between communities and governments” (Boege et al. 2009a: 20).

Such more encouraging traits of hybridity – and of political processes that allow for plurality – are displayed in the historical developments of political order in Somaliland, and also shape a number of experiences of political community elsewhere in Africa, and other regions in the Global South (see for example Boege 2008; Nyanmjoh 2004; Sawyer 2004).

The responsiveness to communal and indigenous approaches to peace and political community gets further articulated in the concept of the ‘everyday’ –a concept that has increasingly been taken up in a post-colonial analyses of peace and state building, and specifically in literature on hybridity (Richmond 2010, 2011; Darby 2009; Roberts 2011). The concept of the everyday dates back to Lefebvre (1971) and de Certeau’s analyses (1984) of how everyday life is maintained by the numerous socially sanctioned practices and strategies people pursue and generate, in order to manage and secure their existence, and to appropriate social space (see

⁵ In doing so, they stand on the shoulders of a number of scholars and concepts which have previously discussed the idea of ‘hybridity’. These include for example: Bayart’s ‘Politics of the Belly’ (1989); Homi Bhabha’s ‘in-between space’ (Bhabha 1995) and the argument that hybridity may also reproduce external domination; Migdal’s notion of ‘State in Society’ (Migdal 1998) and Cleaver’s concept of ‘Institutional Bricolage’ (Cleaver 2002).

also Roberts 2011). In contemporary post-conflict settings concrete mechanisms of the everyday include, for example, small-scale patron-client exchanges, subsistence economies, family and kin protection networks, as well as customary law and authority that provide for social order, justice and security. Indeed, in many cases, including Somaliland, customary law and kinship relations, rather than state institutions, are the primary sources of local security and protection. These everyday mechanisms and practices represents what Darby (2009) defines strategies of ‘self-securing’. Such practices are typically hidden to, and marginalized by, prevailing peace and state building discourse, which operates with a state based understanding of security. This lack of attention to hybridity (and the negative perceptions of hybridity) and to practices and priorities that derive from ‘everyday life’ is according to Roberts (2011) and Darby (2009) central to “the lack of local legitimacy that stigmatizes interventions” (Roberts 2011: 410; see also Darby 2009 and Boege et al. 2009a).

While hybridity and the everyday are left out of prevailing international intervention strategies, peace and order as ideas and as practice are, as noted by Mac Ginty (2010: 398), in reality “hybridized from the outset”. They are formed through accommodation, cooperation, imposition and resistance in the historical encounters of Western and European rulers with people and communities in the Global South. A central analytical challenge is to dissect the various influences and modalities (local as well as international) that construct hybrid forms of peace, and seek to locate “the sources and direction of power and agency” (Mac Ginty 2010: 407; see also Richmond 2011).

While remaining apprehensive of the enormous power-imbalances shaping the encounters, recent post-colonial scholarship also draws attention to ‘sites of resistance’ in which “liberal and neoliberal forms of sovereignty and discursive power are mimicked, resisted and ultimately hybridised (...) in everyday contexts” (Richmond forthcoming: 18). Indeed, in conflict and post-conflict settings, including the Somali context, hybridity, resistance, local agency and ability to embark on alternative strategies often entail a significant moderation – or even undermining – of the practice, idea and legitimacy of liberal state and peace building (Richmond 2011). Through this analytical lens –which in particular has been employed in Richmond’s liberal peace critique (2010, 2011, forthcoming) – the concept of the ‘everyday’ transcends description of the ‘local’ (as distinct territorially bound places) and instead refers to empirical, but not territorially fixed, relational sites of contestation, repulsion, reshaping and accommodation between international, liberal, state-based agendas and local agencies, customs and practices.

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The accounts of hybridity and the everyday challenge the binary categories of ‘non-Western local order’ *versus* ‘Western liberal order’ that underpin prevailing Western academic and policy discourses. Notions of the ‘local’, ‘informal’, ‘non-state’, ‘traditional’ and ‘communal’ are all defined in terms of their difference and separation from the IR notions of ‘state’, ‘formal’ procedures, ‘liberal rule’ and ‘liberal citizenship’ (Baker 2010). Such understandings of ‘difference’ may be partly associated with a (commendable) recognition that transplanting liberal and rational-legal political institutions turned out not to work as smoothly as suggested by past optimistic democratization scenarios. Yet at the same time the drawing of strict boundaries between a ‘local sphere’ and a ‘Western-liberal sphere’, has also been instrumental in casting the ‘local’ as an undesirably ‘divergent’ and ‘fragile’ sphere, which can and should be managed by the Western-Liberal sphere.

Accounts of how post-colonial re-ordering in Africa – illustrated for example by the case of Somaliland – ‘speaks back’ to, and in some aspects overlaps and interact with, Western thought and practice may contribute to the reinsertion of Africa and of the ‘local’ into IR and policy discourses (Smith 2012).

A final observation is to note the revisionist aspirations (i.e. the aspiration to reform prevailing peace and state building support) in the literature on hybrid and ‘everyday’ peace and political order. While the ‘everyday’ represents a lens rather than an approach, and while ‘hybrid political orders’ may not be an ‘ambition’, the emphasis on the positive aspects of hybridity and plurality, and on the importance of ‘everyday’ strategies and interactions (as they play out locally, as well as in the ‘local-international’ encounters) does indicate a more prescriptive or revisionist undercurrent of the accounts discussed here. This is tied in with the post-colonial critique of the “diminution of the local in contemporary peacebuilding” and the “ontological narrowness” of the liberal peace (Roberts 2011: 410). The accounts on hybridity and the everyday, in other words, call for approaches to peace and governance that can better engage with the complexity and emergent nature of political community and political legitimacy, instead of relying on a projected ideal as the yardstick of ‘what ought to be’.

Drawing on this conceptual groundwork, the remainder of the article examines the empirical manifestations of hybridity in Somaliland, the issue of legitimacy and political process in this context, and the possibilities for international actors to constructively engage with ‘everyday’ strategies of self-securing and hybrid conflict management to advance locally supported peace and security

arrangements.⁶

Redefining the Pillars of Political Order in Somaliland

The disintegration of the central Somali state was followed by a wave of decentralized reconstruction of governance and government, which resulted in the emergence of sub-national political orders, of which Somaliland has proven particularly stable and peaceful. Somaliland declared independence in 1991, but has not been recognized by any other state or international organisation.⁷

The socio-political environment characterizing the Somaliland context immediately before the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, and in the aftermath of this state collapse, was an environment that necessitated and facilitated heterogeneous processes of bargaining, accommodation and cooperation between a range of different actors (Bradbury 2008; Renders and Terlinden 2010).

During the struggle against Siad Barre in the late 1980s a close cooperation developed between the northern customary leadership of the Isaaq-clan family, the largest clan-family in Somaliland, and the regionally based resistance force, the Somali National Movement (SNM). The SNM did not operate as a distinct guerrilla front, but rather as “an armed expression of the Isaaq people” (Prunier 1994: 62). This embeddedness of the SNM within the Isaaq-communities as well as the lack of any substantial external funding of the movement led it to rely upon customary authorities. The latter proved particularly invaluable as driving forces behind the mobilisation of support for the resistance amongst the northern Isaaq communities in general and amongst the business community and Diaspora in particular. In 1988 a council of customary authorities, a *Guurti*, was established in

⁶ The article follows what Darby calls “a more hands on approach to the political in the post-colonial tradition” (Darby 2009: 700). There is a delicate balance between, on the one hand, drawing attention to the potentials and possibilities of international agencies deliberately and constructively engaging with hybridity (as a political process) and with the everyday (see Darby 2009) and, on the other hand, avoiding the risk of (mis)representing hybrid political orders as yet another ready made ‘recipe’ for implementation of order and peace.

⁷ It claims its borders with reference to the territory of the former British Somaliland protectorate

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order to make the mobilisation of resistance more effective and coordinated.⁸ The nature of the northern ‘resistance alliances’ that developed, and the coordinating role of the customary authorities in this development, gave them substantial control over the SNM’s economic resources and its politics (Jhazbhay 2009; Reno 2003; Bradbury 2008; Prunier 1994). Shortly after the defeat of Barre, Somaliland unilaterally declared independence, and the SNM formed the first Somaliland administration. This new administration was faced with the task of constructing a government from scratch, with very few resources, and minimal external support. Moreover, as noted by a former general in the SNM: “SNM was a liberation movement, not a political party. We had not prepared to make up a government” (Interview, 02.05.08 Hargeisa). In this context the defensive measures employed by local businessmen, traditional leaders and members of the Diaspora during the exploitative rule of Barre, proved important as tools for organizing and strengthening Somaliland’s relations with the domestic productive groups and strong holders, as well as with the global economy and Somalis outside Somalia’s borders. This strategy of exercising political authority through de-centralized ‘space-spanning networks’ (Agnew 2005) differ significantly from formulas that privilege clear distinctions between public and private activity and centralized bureaucracy (Reno 2003).

Within the domestic realm it soon became clear that local grievances, if left unaddressed, would have spill-over effects strong enough to undermine the broader project of re-establishing central institutions and governance structures (Bradbury 2008; WSP 2005). Peace and stability thus became the main objective from the early years of self-declared independence. Application of customary conflict resolution mechanisms became the means to reach this objective. On this backdrop the customary authorities in general, and the *Guurti* in particular, remained highly influential. They were now driving forces behind the peace and reconciliation process.

The regional clans, represented by customary authorities gathered in a series of local negotiations across the region. The achievements of these local processes paved the way for a number of huge Somaliland-wide clan conferences where broad peace agreements were reached and where the institutional framework for a new political order was created. The importance of controlling violence and reaching consensus at the local level as a precondition for reaching power-sharing

⁸ The concept of *Guurti* originally refers to the highest political council of titled as well as non-titled elders in pastoral Somali society (Jhazbhay 2009).

agreements at the national level was emphasized by several of my interviewees.⁹ By a Somali political analyst it was summed up as follows:

Every clan had to accept the rebirth of Somaliland, and to accept Somaliland they had to deal with the ‘next door’ clan, to address all the grievances and to exchange *xeer*.¹⁰ Only then could we start to agree on how to build a state. The local and regional conferences were handling conflicts of certain areas, and these conflicts would otherwise have destabilized the whole situation” (interview, Hargeisa, 17.04.08).

By pursuing a ‘thin’ government with only a minimum of authority and functions, while prioritizing local processes of reconciliation driven by customary authorities, the process of state formation was not turned into a zero-sum conflict-producing exercise (Bradbury 2008).

A huge clan-conference in the city of Boroma in 1993 was particularly noteworthy in terms of giving institutional substance to Somaliland’s political order. The communities of Somaliland largely financed the conference. It lasted for approximately four months and an estimated 2000 people attended, including 150 voting delegates of customary authorities (Bradbury 2008).

The most important outcomes were:

- The adoption of a national charter defining a hybrid system of governance which formally institutionalized the 82-member *Guurti* council of clan elders in the upper house of parliament¹¹;

⁹ The term ‘national’ here refers to Somaliland’s de facto (albeit not de jure) statehood.

¹⁰ *Xeer* is the Somali customary law consisting of unwritten ‘social contracts’ between the different clans.

¹¹ At a peace conference in Sheikh in 1992 the *Guurti* settled a large-scale intra-Isaaq conflict concerning the port of Berbera. This port is an important source of tax revenues. The mediation efforts were led mainly by traditional authorities from the Gadabursi clan, since they were perceived as a neutral third party by the combating Isaaq subclans. The *Guurti* was at this conference expanded from being mainly Isaaq-based, to incorporating all northern clans. It was this more inclusive national *Guurti* council which was formalized as part of the system of governance

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- The nomination of a lower house of parliament, based on clan representation;
- The formulation and adoption of a peace charter, which “elaborated a code of conduct for the people of Somaliland, in accordance with their traditions and Islamic values” (Bradbury 2008: 98). The charter formulated the responsibilities of the elders for settling conflicts and spearheading the demobilisation process. It also required all communities to make an oath to refrain from attacking any other clans. Altogether, the charter thus provided a ‘national xeer’, aimed at restoring the relationships among the northern clans and also providing the foundation for law and order (Menkhaus 2000; Bradbury 2008).
- The nomination of a new president, Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal, and vice-president Daahir Rayaale Kahiin (Menkhaus 2000; WSP 2005; Bradbury 2008).

As Menkhaus notes: “By any standard, this was an impressive accomplishment for a traditional peacemaking mechanism facing entirely new types of political challenges” (Menkhaus 2000: 189).

Institutionalizing a source of locally respected representational authority, the *Guurti*, was a way to redefine and legitimize the pillars of a new political order. It also broke with the form of centralized illegitimate power, which had constituted the state under the rule of Siad Barre. Moreover, whereas Barre had prohibited ‘tribalism’, the Somaliland system of governance, known as the *beel*-system (clan-based system), which was agreed upon at the Boroma conference, was based on the recognition of kinship as the basic mechanism for organizing social relations. Under the *beel* system both the *Guurti* and the House of Representatives were based on the principle that distribution of political seats should balance the centre with the periphery (Battera 2004) – i.e. secure national representation of all the northern clans.

After a more stable peace was finally established in the late half of the 1990s new political aspirations started to burgeon. The *beel*-system was taken up to revision. In 1997 a new constitution was drafted, which spelled out the steps for a transition from a clan-based system to a multi-party system (Renders 2006). The proposal of the constitution, to start a transition from the *beel*-system to a restricted multiparty democracy, caused vigorous debate in Somaliland (interview with Somali political

at the Boroma national conference opening in January 1993 (Bradbury 2008).

analyst, Hargeisa, 17.04.08). The *beel-system* proved both legitimate and viable in the early stages of post-conflict transformation. However, the proponents of discarding the *beel-system* argued that the disadvantages were that the system had an inherent risk of encouraging the pursuit of narrow interests along clan lines and thus was less suitable as a framework for developing more ambitious political programmes. Moreover, the necessity of transition also became linked to the pursuit of international legitimacy in the form of recognition.¹² In 2001 the final draft of the new constitution, which explicated a commitment to multi-party politics as well as to an independent Somaliland, was sent to referendum and endorsed.¹³ Accordingly, the political system based on power-sharing along clan-lines was replaced with a system in which the head of state as well as the members of the House of Representatives and of the District Councils are elected through the ballot. Yet, the institution of the *Guurti* remained in place and the seats in this Upper House of Parliament are still distributed on the basis of clan representation. Since the adoption of the constitution Somaliland has completed four rounds of elections: local council elections in 2002, the first presidential election in 2003, parliamentary elections (only for the lower House of Representatives) in 2005 and, after multiple delays (see details next section) presidential election in 2010.

While Somaliland is known, first and foremost, for its relatively successful merging of ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’ institutions it is important to stress the significance of the *processes behind* this particular hybrid order. The legitimacy gains of the Somaliland political order lie with the processes through which this

¹² Somaliland was perceived as having a better chance of becoming formally recognized if it adopted a political system based on multi-party politics (Renders 2006).

¹³ Borrowing from the Nigerian model the constitution allows for a limited (three, in the case of Somaliland) number of official parties (ICG 2006). Although the constitution was endorsed by a significant majority within Somaliland, the referendum was boycotted in parts of the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaaq. Both Somaliland and Puntland lay claim to these regions, which fall within the territory of the former British Somaliland, but are inhabited primarily by the Harti clan, which is affiliated to Puntland. In the period between 1991 and 1998 Somaliland enjoyed significant support in these areas. However, over time many inhabitants in these regions have come to identify more with Puntland and with the commitment to a unified Somalia (Bradbury 2008).

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order emerged from – and became socially validated by – a plurality of existing social forces that represented domestic interests and clashes of interests, rather than from the merging of ‘tradition’ and ‘modern’ institutions as such.

This emphasis on process in relation to hybridity is present in for example Mac Ginty’s (2010: 407) observations on “the creativity and pacific engagement that is often involved in constructing and maintaining a hybrid peace”. This entails, he argues, “continuous processes of conflict management in which different interests and values coalesce, cooperate, conflict, re-coalesce and re-cooperate. Much of this process will be unplanned, and requires individuals and collectives to understand (and, if possible, reach an accommodation) each other’s needs”.

In line with this, I argue, that in Somaliland, the gradual legitimisation of the new political order was enabled exactly because the process was not ‘planned’, managed and sequenced by external actors or by a central state (see also Bradbury 2008). Peace and stability were not established because of the revival of state structures. Rather peace and stability were promoted through extensive local engagement and self-organisation, which became a *precondition* for reaching consensus on the pillars of a common political structure. This reveals how the domestic sphere is constitutive for the development of social and political relations, and hence for legitimacy.

This is particularly significant in the Somali context, on the backdrop of developments in the wider region where top-down attempts to ‘manage’ the domestic sphere and reviving central state institutions has resulted in radical de-legitimisation of external involvement as well as of domestic government representatives.

The integration of customary leadership and government authority was an inventive means of creating bonds between the emerging *de facto* state and a society in which several perceptions of what constitutes legitimate representation and governance co-exist. Yet, as will be indicated in the following section, this integration or hybridity does not per definition *maintain* legitimacy or secure ongoing engagement and participation of local people, which was critical in the formative period of the Somaliland political order.

Current Political Order in Somaliland

The bicameral legislature that alloys the *Guurti*, the clan based upper House of

Elders, to the lower elected House of Representatives is the most explicit example of integrating customary principles with government in Somaliland.

On the one hand, this institutional arrangement was a way of tailor-making political order by promoting what Bellina et al. (2009: 21) refer to as “constructive interaction between diverse sources of legitimacy”. As noted above, this was initially critical in legitimizing the emerging structure of state. On the other hand, the interaction between customary principles and government has not only adapted the structure of government to better match local expectations. It has also gradually reshaped the role and involvement of the members of the *Guurti*, and called into question their basis of legitimacy, as representatives of local communities.¹⁴ In particular, the *Guurti* members’ increasing involvement in shaping national politics has led to accusations that the members are more concerned about upward political loyalties vis-à-vis the executive branch of government than with downward accountability.¹⁵ As noted by a local *aqil*: “It was clear that they were *from* the communities in the beginning. But they lost the link. What they want now is the political position and they have it” (group interview with customary leaders, Hargeisa, 15.04.08).¹⁶

Such public discontent was greatly accentuated when the *Guurti*, without broad public or political consultation, consecutively extended the term of the previous president, and thus postponed the election date. For a period, the *Guurti* became a tool for the government of former president Rayaale to cling onto power and

¹⁴ For an elaborate discussion of how, in the Somali context, the involvement of customary authorities with ‘high’ politics can profoundly change their role and their basis for legitimacy, see Hoehne (2006).

¹⁵ A number of incidents lend credence to this view: During the mid-90s when fighting between the government and the sub-clans of Idagalle and Haber Yunis broke out, the *Guurti*-members failed to negotiate. This can be seen as an early sign that their status as paid members of government compromise their legitimacy and make it difficult for them to mediate between the government and the local communities. More recently, in 2006 the term of the *Guurti* was extended for four years through a presidential decree that was issued without consultation with the House of Representatives (Bradbury 2008). In 2010 legislation was passed which extended both the term of both the *Guurti* and the House of representatives.

¹⁶ The *Aquils* make up the category of traditional authorities most actively and directly involved in the everyday life of local people (Gundel 2006).

conduct increasingly centralist politics.¹⁷ The fact that there is no agreed upon principle on how to select the members for the *Guurti* is another trigger for accusations that the incumbent *Guurti* members do not promote legitimate representation at the government level. The *Guurti* members were originally appointed by their clan at the Boroma conference, but as the older members have died their positions have been passed over without broader consultation. Some seats in the house are thus currently held by individuals who have inherited, rather than been appointed to, their position. This has created widespread popular criticism (WSP 2005; group interview with customary leaders, Hargeisa, 15.04.08; group interview with university graduates, Hargeisa, 09.05.08). This criticism indicates that customary authorities in Somaliland cannot, according to popular perceptions, legitimize their execution of power with reference to inheritance or other historical mechanisms of selection.

My interviewees indicated that the *Guurti*, as an institution, still has a significant role to play in maintaining security and stability. Maintaining the *Guurti* is also important for creating a space for party politics, based on majority vote, to develop further in the rest of the political system. It appears that what is being contested is not the legitimacy of the institution of the *Guurti* in itself, that is, as an institution for securing societal consensus. What is rather being contested is the way in which the *Guurti* for a period became part of a centralist power constellation.

These processes of legitimation and de-legitimation, and negotiated hybridity, illustrate the ‘fluidity’ of hybrid peace, and the dynamic nature of ‘traditional’ institutions (Mac Ginty 2010, see also Richmond 2011). At the same time these developments also indicate how the ability of customary institutions to connect with, and adapt to, state authority may entail a risk of undermining the former if their representative role vis-à-vis their communities are not actively maintained (see also Buur and Kyed 2007; Hoehne 2006).

Local Developments: Security and Justice

The institutionalization of the elders within the *Guurti* is but one way in which

¹⁷ Dahir Rayaal Kahiin served as President Egal’s Vice-President from 1993-2002. When Egal died during a private visit in South Africa in May 2002, Rayaale was in accordance with the constitution, sworn in as Egal’s successor (WSP 2005).

customary leadership is coupled to government in Somaliland. At the local level, especially within the domains of security and justice, the customary system and the Sharia courts are in different ways linked to the institutions and practices of government officials and institutions. While the bulk of everyday criminal cases and disputes are taken care of primarily by the customary system, the police at times assist in undertaking arrests.¹⁸ However the police typically leave the subsequent process of arbitration to the customary authorities. Further, the settlements reached through the customary system are in some cases registered and filed, and thus ‘formalized’, by the formal judges as well as the police (group interview with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 28.03.08; see also Gundel 2006; Menkhaus 2007). This implies new hybrid forms of ‘everyday’ power and practices, different from modern bureaucratic authority, but also different from strictly ‘traditional’ authority.

In larger-scale conflicts the police and the military have a role to play in stopping the immediate fighting, yet the subsequent negotiations and the task of determining a settlement are usually taken care of by the customary authorities (interview with the head of the Burao outpost of Academy for Peace and Development (APD), Hargeisa, 20.03.08).¹⁹ As stated by the head of the Burao outpost of APD: “actors from the government cannot do the negotiations, because they are not neutral” (interview, Hargeisa, 20.03.08).

The sanctions that underlie the customary system are, primarily, those of retaliation and conflict escalation. Government intervention remains a weak deterrent to the continuation of bloodshed. From a security perspective, this is a major reason why ‘modern’ governance is unable to stand alone (see for example Gundel 2006). Moreover, due to lack of resources the codified laws have not been reformed and developed. They are often ill-suited to address some of the contemporary forms of crimes, disputes and interests (interview with Somali professor in law, Hargeisa, 25.04.08; group interview with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 28.03.08). The non-codified customary system has proven highly flexible. This system is together with the Sharia courts, largely perceived as more effective and legitimate than the formal courts (interview with Somali professor in law, Hargeisa, 25.04.08; Gundel 2006).

¹⁸ Estimated 80-90 percentages of all crimes and disputes are handled through the customary system in Somaliland (Gundel 2006).

¹⁹ APD is a local Hargeisa-based action research institute.

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Even local business people often choose to consult the traditional system rather than the formal court system. It is therefore not only 'traditional' forms of conflict, which give the traditional system relevance.

In disputes about issues on which the traditional authorities lack knowledge, such as for instance business or technological matters, they at times call in people with specialized knowledge to clarify details (Gundel 2006). A local *Aqil* explained:

The Aqils are in a position to use the resources, skills and knowledge from the communities. It is easy for us to call in a technical consultant, and therefore the traditional system is often effective also in disputes of a modern character. In fact the name 'traditional' gives a wrong impression. It is simply about using the resources and knowledge we have here (Group interview with traditional leaders, Hargeisa, 15.04.08).

These hybrid, locally crafted, security arrangements in Somaliland reveal alternative approaches to govern and to manage relationships with others. They illustrate how 'self-securing' "challenges hierarchy, centralization, linearity and separation (borders)" and "unsettles the understanding that security is best handled from 'above'" (Darby 2009: 709).

Yet, while challenging prevailing understandings of security and peace, everyday strategies and practices of self-securing, do not per se stand in direct opposition to state practices and state formation. The creative merging of customary practices and state authority in Somaliland does indeed imply a revision of the concept of sovereignty and state monopoly on the use of force (Menkhaus 2006). However, at the same time it has enhanced *de facto* governance capacity and proven rather effective in keeping a high level of internal security. Provisions of security are, in turn, of critical importance for maintaining Somaliland as a functioning *de facto* state, since security is a precondition for the undertaking of several other activities necessary for the consolidation of political order. For example, the delivery of social services, the promotion of local businesses, and even the holding of elections are activities, which are not possible without basic security. In brief, the provision of security is vital for state legitimacy because it enables the very 'production' of state practices, functions and institutions (Bellina et al. 2009). At the same time, enhancing security is not, as shown, necessarily equal to building strong and fully sovereign state institutions. As argued by Menkhaus (2006), if state building is viewed as a means of enhancing governance rather than an exercise of strengthening state capacity for its own sake, then it is possible that

pragmatic forms of ‘shared sovereignty’ can in fact promote the former by bypassing the latter. This challenges conventional state building approaches “which tend to conflate reviving formal state capacity with promotion of governance” (Menkhaus 2006: 11).

Also evident in Somaliland, however, is that when parallel coexistence of institutions (state and non-state) replaces mutually reinforcing interactions this can result in contradictions between the ‘logic’ of the state’s constitutional and legal framework and the ‘logic’ of non-state systems of governance. For example, the application of customary law in some cases violates civil liberties and individual rights that are guaranteed in the constitution. This is because within the customary system collective responsibility is given priority over individual rights and in particular over women’s and minority rights (Hargeisa, 28.03.08; interview with a staff-member of local human rights NGO, Hargeisa, 21.03.08).²⁰

The dynamics of local justice and security thus illustrate that locally driven approaches to governance and security do operate within certain hierarchies and lines of inclusion and exclusion, and it warns against ‘romanticising’ custom (Richmond 2011) or viewing ‘communities’ as coherent collectives that represent all ‘local’ interests equally.

Expectations vis-à-vis the state have increased, and liberal discourses of individual human rights and gender equality have grown stronger within Somaliland. Additionally, the protection of these rights is seen as an important dimension of attaining international legitimacy in the form of recognition. At the same time the customary system continues to fulfil important functions in terms of conflict resolution and security in people’s everyday life, both because it has proven highly adaptable and because kinship remains the basic social structure. Moreover, in many rural communities this system is the only system available. Also important to note, the customary system has not ‘take over’ functions from the state but is historically the main source of security and legitimate authority.

Hence, the context is characterized by delicate dynamics of push and pull between

²⁰ This is moreover linked to an issue of unequal access to justice between the urban areas, where people may choose between different justice systems, and the rural areas, where traditional authorities and religious leaders are the only actors to address disputes (APD 2002).

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principles and practices of custom and tradition, and emerging liberal state institutions and practice. On the one hand, allowing customary authorities to apply the customary law *beyond*, and with no reference to, the constitutional laws can undermine the authority of the state as a protector of rights that are associated with citizenship. On the other hand, in the Somali context, attempting to *enforce* state authority and formal liberal laws upon local institutions, and aiming at replacing 'informal' systems and practices of governance is not only unfeasible due to lack of state enforcement capacities. It could also undermine popular legitimacy of the state. This is because in the Somali context centralized state power has a history of being predatory and unaccountable. Thus, the point is not that one system should 'trump' the other (Clements et al. 2007). Rather, it seems that constructing efficient and legitimate forms of governance will require explicit agreements on 'division of labour' between the different social forces and structures of authority, and developing consensus about procedures that can buttress these agreements. Moreover, and importantly, it will require that local people and communities can participate in and be part of shaping the processes of reaching such agreements.

The following section explores possibilities for international agencies supporting such multi-stakeholder processes, and plural arrangements.

Firstly, however, the section briefly attends to the general environment of international intervention in the Somali context. This provides the background for, secondly, examining alternatives to prevailing practices of intervention.

Local-International Dynamics in the Somali Context

Since 1991 many a high profile, internationally led, reconciliation and state building conference has been commemorated as a diplomatic breakthrough in Somalia, only to fail in the implementation phase. In these processes, state-building templates and standard diplomatic formulas have been "justified on the grounds that traditional Somali assemblies were unwieldy and far too time consuming, often lasting months rather than days or weeks" (Menkhaus 2000: 192). The problems of misconceived international intervention policies that focus narrowly on reviving a central state, and at the same time fail to learn from the successes of de-central community and customary processes of reconstruction, runs through as a recurrent theme in critical analyses of Somalia (see for example Hagmann and Hoehne 2007; Hagmann and Terlinden 2005; Menkhaus 2008; Moe 2012; de Wall 2012).

It has been extensively documented how, during the numerous internationally driven peace and state building conferences and reconstruction efforts, faction leaders and warlords have learned to perfection how to play the diplomatic game of the international community, to in this way gain access to internationally provided resources and ‘state building’ aid without having an actual interest in creating peace and inclusive government and governance (see for example Menkhaus 2000, 2008; Hagmann and Terlinden 2005; Samatar 2007).

The *dual track* strategy, recently announced by the US Department of State (US State Department 2011), indicates a willingness to move beyond an approach of ‘state building’ that engages merely with the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to also provide support to sub-state clan-based actors and semi-autonomous political entities, including Somaliland. Yet, as it stands, the United States launched strategy appears to be mostly driven by a self-serving anti-terror (anti Al Shabaab) incentive, rather than a broader vision of inclusive and representative governance, or security for local communities. Indeed, self-serving politics and double standards are longstanding and endemic not only amongst the Somali political elites but also amongst international actors, especially with regards to counter-terrorism. Menkhaus (2008: 189-90), for example, shows how Ethiopia and the United States, in particular, have publicly supported TFG, while simultaneously and covertly “empowering unaccountable and predatory local security forces” as part of ‘counterterrorism’ strategies.

In brief, international actors, allegedly in pursuit of state building, are part of a complex process of cooptation, subversion and alliance-making with a variety of local strongmen, elites and self-appointed ‘clan representatives’. This generates its own forms of unintended local-international hybridity, which unfortunately seem to contribute more to the marginalization of the general population than to accountable governance and government. Boundaries of who are included and who are excluded in these processes tend to be shaped by geo-political interest, local-international power constellations and uncritical international insistence on establishing/supporting a central government, rather than by any common idea of legitimate political order or vision of how to bring on board the non-elite population and communities in reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. Turning to the specific case of Somaliland, the *de facto* state’s relative stability has encouraged pragmatic inventiveness on the part of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), to pursue a development strategy that directly benefits Somaliland’s process of state formation. The United Nations sticks to its position of non-recognition but engages with Somaliland by channelling aid and resources to the region by targeting funds for ‘North-western Somalia’.

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The United Nations launched 'Joint Program on Local Governance' (JPLG) specifically aims at supporting the development of representative and legitimate local governance (United Nations 2011). The support focuses on building technical and administrative capacities of the district councils. Such support is important for further consolidating local governance. Yet the program (along with similar international large scale programmes of governance support) suffers from insufficient participation of the Somaliland communities and their leaders in setting governance priorities, and from lack of attempts to strengthen and maintain linkages between local state institutions and existing traditional community institutions (see Gundel 2008).²¹

While Somaliland is the only region in Somalia that has elected district authorities in most districts, recent local research has shown that a majority of people and communities in Somaliland feel increasingly disconnected from these authorities and institutions, and have limited faith in their accountability (Yusuf and Bradbury 2011).

On this backdrop, and as argued by Gundel (2008: 1), approaches aimed at supporting local governance must reconsider the understanding of 'decentralisation' in the Somali context. There is a need for an engagement with a "*decentral* process of building governance institutions from bottom-up, and not a devolution or deconcentration of power from a government centre".

Previous developments in Somaliland (described in the first sections of this article) do lend credence to these points: they reveal how communities and the customary sphere are critical sites for peace and governance agency; how there is a direct link between peaceful relations on community level and possibilities for wider reconstruction; and; how actively building on plurality and combining customary and introduced democratic institutions can give rise to new types of viable governance frameworks.

Examples of international programs aiding such processes, and providing support

²¹ This view was confirmed by interviews conducted during my recent, on-going, PhD field research. Interview with Abdullahi Mohammed Odowa, Director of Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Hargeisa University, Nov 2011. Interview with Dr. Adan Abokor, Somali political analyst, Oct 2011. Interview with Joakim Gundel, independent consultant and policy analyst, KATUNI, Nov 2011.

to already existing linkages between different forms of authority, so as to advance locally supported and legitimate governance, are scarce. They do exist, however, and some have been documented. They include for example: the participatory action research project on community peace building and development in Daraweyne (Somaliland), documented in the field guide ‘Nabad iyo Caano’ (Ford et al. 2002); Action Aid’s program for supporting community peace building and the Council of Elders in Sanaag (Yusuf 2007); the peace and justice partnership between Somaliland traditional leaders and the Danish Refugee Council (Moe and Vargas Simojoki 2011).²²

These initiatives indicate possibilities for ‘facilitated hybridity’ –i.e. approaches that conscientiously and deliberately facilitates and supports positive interaction and accommodation between different bases of locally legitimate authority and ‘everyday’ agency, to promote stronger and more inclusive governance.

The remainder of this section discusses the peace and justice project initiated by local traditional leaders from the Toghdeer region in Somaliland, in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council, an international NGO.

Possibilities for Supporting Positive Hybridity

In 2003 a small group of traditional leaders in the Toghdeer region of Somaliland got together and discussed their concern over increasing insecurity and clan based revenge killings. They decided to approach the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to ask for support in starting dialogues and experience sharing amongst the traditional leaders from the different regions, and amongst customary actors and security providers from the state (police officers, judges and representatives from the ministries of interior and justice). These traditional leaders were of the opinion that improved cooperation and stronger joint efforts between the different justice and security providers were necessary in order to deal with this increasing insecurity (group interview with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 15.04.08).

Recognizing the significance of the traditional system as the key system for

²² The publication by Ford et al. (2002) proposes a practical approach to community driven peace and development in the Somali context. It could readily provide concrete guidance and inspiration for international agencies seeking to substantiate their proposed commitments to participatory approaches.

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conflict resolution, and its role in the interface of state security and justice provisions and traditional law, the DRC agreed on supporting the initiative.²³ The DRC in addition took the opportunity to bring up the idea that the stake holders participating in the dialogues would not only to attend to issues of security and peace building, but also to the related issues of access to justice –and specifically the issue of co-existence of the three different justice systems (traditional law, state law and Sharia).

An accommodation between local and international priorities thus came to shape the aims and ‘direction’ of the project.

A few examples of outcomes from these ongoing dialogues are: the establishment of a mechanism to hand over offenders of serious crime – in particular intentional murder and rape – to the state authorities, instead of offering clan protection; commitments on the part of customary authorities to ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as Internally Displaced People and refugees, into the system of clan protection, and; the establishment of local ‘Action Groups’ (Somaliland’s Traditional Leaders’ Declaration 2006; Justiniani 2004; personal communication with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 30.03.08). The latter groups were a follow-up on the work towards augmenting the harmonization of the different legal systems in the three regions of Maroodi Jeex, Togdheer and Sanaag (Somaliland’s Traditional Leaders’ Declaration 2006; personal communication with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 30.03.08). The Danish Refugee Council’s involvement in these projects took the form of facilitation of dialogues and support to the creation of small-scale networks between community actors and leaders and the local state officials. It also included support and funding for the logistics of the dialogue meetings (such as transportation, food, and planning) (DRC 2006a; Justiniani 2004; Personal communication with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 30.03.08). The dialogue and network-oriented approach allowed the Danish Refugee Council to support the flexibility, adaptability and hybridity, which have been key strengths in Somaliland’s own pathway to reconstruction and peace.

A similar type of support was also provided in a number of community-based policing projects in the cities of Burao and Hargeisa, which were born out of the broader dialogue initiative.

²³ For an introduction to the underlying strategy of the DRC program supporting the traditional leaders in Somaliland and Puntland, see Joakim Gundel 2006.

These community-policing projects serve as remarkable examples of negotiations between a range of actors. One result has been constructive governance-alliances between government representatives and local communities (DRC 2006b). The projects have also helped enhance security and address the mutual mistrust between citizens and the state police, a mistrust rooted in years of predatory state police during the rule of Siad Barre. The community policing projects were economically assisted by local business people and spearheaded by local customary authorities who ‘mediated’ relations between the police and the local communities. They helped in reaching agreements of ‘joint’ patrolling and information sharing and supported the establishment of community policing committees (group interview with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 15.04.08.; DRC 2006b). This way of enhancing security and rule of law illustrates the close relation between the dimensions of capacity and legitimacy. One of the *Aquils* behind the community policing initiative explained to me that local mistrust, and the corresponding non-cooperative attitudes, towards the state police, had significantly reduced the police officers’ capacity to guard the safety of the communities. Therefore in order for the police to be of any value for local people “attitudes and perceptions had to change. People had to understand that this police is from and for the communities. It is not a force” (group interview with customary authorities, Hargeisa, 15.04.08).

This particular example indicates that while a state that builds on non-state providers of security and stability may appear weak, institutionally as well as in terms of its enforcement capacities, “this very weakness may become a strength as the State gains legitimacy in the eyes of people because it does not attempt to impose its authority on local institutions” (Boege et al. 2009a: 20).

The example also illustrates ‘hybridity’ in the interface of local custom and international discourse. It indicates that hybridity can be deliberate, inclusive and responsive to community priorities, as opposed to the dynamics of local-international interactions that prevail in the South (briefly discussed above).

The peace and justice project built on mechanisms that are ‘cultural intuitive’ (Mac Ginty 2010), yet at the same time it was shaped by international support and input, and liberal notions of human rights and human security. Such hybrid approaches – drawing on multiple sources of ordering and legitimate authority – entails an adaptation and renegotiation of international discourse on security. They offer alternatives to the prevailing state-based (formal, legal, institutional) donor approaches to supporting peace, stability and justice. They do so by facilitating spaces for dialogue, supporting linkages between actors, and by building upon –

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rather than seeking to overcome – the diversity of socially sanctioned practices, including local people’s everyday strategies of self-securing. In this context, liberal and international norms are revealed as facets of the ‘everyday’ diversity, rather than as universal positions located outside this diversity. This indicates how “‘the everyday’ may represent an opportunity to refocus peacebuilding in ways that address the lacunae in legitimacy” (Roberts 2011: 414).

Concluding Thoughts

The emergence and manifestation of a hybrid political order in Somaliland defies the modernist position that suggests an ‘evolutionary’ development from ‘tradition’ to ‘modernity’. It also illustrates that the ‘crisis of African statehood’ is not merely a matter of a breakdown of old strategies of state control, and subsequent ‘fragility’ or ‘failure’ of political order, but also implies re-makings of order, beyond – but not necessarily in direct opposition to – the established Westphalian norm.

As for the issue of political legitimacy, Somaliland challenges the expediency of ideal-types of ‘traditional’ and ‘rational legal/liberal’ legitimate authority, as well as the notion of these types as inherently distinct and ‘different’. Instead, the Somaliland case of hybridity re-casts these types as sources that contribute to wider processes of legitimisation and de-legitimisation of political order. The case indicates that it is not the quality of any *one* source of legitimacy that in and of itself provides a sustainable basis for political institutions and order, but rather a web of connected sources of legitimacy. Developments in Somaliland moreover illustrates that creating and maintaining such a ‘web’ requires a high degree of flexibility and pragmatism, not least because local expectations and perceptions of what constitutes legitimate and efficient governance are in flux. This resonates with Mac Ginty’s (2010) point that hybridity and hybridization as an on-going, horizontal process that allows for negotiation, accommodation and contestation over diversity (i.e. of norms and beliefs and sources of authority) is worth embracing, as it can offer local acceptance and thus sustainability of peace. “Policy statements by many states and international institutions assert that peace is a ‘strategic’ goal. Yet, the evidence of the hybrid nature of the peace that prevails in many societies suggests that pragmatism rather than strategy plays a significant role in pacific outcomes” (Mac Ginty 2010:408).

It is noteworthy that the complex processes of negotiating peace and political order in Somaliland were not managed and sequenced by external agencies and agendas,

but instead were allowed to emerge from within. This is a reminder that “‘What works’ sometimes works because of lack of international engagement” (DIIS 2010), or because of the reshaping or selective re-appropriation of prevailing peace building frameworks and introduced colonial models of peace and order. This also testifies to a “tense relationship between ‘constructive engagement’ with the old order and ‘constructive disengagement from it’” (Cornelissen et al. 2012: 14).

Considering the issue of international intervention, the wider Somali context displays how local-international interactions and hybridity can take on complex dynamics in which international agendas are subverted and mimicked, in ways that draws energy and engagement away from common solutions and community priorities.

Yet, as illustrated with the example of peace dialogues and community policing projects, international donors and NGOs can potentially contribute to ‘facilitating’ constructive hybridity – in terms of supporting contestation and positive mutual accommodation between different socially sanctioned norms and sources of legitimate authority. These alternative NGO discourses may be part of re-focusing the practice and concept of peace support.

A refocus along these lines presents the challenge of creating spaces for working *with*, rather than *on*, clashes of interests and claims to legitimacy. It also entails deliberate engagement with local ‘everyday’ mechanisms and priorities in post-conflict settings, and explorations of possibilities for connecting complementary practices related to agency, self-determination, participation, security and social support networks. As noted by Richmond: “this everyday is not a benign space, but a tense episteme requiring understanding and translation (not mapping, explaining or essentialising)” (Richmond 2010: 690).

Analysis of such hybrid approaches to peace and political ordering may enable a reinsertion of ‘the local’ into IR and policy discourses. This would contest the liberal claim to universalism, and its search for state based unity. However, it would not entail a rejection of liberal principles and state practice per se – but rather disclose them as part of a multiplicity of sources of legitimacy within the everyday of political ordering. Notions of hybridity and the everyday aid such move beyond the primacy of *either* ‘the local and communitarian’ *or* the ‘liberal and state based’. Questioning the “apparent naturalness” of this dichotomy, through the analysis of empirical experiences of hybrid and ‘everyday’ peace, does not erase differences but “shift them away from the zone of timeless oppositions” (Brown 2009: 80) into that of practical political issue.

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