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Capital in the Borderlands: Economies of Power in an Ethiopian Frontier City

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M.A., Anthropology, Emory University, 2017
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An abstract of
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James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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**Abstract**

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By Daniel K. Thompson

In 2010, officials from Ethiopia's Somali Regional State (SRS) began organizing meetings with diaspora Somalis in Minneapolis, London, Dubai, Melbourne, and other world cities. They asked "the diaspora" (qurba joogta) to stop supporting a decades-long secessionist rebellion against Ethiopia and instead to redirect their finances towards investment in the war-torn region. By 2013, diaspora returnees were flocking to SRS's capital city, Jigjiga. They brought with them business plans and foreign connections, ready to remake what one returnee called the "way-behind little town" into a globally-connected city. Based on 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Jigjiga as well as participant-observation among Somalis in Atlanta, this dissertation examines the political and economic transformations surrounding diaspora return and "post-conflict" reconstruction in the Ethiopia-Somalia borderlands. The analysis contests the category of return migration as an isolatable phenomenon, showing the ways in which Ethiopian Somalis have dealt with uncertainty through constructing multiple forms of obligation and dependence that span a transnational context fraught with wealth and power inequalities. I demonstrate how Jigjiga has become an increasingly central site in a transnational web of socio-economic relations through political realignments, investment incentives, and new modes of commanding social activity—power created in large part by new practices of governance over Ethiopia's borders and urban space. The work focuses on businesspeople's understandings of, and responses to, new modes of governance and intensifying claims for redistribution as they navigate new terrains of taxation, trade regulation, and the governance of mobility. Their perspectives offer fresh insights on the ethical relevance of international inequality and the commensurability of money, goods, and relationships that move across a transnational landscape of deepening disparities in wealth and mobility.

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*In Jigjiga*

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# Chapter 1

# Introduction: Cities, Borders, and Economies of Power

"They want it like New York here—really tall buildings," reflects Yakob. "But we don't have the power! The people don't have the capital."[1] Residents sometimes refer to Jigjiga, the capital city of Ethiopia's Somali Regional State (Somali Region or SRS), as "the New York" of Somali Region. The hotels and office buildings rising from the semi-arid landscape at the foot of Ethiopia's eastern highlands reflect Jigjiga's regional centrality: it is a hub of trade, finance, and political power. It is by far the largest city in Somali Region and has for a century served as a node connecting the regional economy to more globalized circuits. In the past decade it has drawn into its orbit a much broader web of connections, including investments by diaspora Somalis from North America, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere, and expanded trade connections with places like Dubai, Mumbai, and Guangzhou. In this work I focus on how Somali businesspeople, both diaspora investors and local traders, mobilize their wealth, relationships, and political power to carve out a space of life in Ethiopia's historically war-torn eastern borderlands.

When it was named the regional capital in 1995, soon after the ratification of Ethiopia's new federal constitution, the city began to expand. Already explosive growth accelerated after 2010 as Somalis from abroad—"the diaspora" (*qurba joogta*)—poured funds from North America and Europe into the historically marginalized region. For many businesspeople, both diaspora returnees and local capitalists, the choice makes sense. Shafi is a local businessman who works together with family members abroad on investment projects in Jigjiga. He reflects: "I'm an African man. So I would never say I'll invest in Europe or America, because I don't have that capital. And so basically I'd be choosing within Africa."[2] Yet the choice of relatively wealthy Somalis to invest in Jigjiga is, from another standpoint, surprising. Some investors are from Jigjiga. However, most had never even been to the city before they came in the past decade to look at investment opportunities. Some were not even from Ethiopia. Almost all of them considered the region a political minefield, the regional government a dictatorship. All were well aware that secessionist insurgency

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[1] Yakob, audio-recorded interview, 12/3/2017. Note: All names of informants in text are pseudonyms.
[2] Shafi, audio-recorded interview, 5/31/2018

remained a threat. This dissertation is about these choices of investment in transnational context, the mobility of people and wealth in today's global economy, and how surprising conjunctures of money and people have come to concentrate in a secondary city in the Horn of Africa. It is above all about strategies for dealing with uncertainty through investing, saving, sharing, and creating multiple forms of obligation and dependence across spatial and social domains.

In analyzing how Somalis conceptualize their investments in Jigjiga, I will argue that Somali business-people's decisions to invest in Ethiopia stem from a variety of motivations that are not easily boiled down to profit maximization or monetary return on one hand, or to a natural desire to return to the "homeland" on the other. Their investments are multifaceted, involving the conversion of money into political connections and relationships, mobility into trade opportunities, and relationships into forms of stability and predictability stretching beyond economic resources or affective ties to a country of origin. Furthermore, I seek to show how investments in Jigjiga require the careful management of relationships that ensure the protection of wealth and property: investors negotiate the demands of others for shares of their wealth, the unpredictability of political regimes, and efforts to convert temporary market transactions into enduring relationships.

Return migration is a story here—a thread woven through the work—but it is not *the* story. The thread connects to a broader fabric of inequalities in power and wealth that shape Somalis' opportunities in a global frame, affecting migration decisions and transnational business connections as well as localized access to opportunity and livelihood strategies in the borderlands of the northern Horn of Africa. The lack of capital that Yakob and Shafi lament echoes Collier's (2007, 87) insistence that "economies of the bottom billion are short of capital." This purports to explain the highly publicized movement of Africans overseas, boarding leaking boats across the Mediterranean, willing to risk their lives, allegedly for a job—to subordinate them-selves to Euro-American capital in hopes of earning some small wealth of their own. There is a tempting conceptual map of the world behind most analyses of these dynamics: wealth and capital are concentrated in the global North, available to citizens of developed countries. The material objects that exist in the global North reinforce this perception—the New Yorks and Londons, the towering banks and treasury vaults, the town houses and Porsches and rapid transit systems. Return migration from the global North to Africa can then be seen as a flow, redistributing capital from where it is concentrated to where it is lacking.[3] The key question from this regard might be: How does the recent influx of diaspora capital impact local socio-

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[3]cf. Boly, Coniglio, and Prota 2014; Chacko and Peter H. Gebre 2013; Hammond et al. 2011; Plaza and Ratha 2011

economic development? Specifically—to touch on the theme of uncertainty that runs through the text—does diaspora capital offer the potential to increase socio-political stability in "post-conflict" Somali Region?

As Marx (1990, 932) points out, however, "capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things." Amartya Sen (1986, 8) mobilizes a similar insistence that too often analysis focuses on *what exists* (we might add, what exists in what location) rather than *who can command what*. Resources, labor, and ideas all exist in Africa, and mobilizing them is not simply a matter of bringing money to the continent. Bringing money does not equate to bringing capital. On one hand, money only becomes capital if it generates social action: if it puts people to work and spurs production; if people believe in (or are forced to rely on) its power and invest in it as something that provides predictability in an uncertain world. On another hand, financial capital stretches well beyond what exists in a material sense, even money: numbers on a computer screen constitute claims that can be translated into cash in increments, but which would disappear if the sum total was suddenly withdrawn from the diverse array of shares, credits, and derivatives in which it is legally tied up. Finance capital is a carefully calculated and constructed cultural belief.

Considering capital from this standpoint suggests two preliminary points of departure. First, despite a popular Western imaginary of humans as economic creatures driven by profit maximization connected to markets, there have always been other modes of commanding social activity. These range from what might be thought of as the relatively benign—family obligations, loyalties and patriotic sentiments—to the coercive—slavery, indenture, corvée. Capital may have built New York, but it is not the only force that has organized labor to construct cities. This work seeks to uncover the articulations and disjunctures between market-based modes of command and other forms, including political authority and kinship obligations. Second, following from this, market-based modes of command may work in tandem or at odds with alternative ways to address unpredictability. When markets fail, where do people turn? How do they render their assets fungible across space and time, and convert them into other forms of wealth or opportunity? When social relations mediated by money are transmuted into relations mediated by other types of things, how are the relative values of these things calculated?

These and other questions I seek to address here center on relationships and their power to affect the distribution of goods and services in Jigjiga and across the places with which Jigjiga is connected, both regionally and internationally. A focus on command is not only a Western theoretical construct emerging

from Sen's economic analysis (though I do extend some of Sen's arguments). It engages a timeless, cross-cultural theme about wealth and sociality: the tension between human capacity for—and in some cases preoccupation with—accumulating wealth, on one hand. And on the other, the fact that wealth becomes power only with regard to what it can mobilize in a social setting and in a temporality that resists prediction. My use of "command" derives more directly from the thought of Somali poet and political leader Qaman Bulḥan, writing in the early 20th century:

> *Haddii inaad taajir tahay, tuhuney uurkaaga*
>
> *Todowga xoolaha ninbaa tulud ku sii dheere*
>
> *Wallee, ina raggow, talo adduun taada uun maaha![4]*

> If your gut suspected you to be wealthy,
>
> There is a man whose wealth is greater by a she-camel.
>
> By Allah, o son of man, command over earthly things is not yours alone!

The same terminologies Qaman employed infuse contemporary discourse in Jigjiga. The term *taajir*, a wealthy person or perhaps a millionaire, on one register contrasts with another commonly-used term: *miskiin*, the poor or humble person. The distinction evokes not only wealth, but also a contrast in pride. The terms for wealth, *ḥoolo* and *adduun*, are suggestive of the intersectional nature of wealth in cultural context. *Ḥoolo* literally means livestock, but is used for wealth more generally. The historical analysis in Chapter 2 traces ways in which livestock functioned historically as an interface between market-based wealth, the mobilization of kinship relations, and political-military power. Other "things" have replaced livestock as nexuses of command, but struggles to define who controls these things and the people attached to them continue. *Talo* or command addresses the capacity to mobilize relationships, obligations, dependencies, between people across the domains of kinship, religious and political power as well as material wealth. The capacity of objects and relationships to generate power (that is, mobilize social action) across these cultural domains is not limited to Somalis; in numerous cultures, relations ranging from momentary transactions to loyalty, friendship, violent threats and coerced servitude, shape the distribution of material objects including money, land, and productive assets.

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[4]Poem text from Axmed Cabdi Haybe 2017, 3–4. I thank Kader Moḥamoud for assistance with the translation.

How do these relationships affect balances of power to command social action and resource distribution in a world that is deeply interconnected and at the same time highly differentiated—a world of border walls and passports, a world in which instantaneous communications and internationally integrated cities coexist with extreme disparities in power? This is the broad question. Analysts writing from numerous perspectives have argued that economic change—development, redistribution, forms of equality—"is going to have to come from within the societies" of Africa (Collier 2007, 12).[5] The argument is intuitively appealing: the idea of locally-driven socio-cultural change sounds more participatory and less violent than foreign cultural-political coercion. Yet an ideology of space and time easily slips into the formulation, such that development analysts look for supposedly "local" or "internal" solutions to come from Africans on the continent whose power to mobilize action and resources on the global scene is curtailed by current geopolitical orders, migration regimes, and legal-political institutions of property ownership that shape exchange on the global scene. These displace the relative value that Africans can command into the future, even as foreign banks and fund managers create value through loans and "emerging market" funds that constitute new forms of capital commanded from outside Africa.

As this study shows in fleshing out mechanics of the borderlands economy, millions of dollars in cash and credit circulate through Ethiopia's eastern borderlands monthly. It is not that Jigjiga needs cash to flow from the global North; the issue is less where the money is than who controls money and establishes its capacity to command social action, in what space-time (time is of course the crucial element for finance) and by what means, what social action they can mobilize, and how it affects the people who have relatively less power.

## 1.1   Strands of globalization theory

I draw on three threads of globalization debates that weave together my central concerns here. First, increases in international migration including Europe's 2015 "migrant crisis" have raised debates about the moral dilemmas of collective responsibility in an unequal world, as well as the technical mechanisms that reproduce inequalities. These issues are not fundamentally about the movement of people. Migration is a response to and a reflection of inequalities in distributions and demands upheld by a global system

---

[5]Responses to foreign intervention in post-conflict state-building assert that "all state-building is local" (Badiey 2014, 172) and that "internal" solutions are more sustainable than "external" ones (Zambakari 2014; Spears and Wight 2015).

of geopolitical borders.  Beyond the physical movements, there are moral questions:  Do national borders demarcate responsibilities for redistribution?  Is democracy confined to the limits of one country *really* democracy, especially if that country holds excessive sway over global political-economic order?  There are also more technical questions about the inequalities that drive migration:  If it is not a shortage of money per se that explains Africa's underdevelopment, what are the mechanisms by which inequality reproduces itself in specific times and places?

The demands of migrants to be heard and seen, to be recognized as having rights, rescale some important questions Du Bois (1998) asked about the United States almost a century ago:  what are the limits of democratic control? How are property and privilege to be legitimized—that is, how can people be convinced that extreme inequalities in power are the inevitable outcome of natural processes (and unconvinced, once inequalities have become so naturalized)?  Du Bois, of course, was far from the first to ask the question of who is to be considered a neighbor, comrade or compatriot.  Much of Western political theory and popular mobilization has taken shape around the concept of a "social contract" in which individuals exchange their "natural freedom" for protection and submission to the general will and reciprocal protection of property guaranteed by the state (Rousseau 2002).  The idea of a social contract evokes a delimited group with shared interests who subject themselves to an overarching political authority.  On the global scene, it reinforces an understanding of the world as comprised of distinct nations, each with their representative state structures and each pursuing their own national interests.  From the vantage of Ethiopia's eastern borderlands, this is a fundamentally flawed vision of how politics actually operates.  Defining rights and discerning processes producing inequality in today's world require engaging theories of race and racialization as intimately connected to nation- and state-formation (Hall 1980; Pierre 2013; Stoler 1995).  The construction of today's African states was not solely a process of establishing regional command over people and resources; it was also an exclusive process in which broader rights to reparations for the violence of colonial exploitation were disavowed (Cooper 2014; Kelly and Kaplan 2001; Shepard 2006).

Second, a debate amidst increasing economic interconnection is whether economic connections and financial circulations undermine territorial states or state sovereignty (Sassen 1996, 2008).  In particular, literatures on neoliberalism have highlighted the demise of the welfare state and the increasing precarity of life in marketized contexts (Chalfin 2010; Ferguson 2006; Jessop 2002; Lewis et al. 2014).  The much-discussed encroachment of markets and market ideologies across the world through neoliberal globalization

requires some elaboration.  When analysts like Saskia Sassen and Aihwa Ong talk about states not being undermined, but rather reconfigured amidst contemporary globalization (Ong 1999, 2006; Sassen 1996), a significant element lying underneath such concerns is the issue of transactionality and immediate exchange as opposed to more enduring forms of relationship and shared responsibility.  Markets are themselves systems of governance and moral spheres in which people construct ethics and uphold or disavow collective responsibilities (Abolafia 1998; Callon 1998; Elyachar 2005; Westbrook 2004).

> Choosing to conduct ourselves through markets as opposed to another mechanism of governance (such as legislature, court, bureaucracy, and so on) is essentially a political choice.  Therefore the common understanding of capitalism as government's antagonist makes it difficult to think clearly about capitalism as government, that is, about the mechanism most fundamental to global politics. (Westbrook 2004, 5)

If markets and states are cultural frames of reference and modes of commanding relationships and distributions of goods and services, then as Westbrook (2004, 10) argues, "globalization is at bottom a process of cultural formation, and so subject to political critique." Alongside the national constitutions, ostensible social contracts, and legal regimes territorialized across today's global landscape, "money is itself constitutional" (Westbrook 2004, 13)—exchanges of material wealth constitute one mode among others of determining who is inside and outside of certain types of rights and responsibilities.

The third thread engages urban theory, and spatial theory more generally, by considering the simultaneous spatial extension and densification of social relations entailed in contemporary global urbanism. Engaging with studies of how people construct economic life at the intersection of transnational flows of people, commodities, and finance (Bestor 2004; Meagher 2011; Simone 2004; Tsing 2005), the approach specifically seeks to extend a "borderlands" analytic highlighting negotiations, hybridity, and indeterminacies entailed in densifying urban social relations (Iossifova 2013, 2015).  The approach here builds on questions of rights and responsibilities and a vision towards understanding localized struggles over equality in an unequal world. Egalitarian societies are incapable of supporting urbanism, David Harvey (2009, 209) suggested in *Social Justice and the City*. Urban theory has been dominated to a significant extent by a focus on division: gentrification, class- and ethnicity-based enclaving, and fortress architecture all do characterize contemporary urbanity (Lees, Bang Shin, and López-Morales 2016; Low 2008; Murray 2011; Smith 1996,

2006). Borders and margins in urban studies have largely featured as sites of division and contestation (Komarova and O'Dowd 2013; Humphrey 2013; O'Dowd 2012; Pullan 2013). If borders are seen as conduits and opportunities alongside their function as barriers (Little, Waktole Tiki, and Dejene N. Debsu 2015; Nugent and Asiwaju 1996), then theory amidst the reinscription of social inequalities in urban space should foreground not only division, but also new relationships and claims to redistribution (De Boeck and Plissart 2014; Holston 2008).

From this perspective, cities and borders emerge not only as geographical formations, but also as sites at which people configure rights and obligations across time and space. Recent work by Obeng-Odoom (2016, 9) argues that "global cities have arisen because national borders... have enabled and sustained market forces," and suggests that the resulting pattern of urban development "systematically marginalises the majority of urban residents." Analysts of capitalist urbanization have highlighted how people struggle for rights and belonging in cities increasingly characterized by economic segregation and heightening inequality (Grant and Thompson 2015; Massey 2007; Sassen 2008). Borders are often understood sites of a different type of struggle—people's efforts to move intersect in complex ways with global regimes that restrict labor mobility and create conditions for exploitation (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Yet despite the proliferation of studies on borders and cities and border cities (Lebuhn 2013; Sohn 2014; Yeh 2016), there remains significant room in urban studies to further understandings of how people utilize the interplay of urban connections and border disjunctures to carve out spaces for themselves, especially in fast-internationalizing African cities.

At the intersection of these three bodies of work, in my framing, lies the issue of command over social activity: of power; social activity mediated through money and other things. This returns my concern to the issue of diaspora return, wealth creation and city-building in Jigjiga, and the meanings and outcomes of processes that such mobility entails. What I want to foreground is a financial approach: it is not always the accumulation of resources, but rather centralized command over social activity (including labor) that undergirds city growth. The core questions that I want to address in this work are about the conversion of money and other "things" into social action in specific times and places. The question of whether diaspora return constitutes redistribution rests on deeper issues of—in Maurer's (2003, 73) phrase, what counts as "capital" and what counts as "mobility." How do people construct the value of money and other "things," and establish their ownership and convertibility into other "things" and other social relations? It is important

not to pay attention only to material accumulation, but to the multiple forms of debt and credit, obligation and entrustment, and the temporalities over which value is redistributed or converted into different types of resources (Graeber 2011; Maurer 2003, 2007; Shipton 2007).

A point to be made here is that despite empirical evidence about increasing concentrations of wealth, we should recognize that the more or less forceful organization and legitimation of wealth concentration—what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the conversion of possession into property—is a contingent cultural process. However tight the legal and cultural threads weaving together the permanence of private property are bound, they are not beyond unraveling. Finally, the alternatives are not the binaries that we're often told; that is, market distribution or state distribution. There always have been multiple and overlapping modes of entitlement.

## 1.2   Urbanism in Ethiopia's eastern borderlands

The dissertation hinges around a radical about-face that has unfolded since 2010. Yet the problematics of urbanism and transnationalism that are emerging in eastern Ethiopia are intimately linked to the restructuring of the Ethiopian polity that has unfolded since the 1990s. With the 1991 overthrow of the communist Derg government, a coalition of former rebel groups known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) instituted a system of multinational federalism or ethnic federalism, initiated through a transitional constitution in 1991 and a permanent constitution in 1995. The reorganization devolved authority to Ethiopia's major ethnic groups within their own regional states—Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Oromia, Somali, and Harari—as well as to more ethnically diverse areas of Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNP), and Gambela (within which ethno-linguistic groups received "their own" sub-regional administrative units). In practice, authority in the eastern regions continued to be centralized and to deny Somalis their ostensible rights to self-government, which contributed in the late 1990s to a renewal of secessionist conflict that had gripped the region periodically for decades. It was not until 2010 that an administration came to power that forged an agreement with the federal government, which enabled the devolution of authority to ethnic Somali leadership.

The advent of "real federalism" in 2010 through the removal of federal military forces, the Somalization of regional administration, and federal disbursements established new possibilities for Somalis' inclusion in Ethiopia. Initially at least, for many Somalis who had felt excluded within Ethiopia for their entire lives,

this was a major success in establishing the possibility for inclusion and participation. Diaspora returnees frequently cited the federal system as the reason that they could even envision returning to Ethiopia. The viewpoint of Warsame, a 29-year old investor from Australia, captures some of the tensions of this shift. Warsame was born in Somalia and grew up in Australia, having never visited Ethiopia prior to arriving in Jigjiga in 2017 to run the family business. The new system

> shifted my parents from hating Ethiopia, and thinking of it as a country that oppresses them, into feeling that they're the same as the Amhara or the Tigray or the Oromo—that, you know, it's Ethiopia, but there are so many different ethnicities... a tree with so many branches. And that one is not more favorable than the other. But if it wasn't for that change, and also ʿAbdi becoming president... [he pauses]. Not only my parents, but the Somalis over there—one year before, or two years before ʿAbdi came through and the federalism system sort of started, they were protesting Ethiopian government everywhere in those countries. You know, they did not see them as their government.

Warsame, like many other diaspora returnees, described the federal system—which had existed formally since 1995—as *really* starting with ʿAbdi's presidency in 2010. This is when the Somalization of the regional administration and security forces enabled people to feel that the regional government was "their government."

He continued by expressing his astonishment with the rapid about-face his parents made:

> And then, to me—to somebody who did not know the politics in Ethiopia, I just thought they were psychos, because their opinions of Ethiopia changed dramatically within a space of two years. You know, from "Ethiopia is the enemy, and Ethiopia oppresses our people," to "We are Ethiopian." You know, it usually takes a bit of time to go from the complete opposite to "I love Ethiopia."[6]

From the widely-shared perspective of potential equality within Ethiopia emerges a vision of federalism as fulfilling the social contract of democratic representation for the existing "community." "Yes, things changed!" Emphasizes Bashe, a former contraband trader who has never left Ethiopia. "Now, this federal

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[6]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

government improved in that each tribe and each language—those who share their own language—they were given their own. 'Administer yourselves,' they said."[7]

Warsame's family bought up urban properties in Jigjiga. Hundreds of other diaspora Somalis poured money into property investments, service industries, and trade enterprises. Political support for the rebel Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) dwindled. Diaspora capitalists sang the praises of the autocratic regional administration. The financial incentives offered to diaspora returnees raised a critical question for Jigjiga's residents: where is the line between "buying in" to the political system and "being bought off" through political patronage? The practical question for businesspeople draws together responsibility and transactionality as they shape relationships that extend over differentiated space. Framed historically, the question might be asked thus: can markets create a nation? Yet the question itself posits a distinction between the two that may not be certain. Political loyalties and more short-term transactional exchanges are in some ways mutually constitutive; yet a fundamental anthropological insight is that across societies, distinct moral orders or spheres of exchange tend to prevail, and transfers of value across these domains may be questionable (Parry and Bloch 1989). How do short-term transactional relationships and longer-term structures of obligation and entitlement through which people face uncertainty mutually shape each other? How do people commensurate political loyalty, kinship obligations, and material rewards?

Having lived and worked among Somalis outside the Horn of Africa for years, I was surprised to discover that people who were seemingly socialized into a disdain for borders and economic controls—members of families famous for their informal international financial networks and internationalized trade via "free market" centers such as Dubai and Nairobi[8]—would tolerate Ethiopia's intense government economic regulation. In my experience, many Somalis, especially those from elite families, were strikingly transnationally oriented, with families spread across the world readily mobilizing capital to invest in diverse sites where opportunity appeared (Cawo M. Abdi 2015; Thompson 2016). The more time I spent in Jigjiga, the more I was amazed by the complex mixture of freewheeling capitalism, intense mobility (both domestically and internationally), and autocratic regulation of finance and migration that came together in the city. I initiated careful queries among officials in the heavy-handed regional government (essentially a provincial dictatorship from 2010-2018). I got to know businesspeople who would put aside their fear of the government and talk openly (promised confidentiality and encryption of their responses). These explorations began to reveal

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[7]Bashe, audio-recorded interview, 7/2/2018
[8]See Carrier 2016; Lindley 2010; Weitzberg 2017

ways in which opportunity took shape in the city through a constant struggle between market freedoms and their restriction, between international migration and attempts to control going and coming, and between the expansive forces of trade in Jigjiga and their regulation at surrounding borders.

These tensions were particularly manifest in Jigjiga's market and social organization. The structuring of spatial processes across multiple scales (cf. Simone 2004, 2-15) was evident in locals' struggles for access to border trade and international connections, and in diaspora returnees' struggles to develop the rapport and permissions required to invest in the rapidly growing city. These struggles in Jigjiga offered a lens into the ways in which the city and the surrounding borders operated as a frontier articulating Ethiopian space with a broader world. At Jigjiga, the global economy appeared to be knocking on the door of Ethiopia's protected national markets as diaspora investors brought their "private-sector" international connections. In the sense explored by Fisher and Downey (2006) and others, eastern Ethiopia is a frontier of capital. Simultaneously, however, diaspora investors had an interest in maintaining market and border protections—because such regulations gave them a market that wealthier foreign investors and corporations could not access directly. Eastern Ethiopia is thus also, looking from inside Ethiopia's borders outwards at the world, a frontier of a national market defending itself against becoming just another site for international finance and corporate globalization. Such a way of looking at the issue also has analytic import: what good is looking at wealth within national borders—in the vein that Collier (2007), Piketty (2014), and other economists do—if that wealth is controlled largely from the outside? And how can we focus on wealth differentials between countries when these very differentials are coming to inhabit more localized spaces, in the form of struggles for access to cities and mobility in the developing world? An ethnographic understanding of Jigjiga offer a lens into everyday sites and processes structuring inclusion and exclusion in markets—the interface between national and global circuits—and the ways in which this inclusion and exclusion shapes opportunities, mobilities, and distributions of assets and relationships.

Specific urban processes intersecting with these larger-scale economies were evident from the beginning of my work in Jigjiga. Urban space became a tool for attracting diaspora capitalists, who I would meet in the Regional Diaspora Bureau with their investment plans and later in the offices of the Jigjiga City Administration seeking the free urban land they had been promised for their productive investments. Local youth hopelessly watched their homes built on land secured "informally" handed to diaspora returnees. During my stay in Jigjiga, many local youth left to try their own luck at becoming wealthy emigrants; some

made it to Italy, Austria, and Norway. Others my friends in Jigjiga and I never heard from again. As officials sought to manage economic opportunity in order to offer controlled sectors to their relatives or to diaspora investors, local businesspeople either left to try their luck elsewhere or—more commonly—relied on illegal but socially legitimate avenues to pursue their livelihoods. Contraband trade continued to flow, as it had for a century, though it diverted into alternative channels to avoid border enforcement and regulation in city markets. Reflecting broader dynamics in Ethiopia, the regional administration began to lose legitimacy as people grew frustrated with the strict regulation, high taxation and lack of opportunity. In Jigjiga, no one protested against the regional government; many who even dared question the regional regime landed in Jigjiga's "Jail Ogaden." Yet, as I show in this work, everyday protest took the form of occupying space and subtly resisting low-level officials, especially municipal leaders, while talking the talk of the regional regime.

By examining the ways that Jigjigans talk about trade, finance, property, and politics, I engage with broader concepts of social contracts, social justice, and understandings of multiple forces shaping unequal power in transnational context. Rather than understanding the market and the state to either encompass or undermine each other, we can consider how arrangements of collective responsibilities and relational exchanges might coexist, compete, and perhaps complement each other as people seek to forge their livelihoods. As with much of Africa, conceptions of property in Jigjiga do not equate to the individualized system so fundamental to Western capitalism. Property is not, in a Western sense, private—that ideology of permanence has not settled to disrupt potential future claims. On the other hand, claims on the state as the agent of responsibility and forms of share-based distribution that have emerged elsewhere in Africa are also indiscernible in eastern Ethiopia (Ferguson 2015; Phillips 2018).

This work focuses on the arc of ʿAbdi's regional administration from 2010-2018, because ʿAbdi's strategy of state-building transformed modes of border regulation and urban political practice, reshaping eastern Ethiopia's connections to Ethiopia's federal structure and to the world beyond in a few years' time. ʿAbdi's administration of Ethiopian Somali Regional State (*Dowladda Deegaanka Soomaalida-Itoobiya*, DDSI—the abbreviation I will use to denote the government apparatus) first set about to remake regional geographies and identities by foregrounding a public discourse distinguishing Ethiopian-Somali identity from Somali identity as manifest in Somalia and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. Creating a space for Ethiopian-Somali autonomy socially and geographically distinct from Ethiopians—perceived as "colo-

nizers" of the region—enabled DDSI to reach out to Somalis with Ethiopian origins in diaspora—who were a major source of support for secessionist rebellions in the region—and invite them "home" to build up their country. This strategy entailed targeted production of economic opportunities for diaspora returnees and elite regime supporters, managed through increasing controls over border trade and urban organization in Jigjiga.

Borders and the city, in other words, became joint sites of strategy to rework SRS connections to federal Ethiopia and to the outside world. In 2015, strict border trade enforcement diverted international and trans-regional flows into the hands of elite investors. DDSI used access to urban property to incentivize diaspora return and political support. By 2016, Jigjiga's skyline marked this alliance: the tallest buildings belonged to government-allied import-export traders and a few diaspora returnees. As diaspora returnees flocked to invest in Jigjiga's market—both controlled border sectors and more open urban property markets—the global North came to inhabit this city of the global South, creating new juxtapositions of wealth and poverty and perceptions of marginalization among local businesspeople. New articulations in urban space created new cross-border flows and attempts to regulate them, both internationally and trans-regionally within Ethiopia. As Jigjiga's urban development attracted new flows of international capital, administrators in this provincial capital city sought to regulate these new articulations that would keep Jigjiga both an Ethiopian city and a city ripe for Somali diaspora capital. Managing such articulations requires the right mix of protectionism and market openness, the marking of boundaries between sectors which are spheres of political intervention and those which are properly left to "economic" forces—and marking these in ways that are socially acceptable to both locals and diaspora investors. Jigjiga rapidly became a "frontier zone" (Sassen 2013) for specialized international investment in the form of diaspora capital. As I develop in the second half of the dissertation (Chapters 6-8), the frontier city is also a site of resistance and refiguring by those disempowered at borders, who find a critical mass in the city.

## 1.3   Methods

The questions animating the dissertation emerged during initial site visits to Jigjiga in June 2015 and May 2016, and weekly meetings with Somali friends and interlocutors in Atlanta, Georgia from 2014 through 2019. Leading up to longer-term fieldwork, I pulled together preliminary interviews with quantitative analysis of US and Canadian census data (Thompson 2017b, 2018c). These studies indicated interesting

possibilities regarding the emergence of an Ethiopian-Somali identity in diaspora, pointed to some of the complexities of ethnic and national identification among Ethiopians abroad, and constituted an interesting starting point for conversations with diaspora returnees and regional officials during fieldwork in Jigjiga. En route to Jigjiga in July 2017, I spent two weeks in Oxford and London collecting archival materials that are used in Chapter 2.

In the course of 11 months spent in Jigjiga and its surrounds in 2017-2018, I documented numerous transits by bus and car across eastern Ethiopia and into Somaliland and Djibouti, spent hundreds of hours conversing with businesspeople (primarily in Jigjiga, but also in transit and in other locations such as Tog Wajale, Dire Dawa, Hargeisa, and Addis Ababa), and also easily upwards of 200 hours in the company of current and former regional officials, in government offices in Jigjiga (particularly the Jigjiga City Administration) and in private. In September 2017, a series of conflicts near Jigjiga added to a building political crisis across Ethiopia, eventually resulting in the re-imposition of a state of emergency that had been lifted that August. Due to the political environment in the region, which deteriorated throughout fieldwork (culminating with security crackdowns after the attempted assassination of P.M. Abiy Ahmed on June 23, 2018—two weeks before I returned to the US), participant-observation gained something of a precedence over formal interviews, especially during the first half of fieldwork. I quickly found that while general information could be collected on people's backgrounds, formal interviews, unless preceded by weeks of building trust with specific informants, tended to yield little information on people's interpretations of the urban market and the broader world in which it is embedded.

Formal interviews were divided into a small sample of more or less detailed ethnographic interviews and life-histories (55 businesspeople and 8 officials) and a larger sample of shortened business history questionnaires (100 businesspeople). It quickly became apparent from all of these data sources that what had been conceived as a project on urban economy had to come to grips with an ongoing transformation in the structure and political culture of governance. Contraband traders on buses complained of the heavy regulations that dampened their opportunities. In-depth interviews—and, often more helpful, informal conversations and observations—revealed the dense network of personal relations and often precarious positions of mid- and large-scale businesspeople in the political scene.

What had been designed as a study of marketplace competition between diaspora investors, cross-border traders, and town-based businesspeople, then, had not only to provide background on the recent history of the

regional political-economy, but also to come to grips with what is commonly understood to be a mafia-type coalition of government and business interests stretching well beyond the region. While those who approved my research project in Ethiopia might see the final work as more aggressively "political" than set out in the study framework focused on urban economics, much of the story presented here resulted from unlooked-for revelations, unexpected answers to questions about business operations and market structure, and unintended interactions with officials in various capacities. Working in a difficult political context in which people are reluctant to speak openly has its own relevance for studying the institutions that organize markets, including the intersections between social and governmental modes of regulation, public discourses, and processes of decision-making and social interaction in relation to structures of authority. In examining the experiences of Ethiopian Somalis in relation to the life opportunities and closures shaped by the regional political economy, I throughout the work attempt to keep in view what it means to analyze dynamics in a way that works for the residents of SRS by furthering the development of a more inclusive and equitable political-economic structure (not only in SRS, but wherever Jigjigans seek to forge their lives).

This strategy was related to the sampling approach for ethnographic interviews, which could be described as snowball sampling from several purposive starting points. Clan relations are crucial networks of trust and also tend to be structured by particular relations both with the regional government and with the social fabric of the city. For example, the most prominent chat traders in Jigjiga are Isaaq; real estate is largely in the hands of Jidwaaq clans; and the regional and city administrations are largely in the hands of a coalition of Moḥamed Suber (Ogaden) and Garre[9] family networks. I consciously attempted to spend significant time with individuals from every major clan grouping present in the city. Developing trust with well-connected businesspeople in different groups involved spending significant time around town observing business activities, and usually extending my network of contacts by sitting for *chat*-chewing[10] with my initial contacts and their friends or business partners. It was only after developing significant trust and observing their business operations for some time that I undertook formal interviews, which consisted of two short questionnaires (one about business and social networks, one on preferences of places to live and to do business) and a longer interview that was often completed over multiple sittings. I speak fluent (though not flawless) Somali, and conducted interviews in Somali as well as in English, according to informant

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[9]For the uninitiated reader, clan names can be confusingly similar and spellings are not always consistent. Garre refers to the group claiming their clan homeland in southeastern Ethiopia, into Kenya and southern Somalia, bordering Borana Oromo areas. Gerri refers to the group claiming their clan homeland northwest of Jigjiga, where they intersperse with the Jarso.

[10]*Chat*, or *catha edulis*, is a mild narcotic plant, the leaves of which are commonly chewed for stimulation.

preferences (many diaspora investors had lived for upwards of twenty years in English-speaking contexts). Because of the length of time required to gain entrance to particular clan and trade networks—and because of cultural constraints preventing a male foreign interviewer sitting with women in private—I hired one female research assistant and two male assistants who had strong family networks in certain market sectors (particularly, chat and contraband trade).

In a borderlands context where virtually everyone is fluent in at least two languages (Somali and Amharic), but often more (Oromo, English), it is perhaps more strikingly tangible that translation is simultaneously an everyday act and a complex and potentially politically-charged affair. I have translated recorded conversations from Somali to English for this production; while in the field I often immediately translated informal conversations in Somali into English notes, noting important Somali phrases used. It was always possible, and occasionally occurred, that when discussing sensitive business deals in my presence, interlocutors switched from Somali to Oromo or Amharic, which achieved the goal of removing parts of the conversation from my comprehension. Every dialogue involves translation of meanings, and the results of translating experience from one person to another are inevitably fragmentary. My main claim to validity of the results is that the pieces of evidence garnered from interviews, partial datasets obtained from government offices, and other fragments are interpreted in light of sustained interactions and conversations with hundreds of Jigjiga's residents over the course of several thousand hours spent in tea shops, businesspeople's houses, government offices, and public transportation. At the same time, I am aware of the multiple directions a study of Jigjiga could have taken which mine did not: In focusing on the perspectives of upper-class Somali businesspeople, voices of marginalized Somalis such as "outcaste" Gaboye, highland Ethiopian Jigjigans, and the mass of Oromo and Debub laborers fade to the background, hopefully to be examined by others in the future.

Finally, the language of identity in Somali-Ethiopia is politically contentious, whatever terminologies are used. Throughout the analysis, I have employed the term *Habesha* commonly used by Somalis to designate highland Ethiopians. While this term is used by Somalis and in some cases by Ethiopians in diaspora to differentiate Amhara, Tigrayans, and related northern highlands ethnic groups (Habecker 2012), some highlanders in Jigjiga contest the term and emphasize their identity as "Ethiopian." Many Somalis also call highlanders "Ethiopians," but upon reflection some also include themselves in that category while differentiating themselves from both their fellow Muslim Oromo and the Amhara and Tigrayans grouped

together as *Habesha*.

## 1.4   Outline of the argument

Part I (chapters 2-4) addresses the construction of state authority in the eastern Ethiopian borderlands not simply as a technical procedure or an inevitable outcome of postcolonial politics, but as a normative and value-laden process. Building on recent social-scientific work that conceptualizes states as moralized entities that inhabitants regard as having ethical duties (Aretxaga 2005; Garelli and Tazzioli 2013; Krupa and Nugent 2015; Tate 2015), Chapter 2 explores how state-building in eastern Ethiopia mobilized competing cultural conceptions of proper social organization. Over the 20th century, I argue, the intersection of Somali, British, and Abyssinian (highland Ethiopian) cultural "worlds" tended towards the politicization of Somali identity. Somaliness (*Soomaalinimo*) came to represent practices of social redistribution in the nomadic economy and free trade across colonial and later nation-state borders, juxtaposed against "Ethiopian" taxation and hierarchical social structure. Chapter 3 analyzes recent shifts in political organization and identity that strengthened government officials' capacity to tax and regulate trade, driving a rise in inequality between the contraband traders who formerly controlled much of Jigjiga's wealth and current elites, who are connected to the regional government. Chapter 4 details how government officials attracted diaspora investment from the global North and facilitated capital flows through tax breaks and property incentives, and hints at the patterns of resistance to inequalities that became increasingly visible in Jigjiga over the past decade.

Chapter 5 serves as an interlude, detailing conflicts over ethnic borders that revealed fissures in Ethiopia's federal system, laid bare the ways in which people conceptualize and interact with government authority, and indicated the importance of alternative social orders outside of politics on which people rely for their daily sustenance.

Part II (chapters 6-8) focuses on how the regulation of trade and investment at geopolitical borders, and the governance of social relations in the city, have shaped wealth inequalities and people's understandings of these inequalities. Chapter 6 follows Jigjiga's contraband traders (predominantly women) across nearby borders and shows their discontent with patterns of regulation that divert surplus value from trade into state coffers, hampering the womens' capacity to provide for their children and extended families. Chapter 7 demonstrates shifts in wealth and segregation patterns in the city and examines people's reactions to government enactments of authority over urban land and social life. Chapter 8 addresses the legitimacy of

economic inequality through the lens of Rousseau's distinction between "possession" and "property" in an effort to theorize the cultural imaginaries and political practices that make conversion between money and other forms of value viable in everyday life. I show that an ethics of egalitarianism continues to undermine the legitimacy of extreme inequality and I extrapolate this into ways of thinking about property, wealth, and political power as moral issues that cannot simply be divided into "market" and "political" spheres.

The moral legitimacy of contraband trade, tax evasion, and social claims on collective wealth, I conclude, cannot be understood simply as the residues of a Somali cultural system that was relatively egalitarian, now being eroded by Westernized conceptions of private property and pure market exchange. Rather, the growing relevance of controlled access to global markets in Jigjiga *heightens* the livelihood importance—and with it, the ethical relevance—of channeling surplus value into social reciprocity and recognizing the personhood of others rather than prioritizing monetary accumulation. *Diaspora investors, some of whom vocally promote free-market values, in this context appear less as a vanguard of neoliberalism bringing global markets to Ethiopia, and often more as actors unexpectedly caught in new webs of obligation and power struggles to define the limits of private wealth, shared resources, and government appropriation.* By analyzing how interpenetrating economic and legal regimes in the borderlands generate these cultural confrontations over market ethics, this work moves beyond a binary between pure redistributive "socialist" and "free market" systems of exchange and takes seriously the multiple, overlapping conceptions of property rights, taxation regimes, exchange and distribution that constitute possible ethical foundations for economic justice in Ethiopia's eastern borderlands.

# Part I

# Constructing Authority in Somali-Ethiopia

# Part I Introduction

"When I say Ethiopian, I mean those other Ethiopians," laughs Hashim, an elderly diaspora returnee who retired in Jigjiga a few years ago. He lived in Mogadishu, London, and San Diego before coming to Jigjiga, where he spends long afternoons chewing *chat* to stay alert while reading Somali poetry and writing his own analyses of it. He champions the voices of Ogadeni poets from Somali-Ethiopia's hybrid, borderlands space. Despite the fact that he spends much of his time with "other Ethiopians," he and many like him have subtle sympathies for the historical secessionist cause of Somalis in Ethiopia. Why live in Jigjiga if you perceive Ethiopia to be a colonizing power? Jigjigans explain the relationship between Ethiopian colonization, Somali identity, and the current federal arrangement in a variety of ways, weaving together poetry and oral histories to form various vantage-points that conjoin the region's past and its relationship to their individual futures. Details about history of the region, and particularly the past 150 years, are a subject of constant discussion in Jigjiga. With an Ethiopian-Somali identity emerging more fully only in the past decade, people are searching for the roots of their new nationality—and contesting government discourses that whitewash elements of their and their ancestors' experiences.

English-language histories written about the region have tended to take two approaches, neither of which is satisfactory. On one hand, a number of works develop the history of polity-formation on one side or another of the region's borders: The history of Jigjiga has been written in terms of its incorporation into the Ethiopian state (Barnes 2000; Eshete 2014), and the history of Somaliland has been written in terms of British colonial history, union with Somalia, and subsequently state-building with traditional leaders and institutions (Johnson and Smaker 2014; Renders 2012). The second common approach is to write the history of the region as that of a unified people—the Somali nation, or at least a proto-nation—who were divided by colonial borders when they probably should have been united under one flag (Laitin and Samatar 1987; Mohamed Osman Omar 2001; Thompson 2015). Not only current local sentiment, but also a careful examination of the historical record, show both of these conceptualizations to be inadequate. Considering Jigjiga through the lens of its historical incorporation into Ethiopia makes little sense of the continued salience of cultural and social links with Somalia and of the pro-Somalia stance of the regional governments before about 2009. The ambivalence of many locals regarding the much-discussed "Greater

Somalia" project of the mid-20th century suggests the inadequacy of the second approach.

The three chapters that follow examine the politicization and territorialization of Somali and "Habesha" identities in the eastern borderlands through three moments–meaning not only times, but spatio-temporal formations. The first is the colonial moment in which European powers and the Ethiopian (or Abyssinian) Empire converged on the area of land between the port of Djibouti, the Harar highlands, and what is now the coast of the self-declared Somaliland Republic. The second is postcolonial conflict and the introduction of Ethiopia's multinational federalism (or "ethnic federalism"). The third, overlapping the second, is forced migration from the region, settlement abroad, and subsequent return migration to Ethiopia.

In analyzing the current political economy of Jigjiga, it became clear that ethnic and clan organization plays an important role—and yet it also seems to me irresponsible to talk about ethnicities or clans in a way that might risk naturalizing them as a timeless part of regional society, an ineradicable form of social organization that pre-existed colonialism and may well outlast attempts to rebuild Somalia as a nation-state. Thus the first and second chapters in this section focus on the politicization of ethnic and clan identities in relation to broader dynamics. Taken together, the argument is that neither clans nor the Somali nation were pre-existing units in any sense that is meaningful for an analytical lens on the present-day political economy. Both, rather, were reproduced and changed through a particular history that is best understood by placing a series of critical local events in the context of their connections to dynamics in the global political scene. Furthermore, within broader regional political-economic reconfigurations, Jigjiga became a crucial locus of negotiations and contestations over political allegiances and trade links.

These interactions molded the town's social history and current geography. More than that, however, they shaped people's understandings of how to interpret, anticipate, and respond to the activities of people based loosely on ethnic and clan categorizations such as the "other Ethiopians" mobilized by Hashim. People mobilize identity categories to make political assertions (that "Ethiopians" should not be governing Somalis), to make claims to wealth (that a close clan-member owes one a share of his wealth), and generally to assert their demands to rights and resources—often in terms of moral obligations. (As Hashim and others know, generalizations about identities—even when instrumentally useful in decision-making or political mobilization—are complicated in daily life and relationships.) Chapter 4 applies these understandings and the contextual framing to the recent advent of diaspora return and investment. It shows how Somali diaspora investment stems from a diversity of motivations—including profit motives and moral obligations to pro-

vide for kin—and how it introduces new claims about rights and responsibilities in a social world in which ethnicity and clan are cross-cut by nationality, different opportunities for mobility, and a variety of projects as people seek to carve out spaces of stability and predictability for themselves.

# Chapter 2

## Notes on the Nature of Space in the Northern Horn, ca. 1890-1960

"The natural state of a Somali is entirely nomadic: and his life in his own country to-day must be exactly the same as it was 500 years ago," wrote Douglas Jardine in 1923. He continued his description by expressing a common opinion about Somali politics: "the tribe is the mainspring of the Somali's existence." These sentiments, however, are in tension with the passage immediately following:

> but there are many Somalis who forsake their tribes and leave the country to seek their fortunes abroad. As traders in Eastern Africa or Aden, as miners in Australia or South Africa, or soldiers in the French or Italian Colonial armies, or as seamen with headquarters at Port Said or Bute Street, Cardiff, they have been equally successful. But sooner or later they find their way back to their tribe with one ambition in life, namely, to be once again the normal nomadic tribesman. ... There is surely no native race so absolutely immune against the demoralizing force of denationalization. ... In the good cause of "propaganda" during the War, I was endeavouring to explain to Ahmed the might of England and France and the glories of London and Paris. Ahmed listened to my winged words for some time and then remarked that he knew all about it and that his address in London was 14A Jermyn Street (Jardine 1923, 22–23).

Jardine was far from alone in commenting on the discrepancy between the "natural" state of the Somali and the presence of Somalis "out of place" abroad—or even in the Horn's growing towns. Seventy years earlier, Richard Burton had stated that "Somal of the towns" are "the worst specimens of their race" (Burton 1856, 86). "In their dry savanna homeland," anthropologist I.M. Lewis (2002, 1–2) wrote in 1965, "the Somali are essentially a nation of pastoral nomads". Even in current histories, such perceptions endure: "The Somalis are pastoralists," states Millman (2014, 8–9) in a recent book, "and always have been. ... While the intrusion of the modern world has produced towns and a sedentary population, most of the inhabitants of Somaliland continue to live their lives by ancient patterns."

Starting from the imaginary of a Somali-inhabited ethnic homeland, many histories of the Horn have narrated extra-regional migration, urbanization, and geopolitical territory formation as externally-driven processes foreign to Somali culture and pastoralist political economy. Such views are tied to a primordialist conception of the Somali as an ethnic group (or "race" or "nation," depending on the era of publication) which, in symbiosis with their homeland's desiccated landscape, pre-existed cities, global trade, and perhaps even politics. Thinking this way about the connections between people, culture, and space de-historicizes—in Hall's (1980, 342) words, "translating historically-specific structures into the timeless language of nature."

Pointing out that globalized trade existed in this space long before Britons arrived, or that Somalis had "their own" conceptions of territoriality, is only a starting point for analysis. Whatever ethno-territorial formations preceded the arrival of British and Abyssinian (Habesha) colonizers in Somali-inhabited areas in the 1880s, it was a power-laden encounter of Somali, British, and Abyssinian worlds that racialized the region *as* Somali space (that is, as a homeland for Somalis, a nomadic-pastoralist space interfacing with "modern" economies, and a latent national territory). This confrontation unfolded amidst the construction of a Euro-American-centered capitalist economy and global racial hierarchy between the late Victorian era and post-World War II decolonization (ca. 1880s-1960s). Alliances, animosities, migration patterns and circuits of trade and accumulation forged in this period continue to shape the politics of Somali-inhabited eastern Ethiopia to this day. So too do the geopolitical borders that divide the postcolonial world into supposed nation-states. Decolonization subsequently enabled European powers to disavow responsibility for the past: political independence promised that if Africans just stopped fighting and worked hard, they could "develop" to equivalence with their former colonial rulers.[1]

It was certainly not nature, and not solely culture or tradition, that created the patterns Jardine observed: Somalis' reliance on kinship, return migration, and the exchange of labor wages abroad for livestock and social reproduction at "home." Return to a supposedly unchanging space and timeless pastoralist economy was one facet of struggles in an imperial system—struggles over spatial and temporal distributions of wealth, power, and opportunity. For Somalis, struggles "to ward off their dispossession despite their membership in the market economy" (A. I. Samatar 1989, 13) concentrated in a territorial and cultural-economic (Somali: *dhaqan-dhaqaale*) frontier zone where a Britain-centered capitalist world-economy and an ex-

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[1]See Cooper 2014; Kelly and Kaplan 2004

panding Abyssinian Empire (whose "feudal" character has been subject to debate)[2] met Somali systems of production and exchange (including but not limited to pastoralism). While temporalities of nomadic mobility, livestock production, and the give-and-take of kinship-based exchange continued to exist, Britons and Abyssinians introduced new forms of commanding social action, including tax and tribute. To conceptualize the northern Horn in the early 20th century as a frontier is not to affirm its peripherality. Like any place, the region might equally be thought of, looking out at the globe from the Jigjiga Valley at the base of the Gureis Range that forms the far eastern reaches of the Ethiopian escarpment, as the center of a world in which Jermyn Street, London, could function as a periphery: British cash translated into non-market means of command and shared futures in the Horn. "In [the Somali's] ears, as in ours, freedom is ever calling," wrote Drake-Brockman (1912, 103–4), closely paralleling Jardine's account. "Like every true Britisher, he too longs to return to his native land; and though at times he will wander away for years, he keeps, by some means or other, in touch with his relatives, and returns sooner or later with his earnings to spend among his friends."

On the market frontier, what Britons envisioned as Somalis' "instinctively commercial" (James 1888, 2) habits could translate quickly into seemingly "irrational" forms of investment and redistribution. "Camels, cattle and sheep are the Somali's possessions, and raiding is his pastime" suggested two Britons who accompanied Ethiopian troops campaigning in the interior (Jennings and Addison 1905, 4–5). "Camels are," wrote an officer near the turn of the century, the Somali's "fetish and his god, and their acquisition seems to be his main object in life" (McNeill 1902, 269). Though patronizing and racializing, such accounts of evident irrationality bring into view how Britons' cash economy and racially-infused nationalism abutted a set of different value-registers—registers in which livestock measured not primarily market-based or financial wealth but power in kinship networks and political mobilization. Both of these would secure material sustenance through means other than the appropriation of so-called "free labor."[3] As the British imperial economy articulated with pastoral production, in other words, livestock functioned as a nexus of power in market and non-market spheres.

Such command was not an individual prerogative: as the Ogaden poet Qaman Bulḥan famously said: "*Wallee, ina raggow, talo adduun taada uun maaha!*"—"By God, o son of man, command of earthly things is

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[2]See Donham 1986; Goody 1971

[3]Samatar 1989, 20: "What Lewis interpreted as capitalistic character, that is risk-taking, is not necessarily a quality confined to capitalists. In fact, what distinguishes a capitalist from others is not only private ownership of the means of production, but most importantly hiring labor and appropriating the products of that labor. This the typical Somali pastoralist did not do."

not yours alone!" Distribution of livestock through damage-restitution (*mag*)[4] and dowry contract (*meher*),[5] along with social payments to kin and friends who had a claim on one's wealth, created a framework for stability and a social basis for property, enabling more transactional market exchanges to take place. Even as cash has gradually and unevenly replaced livestock in such transfers, the reproduction of the longer-term kinship order creates conditions for political and market stability (cf. Cassanelli 1982; Ciabarri 2010).[6]

The effects of geopolitical borders forged across this frontier zone between 1897 and 1960 provoked debates over the social and spatial distribution of command—over who was responsible for whom, who could tax whom, who could exchange with whom. Border demarcation was not simply the carving up of populations among distinct geopolitical units (empires and later nation-states). With the introduction of boundary regulations on mobility and trade, Britons, Abyssinians and Somalis struggled specifically over their capacity to command transfers of value between market, kinship and state orders, mapped onto a landscape of differentiated sovereignty.[7] Should Abyssinians be permitted to tax trade carried on by British subjects in Ethiopia? How should governments treat *mag* to be paid across the border? Who was responsible for Somalis who left their "homeland" and had no kinship support to fall back on? The intensification of struggles among Somalis, Abyssinians, and Britons (and less visibly, British imperial subjects from Arabia and South Asia) over such questions coalesced in the socio-spatial organization of the borderlands town of Jigjiga. Geopolitical borders and cities, as well as migration-systemic links to sites abroad such as London and Cardiff,[8] took shape in the early 20th century not simply as "intrusions of the modern world," but as sites at which multiple groups converged in struggles to control wealth and social organization.

Borders are not simply divisive; they work in different ways, for different groups, and their function and relevance can change over time. Nor is urbanization simply a process of convergence, despite the spatial coming-together of people it implies. Demand for livestock began to expand the relevance of markets and to create nascent urbanization patterns (A. I. Samatar 1989, 18); yet it was not just markets that shaped this

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[4]I.M. Lewis analyzed *mag* or *diya* (the Arabic term) primarily in terms of "blood-money" payments mandatory after homicide or manslaughter, in which livestock were gathered from the offender's kin and distributed to the victim's. This form of reparation or indemnity is, however, applicable to lesser damages than death and functions somewhat analogously to combined life and disability insurance.

[5]Marriage contracts or *meher* generally include several conceptually distinct types of gifts, such as a young camel known as *gabaati* for the bride's father, cash or clothing (*yarad*) for the immediate family, and *sooryo* for the bride's brothers and cousins. The total *meher* is not paid out immediately but takes the form of an obligation to be paid over time.

[6]The concept of transactional orders draws on a cross-cultural perspective differentiating more transactional market exchanges from longer-term structures of mutual responsibility including kinship and governance (Parry and Bloch 1989).

[7]I draw here on the "spheres of exchange" line of anthropological theory (see Bohannan 1959; Parry and Bloch 1989; Polanyi 2001)

[8]On migration systems, see Massey et al. 1993.

borderlands urbanization, but efforts on all sides to maintain differentiations in culture and political loyalty amidst intensifying political-economic connections. In the region that became the Ethiopia-Somaliland borderlands, entrepôt towns served as markets and meeting points for Britons, Abyssinians and Somalis—but such meetings also involved contestations and reframings of the broader meanings of ethnicity and political loyalty. What comes into view, then, is a deep history of trade, patterns of social interaction, and processes of state-building and –breaking re-molded into different forms, indelibly marked by this colonial encounter and their subsequent scaling up through postcolonial nation-state politics.

To think more dynamically about this system requires historicizing some of colonialism's de-historicizing narratives. The British brought with them a suite of strategies and meticulous practices of record-keeping and cartography to apprehend the nature of subject races. I will start with British perspectives not only because of the voluminous records available, but also because their views had a major impact on subsequent geopolitics and continue to dominate Western histories of the region. Shifting to the views and practices of Somalis and Abyssinians, however, I suggest that Britons instrumentally misjudged the social structure of the Northern Horn, with lasting effects.

## 2.1   Cross-cultural encounters: colonialism as poly-ethnic system

In September 1892, Harald George Carlos Swayne and his brother, Eric John Eagles Swayne (future commissioner of British Somaliland) approached "the ill-famed Abyssinian stockade fort" at Jigjiga, "which had been such a thorn in the side of the Jibril Abokr tribe." Finding it unoccupied—the Abyssinians being encamped (probably near Kara Marda pass) above the valley—they took some photographs and accepted milk from Jigjiga's Bartire inhabitants, then marched northwards the following day. Reaching Jeldessa on the 14th they evidently found a much livelier scene: "a swarm of people of mixed Eastern races blocked the way, bartering cloth, tobacco, coffee, and other articles of trade; and among the Abyssinians, Gallas, Somalis, and Hararis I observed several men of the black Soudanese type" (Swayne 1903, 136). In Jeldessa, Harald Swayne writes, after establishing some rapport with Abyssinian officials the brothers met with Adeni Arab merchants and with ꜥIse Somalis insisting "that they were British 'subjects,'" including one old man who "had been to London and Bombay as a ship's fireman." Also near Jeldessa, according to Swayne's account, ꜥIse soldiers claimed British protection by performing a *dabaldeg* display, an "acknowledgement

of sovereignty" recognizing the British Government.[9]  The Swayne brothers informed the ʿIse that "they were under Abyssinian control here.... They replied that they were sorry, for they felt great friendship for us. The situation was for a moment awkward" (Swayne 1903, 141–42).

When the Swayne brothers returned from their "exploration" of the interior, Harald drew a map to inform British administrators about the extent of their colonial obligations. In contrast to what the written account suggests about ethnic mixing, the map showed clean lines delimiting tribal territories. Twenty years later, mixing or cooperation between Somalis and highland Ethiopians was so effaced from British recognition that Commissioner Manning of the British Somaliland Protectorate could assert: "It must be remembered that the distrust and dislike of the Somali for the Abyssinian is deeply rooted and hereditary, and dates back to a period anterior to the British occupation of the Somali coast."[10] Such assertions, common among Britons posted to the Protectorate in the early 20th century, not only flatten history into a supposed heredity, but also discursively remove the effects of British activity from histories of social change. In accounts of Britons, part of their mandate in the northern Horn was to protect simple Somali pastoralists (allegedly living in their "natural state" of nomadism stretching back to Biblical times)[11] from the aggressive and imperialistic Abyssinians of the Ethiopian highlands.

To be sure, there were historical animosities between eastern Ethiopia's Muslims (including Somalis) and the Orthodox Christian *Habesha* who consolidated power in the highlands. Yet the northern Horn at the turn of the century is better thought of as what Barth (1998) terms a stratified poly-ethnic system, within which not only Somalis and Ethiopians, but also Britons (and to a lesser extent in the immediate region, Italians and French), were engaged in continuously struggles to define and enforce boundaries of identity and alliance. We cannot understand the maintenance of Somali and Ethiopian identities as they came to be lived in Ethiopia's eastern borderlands in the 20th century without conceptualizing them in relation to European racecraft (cf. Pierre 2013). Swayne's map took its place in a canon of British regional cartography that shaped geopolitical struggles, and which is explored here before turning to Somali and Ethiopian views of this meeting of worlds.

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[9]While *dabaldeg* generally means a ceremony, historical sources including the Swaynes, Tekle-Hawaryat, and others, recorded a specific type of ceremony including displays of horsemanship and the symbolic submission of Somalis to imperial authorities.

[10]F.O. 401/15/3, Enclosure in No. 3, Manning to Crew, May 28, 1910. p. 3.

[11]See Jardine 1923, 20; Drake-Brockman 1912, 88; James 1888, 2

**Spaces of British Empire**

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was a major impetus for exploration and conquest of regions along the shipping route from Britain to India. British occupation of the northern Horn, however, was more directly necessitated by the Mahdist war in Sudan (1881-1899), which prompted Ottoman-Egyptian forces to withdraw from the ancient city of Harar in the highlands above Jigjiga and Jeldessa.[12] British administrators and soldiers arrived in the Horn's ports—Zeyla, Bulhar and Berbera—to fill the security gap left by the Egyptian withdrawal, at the same time as the Abyssinian Empire was expanding eastward and asserting claims over this space. The meeting of worlds that intensified in the 1880s was not Britons' first counter with the Abyssinian Empire; the dramatic conflict with Emperor Tewodros in the 1860s (which resulted in Tewodros' suicide) was fresh in memory.

The small groups of Britons who migrated temporarily to the Horn's northern coast brought with them a refined suite of cultural strategies for organizing and documenting inter-ethnic encounters as they sought to extend British cultural-political power.[13] Britons conceptualized regional politics as comprised of distinct Somali clan groups. Between 1884 and 1887, agents of the British Empire forged treaties with coastal Somalis, offering "protection" in exchange for an agreement "not to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, any portion of their territory..." (Hertslet 1967, 2:409). The first detailed regional maps and administrative records appeared around the time of these agreements, providing the opportunity to examine how Britons working in the Horn deployed their conceptualizations of space and time as they sought to carve out a niche for the British Empire here. A series of maps is reproduced here in simplified form (attempting to retain something of the original character and spelling of names).[14] Cartographic imaginaries of timeless territory did not reflect an unambiguous, preexisting reality. They oriented the power of an empire towards organizing space and time as imperial officials sought to create ("protect") what they perceived to already exist. As this meeting of worlds unfolded, these strategies were forced to adapt to Habeshas' (Abyssinians') and Somalis' productions of their own spaces and times;

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[12]Ottoman-Egyptian forces, with British approval, had occupied the territory along the coast and up to Harar for two decades, but withdrew in November 1884 as *al-Mahdi's* rebellion wreaked havoc on their authority in Sudan.

[13]Cf. Crais 2002, 83 on South Africa: "Map and census were important instruments in the creation of a model of African society upon which the state could act. Maps and numbers, space and numeracy, made possible the creation of colonial categories that could be fixed spatially, thus allowing for a state-sponsored territorialization of culture." See also MacArthur's (2016) work on Kenya.

[14]I thank Weston Libraries at Oxford University, the British National Archives at Kew Gardens, and the Royal Geographical Society of London for permission to produce derivative images of these maps for the purpose of this dissertation

Figure 2.1: Simplification of Major Heath's "Map of Somali Land and Harar compiled from Italian and Egyptian Surveys," 1883. Map drawn by author based on Heath's map, E1:4(142) in Weston Library, Oxford University.

these adaptations are evident in the sequence of maps paralleling this chapter's text.

In the earliest maps, Somali pastoralist territoriality appears vague in contrast with sedentary Oromo and some Somali groups in the agro-pastoral areas around Harar. Major Heath's 1883 "Map of Somali Land and Harar" (Fig. 2.1) depicts general areas of ʿIse (British: *Essa*, Somali: *Ciise*), Gadabursi (Somali: *Gadabuursi*), and some Isaq (British: *Isaaq*, *Ishaq* or *Ishaaq*; Somali: *Isxaaq*) clans, but with no marked borders around them. In the context of the Egyptian withdrawal, Fullerton's 1885 map (Fig. 2.2) shows the "approximate Egyptian boundary" to which Britain was heir apparent—a boundary that fades out as it reaches the marked territories of Oromo clans around Harar, but which distinctly includes Harar and the far-western Somali clans that were most closely connected with the ancient city.

The first map purporting to show distinct Somali clan territories appears as a negative image of the territoriality envisioned in Heath's and Fullerton's maps: A Foreign Office map from 1885 marks out the boundaries of the ʿIse, Gadabursi, and Habr Awal (Isaq) clan territories, leaving Harar and the only other Somali clan marked on the map—the Bartire—outside the area of concern (Fig. 2.3). Even before the Abyssinian occupation of Harar in 1887, Britons began to discern their territorial commitments as stopping
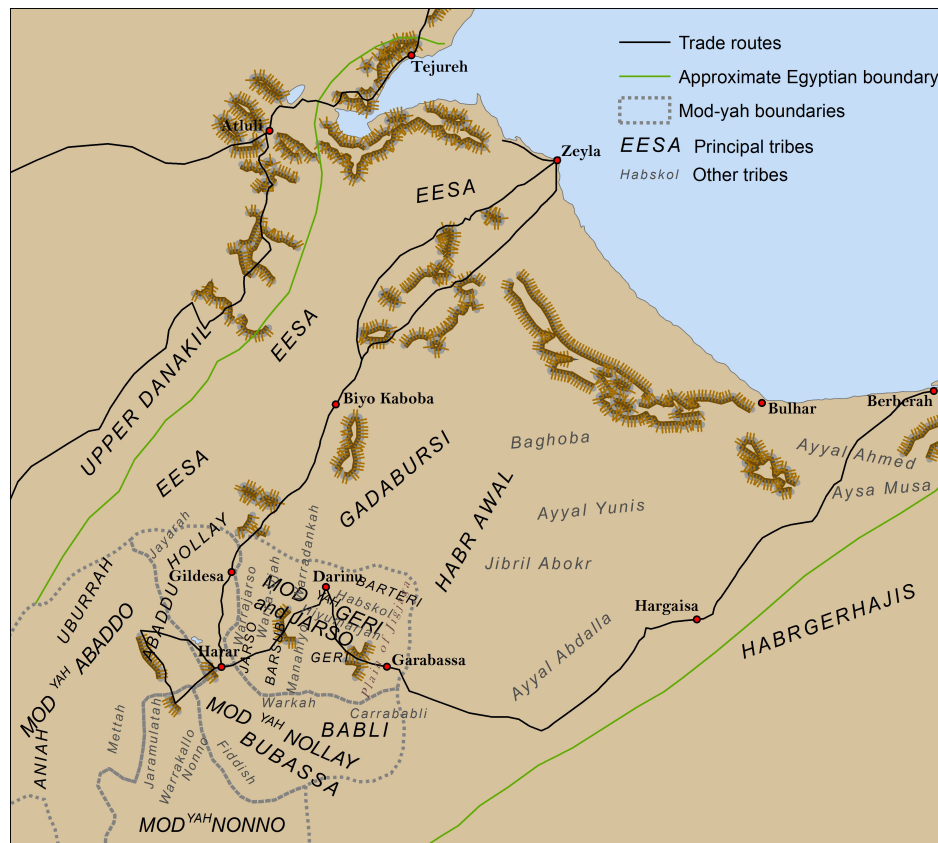
Figure 2.2: Simplification of Fullerton's "Somali Land and the Harar Province," 1885. Map drawn by author based on Fullerton's map, E1:4(175) in Weston Library, Oxford University.

roughly at the base of the highlands.

These vague notions of ʿIse, Gadabursi, and Isaq territorialities defined British claims as Britons representing the Empire began migrating to coastal ports to administer the claimed "Somaliland Protectorate." An 1891 and a subsequent 1894 agreement between Britain and Italy imprecisely defined the spheres of influence of the two European powers in the Horn, but British administrators[15] made it clear that the Protectorate's territorial extent would depend on what ongoing surveys about tribes revealed: "with our present insufficient information as to the tribes on the internal frontiers of the British Protectorate," an 1891 memo by Somaliland's Consul Stace states, "any attempt to define, even approximately, the limits of the Protectorate, would be a task of the greatest difficulty."[16] Yet this set of correspondence includes a map that estimated clan boundaries (Fig. 2.4). It also describes some of the clan territories: the Habr Awal (Isaq), for example—"the tribe with which we have the most intimate relations"—"retire in the hot season to about 50

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[15] At this time Somaliland fell under the India Office, until the Protectorate was transferred to the colonial office

[16] F.O. 403/155, No. 55, "India Office to Foreign Office," Oct. 9, 1891, p. 37
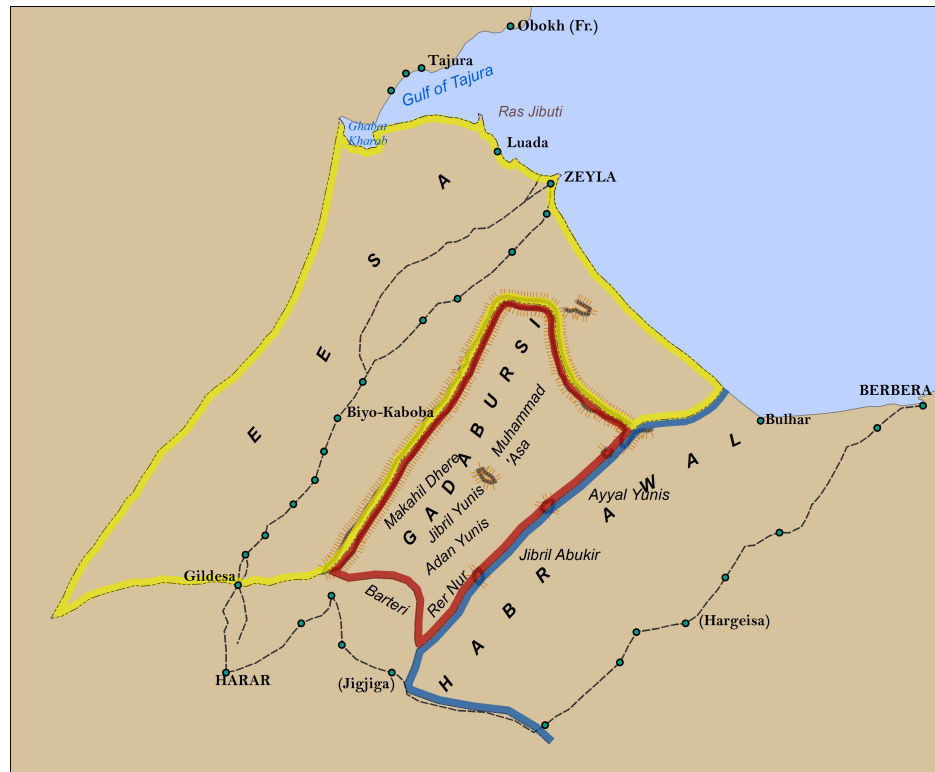
Figure 2.3: Simplification of "Map Showing the Boundaries of the Eesa and Gadabursi Territories," 1885. F.O. 925/325, no. 720, Oct. 7, 1885. Map drawn by author based on original in BNA (Jigjiga and Hargeisa Labels added to existing points on map).
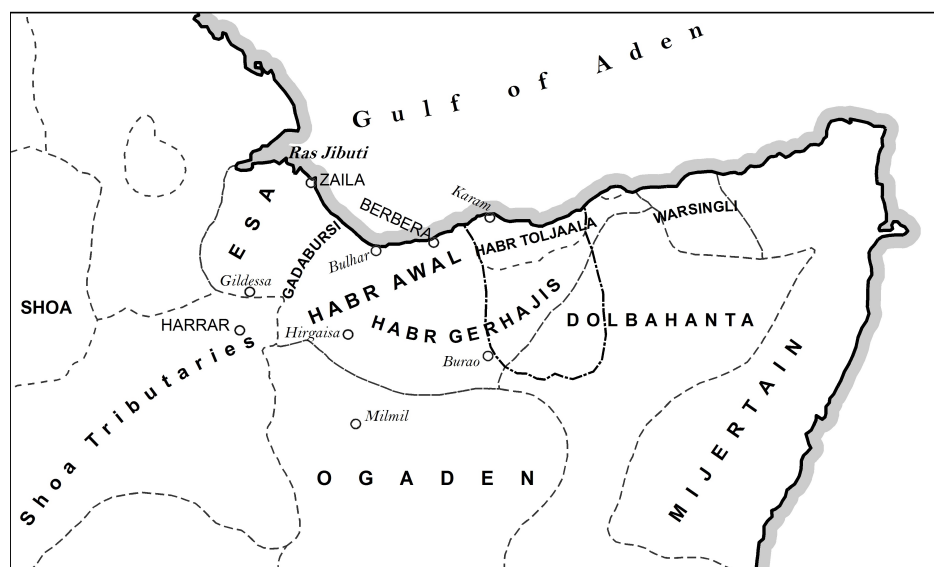


Figure 2.4: British administrators' estimation of clan territories in October, 1891 based on "Justus Perthes' Map" (original unidentified by author). Drawn by author based on sketch map from F.O. 403/155, Inclosure 2 in No. 60.

miles south of Hargaisa, where they touch the Ogaden. They do not, as a tribe, enter the Ogaden, though of course individuals do."[17] Regarding the Gadabursi, Stace wrote, "we shall know more on the return of Captain and Lieutenant Swayne," who were exploring the interior around the Jeldessa (British: Gildesa) and Jigjiga areas.

> But as far as I am aware, there could be very little difficulty in determining the south-west and south boundary, as I understand it is naturally defined by the 'Bin,' or treeless arid tract separating them, as by a long broad strip, from the Somali tribes under Harrar, and similarly the south-westerly corner of the Habr Awal, where the Jibri[l] Abukr dwell.[18]

As noted above, the maps resulting from the Swaynes' missions into the interior place a straight boundary that stretched British claims nearly up to the edge of the highlands, passing across the Haud mid-elevation grasslands just east of the Abyssinian outpost of Jigjiga (Fig. 2.5).

Britons deployed understandings of territoriality and conceptions of group conflict in order to justify and organize rule. For example, after only about a decade of British attempts to understand the characteristics of Somali society, Somaliland's Vice-Consul Cordeaux wrote in 1901 that "the further east we look the more turbulent and unruly do we find the tribes, until the climax is reached in the Dolbahanta [Dhulbahante] country." Regarding Dhulbahante lands on the eastern edge of the Protectorate, little was known except that the inhabitants "are in a chronic state of feud and lawlessness." This contrasted with "the peacefully-disposed coast tribes of the Habr Awal."[19] In many respects, while early travelers and administrators wrote of the Somali generally as a race, by the early 1900s, clans themselves were frequently described in terms of their own racial characteristics. "Somalis of different tribes differ so greatly," wrote Drake-Brockman (1912, 86), "that one must constantly bear in mind the race or tribe of whom each traveler is speaking."

The subsequent analysis reveals how Britons' conceptions of African territorialities and temporalities elided as much of Somali social reality as they apprehended. It is important to note, however, that this meeting of worlds—this poly-ethnic system—was not an even playing field. It was a stratified system, a set of interactions in which Britons would come to have overbearing power to shape ethnic relations. A historical genealogy of the way these understandings took shape in particular interactions among these three

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[17]F.O. 403/155, No. 60, Stace to Baring, Oct. 8, 1891, p. 43.

[18]F.O. 403/155, No. 60, Stace to Baring, Oct. 8, 1891, p. 43.

[19]F.O. 403/313, Inclosure 2 in No. 56, Vice-Consul Cordeaux to Consul-General Sadler, Berbera, April 30, 1901, p. 60.
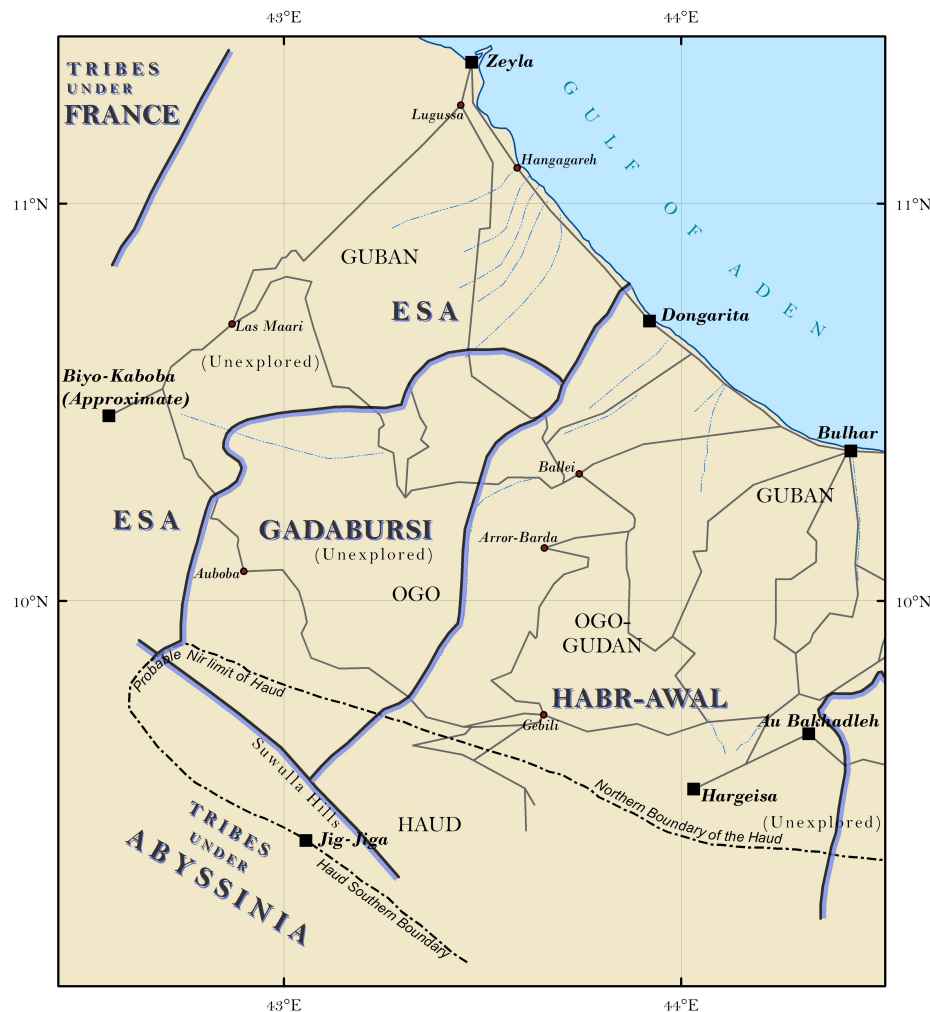
Figure 2.5: Simplification of H.G.C. Swayne's "Routes in Northern Somali-Land," Sheet IV (1895), showing clan territories and approximate extent of British claims based on these territories. Map drawn by author based on F.O. 925/822, Sheet IV in BNA.

groups reveals the particular spatial points at which interactions came to be concentrated, as well as the domains of political, cultural, and economic activity that were particularly relevant transfer points of power as ethnic and clan groupings sought to define others and draw them into their own orbit.[20]

The unfolding geopolitics of the 1890s did little to relieve the "awkwardness" of Britons' political position in the northern Horn. Although the Swaynes and other local representatives pushed for the extension of British claims up to the territorial boundaries they perceived as naturally belonging to "their" protected

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[20]I draw here on Foucault's (1978, 103) use of the term "transfer point": Sexuality, he writes, "appears... as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power: between men and women, young people and old people, parents and offspring, teachers and students, priests and laity, an administration and a population." The concept suggests the production and naturalization of domains that order the organization of force and application to a population.
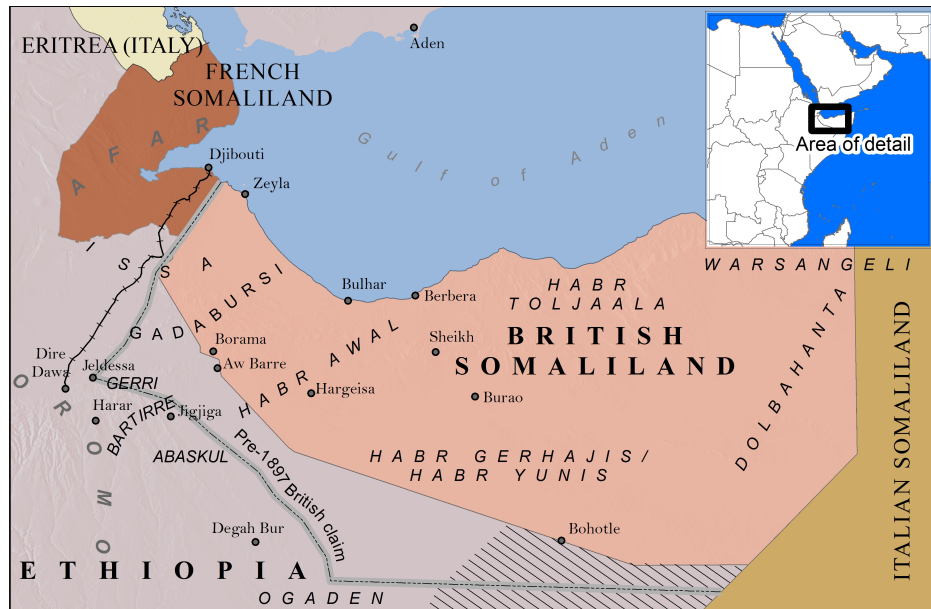
Figure 2.6: Pre-1897 British claim based on Ravenstein's 1894 map, and regional borders as they came to exist in the early 20th century. Map by author.

clans—the ʿIse, Gadabursi, and Isaq (notably Habr Awal in the west)—the British Home Government forged an 1894 agreement with Italy that limited these claims to a line across the Haud plains. The boundary did not quite match clan territories even as Britons on the ground were coming to understand them. The battle of Adwa in 1896—significant for its own racial dimensions as "a victory of blacks over whites" (Zewde 2001, 81)—made it clear that it was not primarily the Italians, but rather the Abyssinians, with whom Britain had to deal in defining the boundaries of control. Emperor Menelik II's claims, made public in a circular letter of 1891, defined the Abyssinian Empire as encompassing the lands of the ʿIse, Gadabursi, Ogaden and Habr Awal Somali (Eshete 1994). In 1897 an official border demarcation reached between Ras Makonnen and British Consul Rodd ceded much of this territory to Menelik, limiting British claims even more (Fig. 2.6).

Struggles over who controlled cross-border mobility, taxation, and the management of payments and exchanges across the border shaped the organization of wealth and power among Somalis as the British capitalist system and the Abyssinian political-religious modes of commanding value distribution converged on a largely (but not exclusively) pastoralist production system. As new political-economic regulations were imposed by both Abyssinians and Britons at the borders defined in 1897, Jeldessa all but disappeared from the historical record. Jigjiga became the key site at which officials, traders, and clan leaders struggled to expand, or in some cases simply to retain, their power and cultural-economic modes of commanding value

that could support the significantly different demands of Somali, British, and Ethiopian power.

**Abyssinian expansion**

The Abyssinians whom the Swaynes encountered at Jeldessa, and who had recently built the fort at Jigjiga, were in one sense foreigners to Somali space—though not as unfamiliar to Somalis as were Britons. The past 1,500 years of regional history had seen a series of religiously-organized conquests and counter-conquests that shaped animosities between Muslims, including Somalis, and Orthodox Christian kingdoms.[21] Polities built upon a combination of highlands agriculture and long-distance trade had risen and fallen over the two millennia prior to European colonialism in the Horn. The ancient kingdom of Aksum, with its port on the Red Sea at Adulis, exported commodities and slaves to Mediterranean areas and as far as India—and periodically controlled territory on the Arabian Peninsula (Phillipson 2000). Control over the east-west trade route terminating at the Gulf of Aden coast was a bone of contention between Christian and Muslim principalities, shaping a series of conflicts including Aḥmad "*Gurey*" Grañ's conquest of the highlands in the 16th century (Zewde 2001).

To understand the unfolding geopolitics around Jigjiga requires sketching elements of the highland-centered Abyssinian or *Habesha* political economy that was expanding eastward. Here, concentric conceptions of ethnicity pertained (unlike the more fixed notions evident in British conceptions). Donald Donham suggests that *Habesha* identity, while riven by regional factions, was defined in relation to the permanent periphery of darker-skinned *Shankilla* (potential slaves) and Muslims. To both the east and west of the highlands, "the line between highlands and lowlands tended to define the boundary between cultures" (Donham 1986, 20). "Ethiopians," writes historian Bahru Zewde (2001, 2),

> divide their country topographically into three major zones: *daga* (the rather cool highlands...),
> *wayna daga* (the intermediate zone where most of the settled population lives) and *qolla* (the
> hot valleys and plains...). Although originally climatic designations, these terms have come
> over time to assume broader meaning, denoting differing modes of life and character.

The ethnic category Amhara denoted position at the center of the political structure, associated with agricultural livelihood, Orthodox Christianity, and geographic identity—mobilized by Haile Selassie in the

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[21]The classic work *The Conquest of Abyssinia*, written in the 16th century CE, describes Somalis as a distinct group, though Somalis forged alliances with Muslim leaders in the eastern highlands around Harar (Šihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad bin ʿAbd al-Qāder bin Sālem bin ʿUthman (ʿArab Faqīh) 2003)

early 20th century in terms of standing "upon our mountains proud in our independence" (Sellassie 1999, 1:136).[22] Amhara ethnicity was not strictly bounded by (real or fictive) patrilineal descent, as was Somali clanship (what we usually call "ethnicity" is not the same type of thing in every case). It was defined by a combination of color and culture in relation to surrounding populations. According to Donham (1986, 12), the darker-skinned Shankilla were seen as almost part of the natural environment—much as African "races" appeared to British imperialists. Galla denoted uncivilized pagans, who over generations could gradually be civilized and Amharized. This description of the Galla—a (derogatory) name for Oromo—reflects their intermediate position in both social and geographical terms by the mid-19th century. Oromo social organization, characterized by the *gada* system of monotheistic religion, age-sets and the rotation of governance among lineage groups, had become a dominant power south of Shewa: from the 16th century, "the Oromo swept across the highlands like a tidal wave," writes Zewde (2001, 9).[23]

Oromo-speaking groups migrating from south-central Ethiopia had cut off Somali access to Harar by the late 1600s. This confederation of Alla, Nole and Babile clans, known as the *Afran-Qallu* (the Four [Sons of] Qallu), used horses to raid the ꜥIse and Ogaden Somali and the Afar (Caulk 1977, 371). In the 1820s such raiding evidently transformed into larger-scale offensives against Somalis, culminating in a famous battle, shrouded in legend, between a left-handed Oromo leader ("Gurey", but a different *gurey* than Aḥmed Grañ) and the Somali *Garad* Wiil Waal ("Crazy Boy"). A famous poem attributed to Wiil Waal describes the conflict's outcome:

> *Intaan weerar ku qaado, Gurey waaxyaha goynin,*
>
> *Cadowbaa wadankeena la wareegi lahaa*[24]

> Had I not attacked and hewn Gurey into quarters,
>
> Our country would have been overrun by the enemy.

The conflict took place in or near the Jigjiga Valley, where the Haud Plains (or Marar Prairie) approached the foot of the Gureis Mountains—a borderland below the natural battlements of Ethiopia's eastern escarpment.

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[22]Selassie also wrote: "We are aware that Ethiopia's success in guarding her independence at all times arises from the mountains which have been given to her by nature and which separate her from all the other African countries. It is proper to say that Ethiopia has been the bastion of Christianity for more than a millennium among the savages and pagans in the arid desert" (Sellassie 1999, 1:118).

[23]On the Oromo *gada* system and history, see Asmarom Legesse 1973; Oba 2013; Tsega Etefa 2012.

[24]Quoted from http://www.doollo.com/mainpage/Wiil%20Waal/Wiilwaal.htm

*Garad* Wiil Waal remains famous for securing the Jigjiga Valley from an Oromo invasion. However, a different threat was to sweep into the region from farther west.

During the late 19th century, the east-west trade route extending to Zeila and Berbera had increased in its relative importance to highland kingdoms (Bahru Zewde, 22; 94). The intersection between land-tenure and political organization in the highlands had shaped the political-economic system such that Habesha emperors' strength "rested in large part on their success in extending peripheries" (Donham 1986, 10). This encouraged expansion to the east, west, and south. By the mid-1880s, Abyssinian trade with European powers provided the firearms they needed to conquer Oromo polities: Arsi, Jimma, Limmu, Guma and Wallaga fell to Abyssinian forces during the 1880s and 90s (Mekuria Bulcha 2002, 67). The famous Battle of Chelenqo in 1887 brought Harar under Abyssinian control—and with this, the Zeila trade route which had been dominated by coastal sultanates (and more recently by Egypt). This invasion of the Islamic urban center sent shockwaves into nearby Somali communities, evinced in a poem Isaq poet Ḥaji Aden wrote on the occasion:

> *Kun baad subax disheen aamminoo, seexday oo kacay'e*
>
> *Saddex boqol ka badan culimadii, suuqa Harar tiil'e*
>
> *Iyagoo salaad Jamac galaad, seef ku madhiseen'e*[25]

> You killed a thousand in the morning as they slept and woke;
>
> Three hundred or more scholars [ʿulema] lie in Harar's market.
>
> As they entered Friday prayers, you emptied [the mosque] with a sword.

This religion-infused conflict set a tone for the practice and interpretation of politics in this borderland. Menelik wrote a letter to the British Consul at Aden after occupying Harar, claiming that the Harari Emir had been another "Grañ" and alerting the British that Menelik now claimed sovereignty over all the Galla (Mohamed Osman Omar 2001).[26] The powerful regional regime of Ras Makonnen was soon established at Harar.

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[25] Quoted in Axmed Cabdi Haybe 2017, 26. My translation.

[26] Mohamed Osman continues (p. 107): The British resident at Aden assured Menelik of "the continued friendship of the British Government" and asserted, "we shall always be glad to further Your Majesty's interests" (quoting Foreign Department archives, N.A.I., New Delhi, June 1887, N. 212-272).

In the early 1890s, forces under the command of Harar had expanded to the edge of the Gureis Range but only periodically ventured down into the lowlands beyond Jigjiga. Makonnen's Harar administration could not simply install itself politically while drawing on economic production elsewhere, as British forces would do in Somaliland. (The spatial distribution of violence and extraction across the empire enabled Britons to claim that their lack of taxation and violence constituted a more peaceful colonialism). The highland empire, by the 1880s cut off from all coastal outlets due to European claims, was "undercapitalized" (Barnes 2000, 16) and could not mobilize large surpluses to feed occupying armies. Military expansion, therefore, required that forces live off of their surroundings (Barnes 2000, 2001). As the eastern arm of Abyssinian expansion reached pastoralist areas, this meant collecting livestock. Two complaints animate current narratives of this expansion. First, Abyssinian extension into the Somali lands joined there with European colonialism—"giving a hand to British colonialism" specifically—in ways that proved detrimental to Somali interests (Axmed Cabdi Haybe 2017, 27). Second, Abyssinians imposed a heavy head-tax or *gibir*, which formed a key complaint for Somalis but tended to subordinate groups closer to Harar more than those farther away (Axmed Cabdi Haybe 2017, 27–28). Yet as in other colonial situations, the divisions between colonizer and colonized were not always clear, nor coterminous with ethnic groupings. Stories abound of Somalis serving as "facilitators" (*waddo-mariyo*) for Amhara tax-collectors, sometimes skillfully tricking these Abyssinian forces, and at other times betraying their clansmen to the Amhara. The collection of hefty taxes was particularly fraught at this frontier between different cultural-economies, but did not necessarily push Somalis directly into reliance on cash as happened with European occupation in some locations.[27] "At that time," writes Aḥmed ʿAbdi Haybe (2017, 28), "the people did not have money, so the clans used to pay the *gibir* in livestock." Livestock, a nexus of market and kinship-based power among Somalis, became a material basis for imperial authority as well.

Elements of the articulation between Ethiopian imperial power and Somali authority would begin to change through sedentarization and the introduction of agriculture in the Jigjiga area, a history narrated most completely in English by Barnes (2000, 2001, 2004, 2010). While seeking to construct an Ethiopian-centered counterpoint to the Somalia-oriented histories of I. M. Lewis and others, Barnes reinscribes British assumptions about Somalis' "unruliness,"[28] resulting in assertions that Somalis were "fickle subjects" but

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[27]e.g. Crais (2002, 20–25) details the increasing reliance on wage labor brought about in Eastern Cape by villagization policies, the establishment of administrative borders, and dispossession of land.

[28]Barnes inserts his study into literature on the Horn of Africa by asserting: "The general works on Somali history have not given much thought to how the Ethiopian state was able to 'rule' a very unruly Somali periphery..." (Barnes 2000, 16)

"faithful clansmen" and in a (statist) tendency to equate sedentarization and stabilization. To test Barnes'
(2000, 14) assertion that the creation of taxable subjects through Ethiopian military-fiscalism tended "to
increase the power of the state over society" requires adequately understanding how authority was configured
among Somalis. Tax became a fundamental issue for the construction of Ethiopian authority in part because
it tended to redirect resources from other forms of command and reciprocity through which Somalis coped
with uncertainty. In other words, it diverted surplus value from kinship orders into state politics—but tax
payments (effectively more like tribute) to the Ethiopians offered little return in the way of public services
or protection.

## 2.2   Somali modes of command

In extending the socio-territorial borders of their empires, both Britons and Ethiopians mobilized claims
over Somali clans, defining Somalis' subjecthood not by individual allegiance or territorial location, but
rather through the agnatic lineage system that constituted one aspect of Somali social organization. A Jid-
waq or an Ogaden Somali, regardless of residence location, was an Ethiopian subject. A Habr Awal Somali,
regardless of his territorial location, was a British protected person. (By this clan model, the Somali subject
was inevitably a "he.") Sovereignty over the ʿIse and Gadabursi, whose "home territories" the border tran-
sected, would be subject to decades-long contestation. Before pushing this analysis further, a foundational
problematic lurking behind narratives of regional politics must be addressed: What is a Somali clan in the
context of the northern Horn? What is its importance in everyday life? (From this basis, the following chap-
ter can take up the related question of whether a clan today is the same thing as a clan was at the opening of
the 20th century.) And how did Somali modes of territoriality compare to Britons' conceptions of them?

**What is a clan? (Notes on segmentary lineage)**

British administrators mobilized a view of regional socio-political organization in which membership
in a Somali clan was an inherited ("ascribed") identity. Membership of clans in larger-scale political or-
ganization, on the other hand, was a matter of allegiances, whether coerced (as Britons envisions to be the
case in Ethiopia) or shaped by some form of social contract (Britons envisioned themselves fulfilling So-
malis' aspirations for modernization even as they disavowed responsiveness to Somali demands). By the
1940s, British anthropologist I.M. Lewis would famously theorize the dual operation of kinship and polit-

ical contract (*ḥeer*) as providing the foundation of Somali social stability through a "segmentary lineage" system. The basic idea is this: segmentary social structure mobilizes a group of relatives when disputes occur, meaning that a conflict between two individuals can rapidly scale up into a dispute between groups. The number of people involved in a conflict depends on the relational distance between parties. A dispute between cousins who can identify a common ancestor would tend to involve fewer people than a dispute between two individuals from different ethnicities, which might mobilize entire ethnic groups. Lewis (2002, 10) engaged most straightforwardly in explaining Somali politics through this framework when he argued that "Somali political allegiances are determined by descent in the male line; and whatever their precise historical content, it is their lineage genealogies which direct the lines of political allegiance and division."

Lewis envisioned the *jilib* or "diya-paying group" as the foundational unit of Somali politics. The Arabic loan-word *diya* and the Somali word *mag* refer to compensation—usually in livestock—mobilized by the *jilib* when one of its members injures or kills a member of another *jilib*. The *jilib* also tended to be an exogamous unit whose members mobilized dowry payments (*meher*). Payments of livestock from other groups would ideally be distributed among the *jilib* according to their relative genetic distance from the family unit receiving compensation. In parallel with information from other agnatic lineage societies, Lewis demonstrates the significant amount of resources from pastoralist production and market exchange that went into reproducing kinship ties that functioned on one level as social insurance. *Jilib*s identifying a shared ancestor a few generations back comprised sub-clans, sub-clans identifying more distant ancestors comprised clans, and clans identifying more distant ancestors—at this level, often shrouded in the mists of time—comprised larger clan-confederacies and clan-families in a bewildering hierarchy.

Lewis and other anthropologists recognized that such genealogical organization was in part fictive, and the colloquial differentiation between "long-branch" (*laan-dheere*) and "short-branch" (*laan-gab*) kinship structures generally reflected not actual depth in time, but differential demographic growth that required larger groups to split into more and more sub-groups to retain a relatively efficient *mag* system. Efforts of historians and anthropologists to diagram Somali genealogical trees reveal varying conceptions of the structure and suggest that conceptions of genealogical relatedness among certain groups may have changed over time (see Appendix 1). To orient readers, Table 1 offers a hierarchy of lineage terminologies used throughout this work, accompanying three examples of lineages in Jigjiga as people describe them in the early 21st century.

In tandem with kinship, Lewis described the operation of Somali "political contract" or *ḥeer*, which "includes essentially contractual elements having closest affinities with the political theories which saw the origins of political union in an egalitarian social contract" (Lewis 1961, 3). In short, a repertoire of contractual options existed through which Somali clans could enter into alliances and through which individuals could potentially leave their original *jilib* and join another. In the terms of a Somali proverb, *Ama buur ahow, ama buur ku tiirsanow*: "Either be a mountain, or lean on one" (Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur 2016, 219). Marriages were a critical facet of organizing such alliances, since Somali women in essence do not belong to a clan in the same sense that Britons envisioned Somali men as inescapably identified by their lineage (Kapteijns 2010). (This ambiguity, along with chauvinism among officials, may account for the near-invisibility of Somali women in British historical records.)

It is starkly evident that the nature of clanship as a political-economic formation underwent shifts as Britons and Abyssinians sought with only partial success to freeze and capture clanship as a political tool. Imperial officials did not only compete to control clans, but competed to define the relationship between clan affiliation and imperial allegiances, with implications for taxation and access to trade. "Chiefly" authority congealed at multiple points within the precolonial lineage system; there was no one chief over an entire clan, but subclan *suldaan*s, clan *ugas*s, and some *garaad*s who would claim authority over an entire clan-group at the level of the Ogaden or even at the higher level of the Darod. Chiefship (*suldaannimo*) also meant somewhat different things among different groups—most famously perhaps among the ˁIse, who maintain a non-hereditary method of appointing their *ugas* through elders' nomination. Conceptions of authority tend

Table 2.1: Lineage levels commonly mobilized by informants in Jigjiga ordered into a terminology as used in the text. Grey shading indicates the levels of identity most commonly used by informants and often spoken of as comparable levels (e.g., "I'm not Ogaden; I'm Isaq")

| | Level | Ogaden Example | Jidwaq Example | Isaq Example | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *<= Increasing relatedness* | Clan-family | Darod | Darod | Irir | *<<= Depth in time* |
| | Clan-subfamily | Absame | Absame | Dir | |
| | Clan-confederacy | Ogaden | Jidwaq | Isaq | |
| | (Seldom used) | Miyir Walal | | | |
| | (Seldom used) | Bahale | | | |
| | Clan-group | Mohamed Zubeyr | | Habr Magadleh | |
| | Clan | Rer Abdille | Bartire | Habr Awal | |
| | Subclan | Rer Amadin | | Saad Muse | |
| | Lineage | Liban Jarar | Ablele | Jibril Abokr | |
| | Sublineage (*jilib*) | Amar Liban | | Rer Yunis Jibril | |

towards a relatively open "wealth in people" logic, involving collective discussion in which clan leaders at whatever level were rarely granted exclusive powers to determine clan allegiances or to mobilize collective payments ranging from *mag* to the much-hated Abyssinian *gibir* tax. Aḥmed ⸂Abdi Haybe writes that the Bah-Magan "rejected the chiefship" (*ugaasnimada ku diideen*) of Ugas Ḥashi after he agreed to pay the Abyssinians *gibir*. British officials likewise occasionally found their appointed chiefs no longer recognized as authorities by their clansmen, posing a problem for the concept of clan-based loyalties.

Even if clan authority functioned quite differently than administrators wished, however, the imaginary of clans as units of political loyalty was convenient for the administration of collective punishment in a border area. If individuals escaped across the porous border to avoid jurisdiction, their kinfolk, imagined in inescapable solidarity with them, could be fined for their misdeeds. Thus clanship acquired meaning as it was performed not only by Somalis, but by Britons and Habesha as well.[29]

Somali men could gain authority outside of chiefship through religious leadership and material wealth. Among the most prominent example of this was Sayid Moḥamed ⸂Abdille Ḥassan—neither a chief nor a particularly wealthy man at the time—who led a *jihad* against the colonizing Britons and Abyssinians. The history of the two-decade conflict is the subject of several books,[30] few of which have mentioned—let alone analyzed—the shifting nature of clanship in conjunction with other organizing principles. Sayid Moḥamed's claims about his own retributive justice reflect how the imperial "mountains" on which some lineages leaned shifted the relationship between clans themselves. For example, in the poem "The Road to Harar," Sayid Moḥamed discursively defined clans as political units with a litany of threats:

> *Haddii aanan Majerteen sidii adhi u iideynin*
>
> *Ararsamiyo Iidoor haddaan iranka loo qaadin*
>
> *Oo aanan irbaha dheer ka jarin, eyda reer Hagara*[31]


> If I don't slaughter the Majerteen like goats
>
> If I don't hunt the Ararsamo [Dhulbahante] and Iidoor [Isaaq]

---

[29]Here I follow Kapteijns' (2010, 3) suggestion that clanship is "not a basic and stable organizational and behavioral principle of Somali society but a basic principle of a particular and extremely influential *way of thinking about* Somali society..." (emphasis in original).

[30]These include 'Abdi Sheik-'Abdi 1993; Irons 2013; Jardine 1923; McNeill 1902

[31]Poem text from http://maktabadda.com/diiwaanka-gabayadii-sayid-maxamed-cabdulle-xasan/jidka-adari-loo-maro/. I thank Aḥmed ⸂Abdi Haybe for assistance with the translation.

If I don't cut the long tendon of the Hagara [Dhulbahante] dogs

In tension with Lewis' dictum of clans directing political allegiance, in this poem Sayid Moḥamed threatens members of his maternal kinfolk, the Dhulbahante, as well as repeatedly insulting his own paternal lineage clan-group: *Awlaxa haddii aanan la dhicin niman Ogaadeena*—"If I don't shoot Ogaden men with a bow." (The final stanza completes the series of conditional statements: "Then I'm not a Muslim.")

Only after insulting these Somali groups does Sayid Moḥamed's threat move outwards to discursively define some of the geographical boundaries of Somali influence, marking the road to Harar (which began at Jigjiga) as a site that would be cleared, ostensibly of both its Abyssinian inhabitants and their Somali collaborators:

> *Ololaha colkaan wado haddaan laga ashaatoobin*
>
> *Jidka Adari loo maro haddaan, laga ugaaroobin*
>
> *Meesha iyo Iimey haddaanan, weerar ku ekaynin*

> If the campaign of vengeance I'm waging is not fought
>
> If the road to Harar has not become a hunting ground
>
> From here to Imey, if I refrain from attack

Finally, he shifts to mark the ethnic-outsider enemies: *Ooryaha Amxaaradu haddaanay, Cadan ka awlaynin*—"If the cries of the Amhara don't ring out from Aden"—and *Ingiriiska eyga ah hadduusan baqe ku ayn-faadin*—"If the English dogs don't flee in fear." This progression and the identification of Somali groups at various levels of relatedness problematize the segmentary lineage concept. British and Abyssinian involvement prompted new power struggles among Somalis, who demarcated imperial allegiances and resistance in part through clan-based structures of indemnity and responsibility.

If Sayid Moḥamed's power was not based exclusively on clan mobilization, the conflict among Somalis, Britons and Ethiopians that ravaged the borderlands periodically from 1900 until 1921 established new forms of what Barth (1998) terms "incentives to identity"—material forms of exchange and mutual reliance that work to reproduce ethnic and clan groups. Britons raided livestock from Protectorate Somalis who appeared sympathetic to Sayid Moḥamed's anticolonial cause, labeling these eviscerations as fines or penalties, and

using the raided goods to pay "their" loyal Somalis wages.[32] On the other side, Sayid Moḥamed raided those who sided with Britons or Abyssinians. Abyssinians meanwhile collected their *gibir* by chasing down clans that refused to pay.

Britons—whose viewpoints continue to dominate the most well-known histories of the area—recorded the resulting conflicts and livestock raiding among Somalis as timeless traits of the Somali race. This concept combined with other racializing narratives to define British strategies of governance. Shaping governance around such naturalizing views and conceptions of clan and racial territoriality, Britons sought to create what they perceived to exist "naturally." Their efforts to manage social interactions and spatial distributions would create new concentrated sites of interaction at borders and in regional towns. These interactions would also play a role in reshaping Somali cultural orientations towards wealth and power, so it is worth making a comment on this aspect.

### Egalitarian orientations

If kinship was increasingly becoming a lever of imperial rule in the early 20th century, its other social functions did not disappear. Among lineage groups, part of each household's wealth was subject to claims by kinfolk and thus bred a web of obligations, with the result that "considerable variations in wealth" did not undermine the "fundamentally egalitarian nature of Somali society" (Lewis 1961, 197). Among Somalis, livestock (*xoolo*, also meaning wealth) were a material basis for the articulation of kinship, markets, and, increasingly, imperial or state power. As the introduction demonstrated, a concept of command (*talo*) configured in part through livestock resonates with Somali descriptions of power from the early 20th century. *Talo* evokes not monarchical sovereignty or Mbembe's colonial *commandement*,[33] but rather leadership in connection with debate and consultation. Leaders who amassed livestock were recognized to have significant potential to command market transactions, but also gained power to command larger groups of people because they could afford to pay *mag* and to direct marriage-based alliances. Nevertheless, such power was

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[32]During British campaigns against Sayid Moḥamed, "[a] large number of transport spearmen were paid entirely in camels, and wounded men and the relatives of the dead were in the same manner compensated." Returning from an offensive against Halin in August 1902, the British force reportedly drove "about 12,000 camels, 35,000 sheep, besides cattle," and the total estimated number of camels taken in the 1902 summer campaign was 25,000 (Great Britain War Office 1907, 1:81; 100; 108). In April 1904 a raid reportedly rounded up "some 800 camels" from Warsangeli followers of Sayid Moḥamed. The recognized Warsangeli sultan, "with true Somali effrontery, subsequently put in a claim for the 800 camels, on the ground of their being tribal property (Great Britain War Office 1907, 1:263). Hamilton records the Abyssinians attacking the Rer Ibrahim for the protection they had given the Mullah. They managed to drive them against Swayne's force, which captured the Somalis' camels (Hamilton 1911, 72). In later campaigns the British continued to similarly raid Somalis: in February 1920 when Sayid Moḥamed's fort at Taleḥ was captured, "[t]he booty included 600 rifles, 450 camels, and 40 ponies" (Jardine 1923, 275).

[33]See Mbembe 2001

recognized as subject to the constraints of collective entitlements as well as humans' mortal inability to see the future. Sayid Moḥamed's accumulation of huge herds of livestock in conjunction with his mobilization of Somali anticolonial forces (and more directly, his raiding of British sympathizers) prompted a broader set of discussions about the temporalities of command. In the exchange of poems known as the *silsilad* (chain), Sayid Moḥamed's critics mobilized a conceptualization of the unpredictability of wealth and power and of collective command over resources. Part of the Ogaden poet Qaman Bulḥan's famous "Halqabsiyo" poem, composed in the 1910s, was quoted in the introduction and provides conceptual orientations for this entire work. The beginning of the poem is worth quoting as well, because it evokes intersections between lost livestock, lost political sovereignty (and the threats of centralized command), and the fragile nature of wealth in an unpredictable world:

> *Baadida nin baa kula deydeyi oo, daalna kaa badan'e*
>
> *Oo aan doonahayn inaad heshana, daayin abidkaaye*
>
> *Dadkuna moodi duul wada dhashoon, wax u daahsooneyn'e*
>
> *Dalana ma laha aakhiro haddii, loo kitaab dayeye*
>
> *Adduun waa hadh labadiisa gelin, waana la hubaaye*
>
> *Ha galgalato waxaa looga dhigay, yaan cidna u hadhine*
>
> *Kolun baa sabool la harqiyaa, hodona deegaaye.*[34]
>
> A man joins you in the quest, with an effort beyond yours
>
> But doesn't want you to find it, despite his trying.
>
> And the people will think you were born brothers; the reality is hidden
>
> The hereafter has no space for such as this, as is written.
>
> The world's two sides will enter shadow, it's certain
>
> Let it turn as it was created to do, 'til no one should remain
>
> At one time the pauper receives an outpouring, and the rich man falls.

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[34]Poem text from Axmed Cabdi Haybe 2017, 3–4. I thank Axmed Cabdi Haybe for assistance with the translation.

The imagery weaves together multiple forms of power: someone who helps you in searching for a lost possession is perceived to be kin, tying parties secretly at odds together in the public eye. Even if the dissimulator escapes in this world—which is not guaranteed, since a single moment can bring calamity—the hereafter has no space or land (*dal*) for him.

In the early 1900s, livestock functioned as a key means of upholding kinship relations, while the role of cash was more ambiguous and commonly denigrated by pastoralist purists, in a language berating its enabling of transactional relationships (implicitly contrasted with more enduring forms of reciprocity and obligation). Ogaden leaders including Qaman Bulḥan and Sayid Moḥamed demeaned the more merchant-oriented Isaq whom they termed *Iiddoor*—"sell to me." As Britons sought to empower Isaq-dominated broker networks and enable their extension into the interior, Isaq involvement in market relations was frequently discursively connected to their servitude or allegiance towards foreigners; by the 1910s they had become, according to Sayid Moḥamed, mere porters (*duudxamaal*) for foreigners.[35] "To be a broker and a lackey is business fit for the Arabs," according to one of Qaman's poems. Selling could easily slip towards selling out, as Qaman warned ʿAli Duh: "Allah doesn't support the man who has sold his brother."[36] Specific stabs at the Isaq linked the ambiguous allegiances entailed in market relations to urbanism and inequality. Sayid Moḥamed accused them thus: "From here to the towns, [the Isaq] put the poor in a ditch" (*Meeshiyo magaalooyinkuu maata doox dhigiye*).[37]

Such critiques of inequality reflect a relatively egalitarian orientation towards property relations which continues to infuse the regional political economy. Somali stances towards wealth distribution, however, were by no means unbounded humanism as the term egalitarian risks suggesting. Even those Somalis who complained about the subjection of the poor and helpless often drew their in-group boundary at pastoralist Somalis (*Aji*) and had no problem subjecting non-pastoralist groups such as Gaboye craftspeople and hunters (Tumal and Midgan). Though Somalis are today famous for their transnational trade, caste-like demarcations surrounding socially legitimate occupations persist in the Horn, alongside an orientation legitimizing the subjection of non-Somali labor to Somali ownership and entrepreneurialism. Studies of Somali business transnationally often indicate that Somalis prefer to work "for themselves" (Carrier 2016; Jones, Ram, and Theodorakopoulos 2010; Ram, Theodorakopoulos, and Jones 2008; Thompson 2016).

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[35]Poem: "Dardaaran," available from http://maktabadda.com/diiwaanka-gabayadii-sayid-maxamed-cabdulle-xasan/dardaaran/
[36]Quoted in Andrzejewski and Galaal 1963
[37]Poem: "Maadeys," available from http://maktabadda.com/diiwaanka-gabayadii-sayid-maxamed-cabdulle-xasan/maadeys/. My translation.

**Somali space**

Spatial transformations in the Somali-Ethiopian frontier zone shaped shifting modes of Somali territoriality. While Wiil Waal's claim to "Our country" indicates a conception of relatively defined territoriality among Somalis in the 19th century, access to space was enacted quite differently among Somalis than British cartographies suggest. Somali clans did lay claim to home wells and grazing areas. Nevertheless, the boundaries of clan movement and the interpenetration of clans were shaped by marriage alliances, contractual agreements (*ḥeer*), and environmental fluctuations that concentrated or dispersed resources during droughts and years of good rain. Such spatial-political dynamics will become more evident in tracing the shifts of the early 1900s. Looking beyond inter-clan relations among Somalis, it must be observed too that trade connections and networks of trade-protectors (*abbaan*) integrated the coastal areas with Harar even after it came under Abyssinian control. And where Britons discerned a territorial boundary of the Somali-inhabited lands at the base of the Gureis Range, in the highlands above Jigjiga Somali and Oromo lineages were mixed. Patrilineal descent determined Somali ethnicity, but intermarriage and cultural mixing meant that there were (and remain today) geographically interspersed groups claiming Somali or Oromo ethnicity, as well as what are sometimes termed "Oromized Somalis" and "Somalized Oromos," though these terms do not capture the blurring of identities.

British approaches to natural and timeless territorialities and structures of authority conceptualized the northern Horn's socio-political scene—to borrow a phrase from Amartya Sen (1986, 8)—"in terms of what *exists* rather than in terms of who can *command* what." Tracing what Sen calls "entitlement relations" undergirding ownership and exchange in this setting suggests two facets that shaped capitalism and imperialism's articulation in this space. First, while lineages recognized ownership of wells and certain grazing grounds, this was not the exclusive territoriality implied by a vision of timeless natural boundaries between groups. Command over wells and grazing land was negotiable. It was not private property from which one could legitimately exclude others (exclude other Somalis at least) in times of want. Forms of dispossession existed, but the enclosure of communal lands that transitioned Western Europe towards capitalism—and that creating a floating labor population in some other African colonies—did not occur at this point in the Horn. Second, the cultural practices underpinning the differential distribution of wealth between individuals were similarly not exclusive private property relations. The more or less forceful organization and legitimation of wealth concentration—in Rousseau's (2002, 167) terms, the conversion of possession into property—was

contingent not on legal title, but at least in part on recognizing Allah's authority and kinfolks' entitlements to a share.

Power balances in negotiated access to land, however, were changing, largely in connection with British governance strategies that had little regard for the 1897 boundary. British-protected Isaq groups were extending their grazing grounds southwards by the 1920s, with pastoralist movements and merchant caravans evidently encroaching on Ogaden wells.[38] Perhaps most famously, by 1920, Ogaden leaders were complaining that the Isaq had taken over Doollo, an area known for its seven wells including Wardheer, Walwaal, and Garloogube. One of the most famous poems from the period, recited by ʿAli Duh (of the Dhulbahante), recounts this expansion as an insult to the Ogaden:

> *Doqonkii Ogaadeen ahaa, Doollo laga qaadaye*
>
> *Loo diid Dannood iyo hadduu, degi lahaa Ciide*
>
> *Niman baa dalkoodiyo xukuma, labadi daaroode*

> The Ogaden fools—Doollo was taken from them
>
> If they would encamp at ʿIde and Danot, they are denied
>
> Other men administer their country, their two regions

A British map from 1929 (Fig. 2.7) would have scandalized Ogadenis with its apparent claim that these areas were simply part of Isaq "grazing areas" and even lay northward of "Ogaden limits."

From the 1920s onwards, as Ethiopian rule coalesced and began to affect livelihoods and trade among British-protected Somalis, Britons discussed more openly in official communications the confusing overlap of clan territories. A new cartographic imaginary took hold, in which not only did British-protected clans have traditional grazing grounds in Ethiopian territory—but these grounds extended much farther into Ethiopian territory in their overlap with Ogaden and other Ethiopian-protected clans. J.A. Hunt carried out an extensive survey of Somaliland during the 1940s and attempted to map the overlaps and movements of Somali clans (Fig. 2.8), revealing the complexities of actual Somali nomadic practice in distinction from

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[38] Angus Hamilton, writing in 1911, was among those advising a policy of market expansion: "The Somali is a born trader; and, if we could content ourselves with establishing our authority within our own sphere and define our economic policy by the development of the ports of Bulhar, Zeila, and Berbera, and the provision of a light railway between coastal centres and the interior, the trade and produce of the country must continue to develop" (Hamilton 1911, xiv–xv).

Figure 2.7: Simplification of "British Somaliland, showing grazing areas of British tribes in Abyssinian territory, area occupied by Ogaden tribes, Italian sphere of occupation, Italian posts, etc.," sketch map dated 24 August 1929. Map drawn by author based on C.O. 535/90/6, BNA.

Figure 2.8: Simplification of one of J.A. Hunt's maps from the 1944 Somaliland Survey showing the ranges of British-protected clans. Map drawn by author based on a map from the file C.O. 537/5917, BNA.

European imaginaries of clan geographies—but again, focusing almost exclusively on how British-protected clans required access to Ethiopian space, rather than vice versa.

It could be said that new conceptions of Somali trans-border mobility and clan overlaps that Britons apprehended by the 1940s more accurately reflected reality than the territorialized maps of the 1890s. Equally, however, these conceptions of Somali space were intimately tied up in new contests over power and its centralization. To understand these contests, we must step back a few years and examine how new geopolitical configurations around borders and towns were shaping this encounter of worlds.

## 2.3   Borders and towns, circulation and accumulation

As Britons sought to extend governance inland after 1900, and as Abyssinians likewise intensified their efforts to administer and tax Somalis at the base of the eastern escarpment, Somali mobility, trade and allegiance became bones of contention. Disputes over taxation—and, intertwined with taxation, loyalty—accelerated from the 1910s into the 1920s. When Britons returned to the Somaliland interior in 1914 after temporarily abandoning it amidst Sayid Moḥamed's jihad, they found that not only had Jigjiga's governor Abdullah Taha imposed a yearly tribute on clans along the border, but he had also employed clan leaders to represent borderlands clans at Jigjiga and work with Jigjiga's administration. Britons attempted "to recapture the trade now passing through Jig Jigga for the benefit of our Somaliland protectorate." Consul

Dodds argued to the Home Government, "The Somali would prefer to deal through a British town, where he well knows that he will always meet with just treatment and a small taxation, which he cannot expect to enjoy at the hands of the Abyssinian authorities."[39] Even though the boundaries of ostensible sovereignty had been established, Protectorate revenues relied on the orientation of trade in eastern Ethiopia towards British territory—which Britons explicitly connected to the allegiances of Somalis who carried on this trade.

## Urbanizing on the frontier

Jigjiga town emerged in this boundary zone first as a garrison for Ethiopian "raiding" or "taxation"; second, as a site where clan and imperial representatives negotiated border conflicts and trade issues; and third, as a locus of inter-ethnic and long-distance markets. Intra-ethnic trust and historical patterns of trade centered on clan-based protection through the *abbaan* system meant that up until 1900, regional market relations were somewhat spatially dispersed (Cassanelli 1982; Ciabarri 2010; Eid 2014; A. Samatar 1987). In a situation of relative security of property and person secured through kinship-based indemnity, Somalis could move and trade across the space and across clan territories without relying heavily on political mediators. Spatial concentrations of people and accompanying intensifications of market exchange occurred seasonally at coastal ports;[40] towns such as Harar that existed in the interior had tended to grow in periods characterized by a breakdown in social relations. Conflict prompted the need for centralized political-economic organization (Caulk 1977). As British and Abyssinian intervention, including the mediation of *mag* payments through government, undermined the potential for more generalized exchange across the border, trade between the interior and the coast required political intermediation, which was concentrated at Jigjiga. In the early 1900s, some Britons almost celebrated the insecurity that promised to drive cheap goods towards Protectorate ports: "In the general insecurity of life and property which now prevailed in the Ogaden," wrote Somaliland's Vice-Consul to his superior in 1901, "accumulations of property were a constant source of anxiety to their owners.... Was it not better to make their peace with the Abyssinians and be able to send their property up to our ports out of harm's way...?"[41]

As Britons and Ethiopians sought to capture trade alongside "traditional" practices of kinship and con-

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[39]F.O. 401/16, Enclosure 1 in No. 70, p. 71

[40]Bosaso or Bandar Kasim in the eastern Gulf of Aden was reported to double in size from 500-600 to 1,000 during the trading season, when Warsangeli and Dhulbahante traders brought gums, frankincense, ostrich feathers, sheep and ghee (Great Britain War Office 1907, 1:29). Drake-Brockman (1912, 35) estimated that the population of Berbera had grown due to the influx of interior Somalis escaping war, but still fluctuated between 8-10,000 in the summer and 20-40,000 in the winter.

[41]F.O. 403/13, Inclosure 2 in No. 56, Cordeaux to Sadler, April 30, 1901, p. 59.

tract, Jigjiga became the central site for negotiating two relationships of command: the safety of British-protected Somalis from Ethiopian taxation; and the restitution of livestock across the boundary through the *mag* system. "Traditional" livestock payments suddenly became quite an expensive affair, costing British-protected clans an annual tribute of at least 300 and—Britons claimed—up to 1,000 sheep per year to cover overhead expenses including the payment of clan representatives (ʿ*aakil*s).[42] A tax of 10 annas (10 pence) per camel as well as taxation in kind on clans grazing the Haud from April through September made Abdullah Taha "a very wealthy man in these parts" (Hanbury-Tracy 2009, 32).

Having superseded Jeldessa as the primary commercial town connecting Ethiopia to British Somaliland at the turn of the century, by 1915 Jigjiga was a linchpin in Abyssinian governance strategies as Abdullah Taha and his successors in Jigjiga's governorship (officially a sub-governorship falling under the Harar administration) worked to draw their putative Somali subjects into the Ethiopian imperial project through both trade and coercion. This is not to say that administration based in Jigjiga served to draw the borderlands uni-directionally into the centralized command of the Abyssinian Empire—a dynamic on which other analyses of Jigjiga have focused (Barnes 2000; Eshete 1994, 2014); in fact, decentralization and local initiative appear to have proved the most effective modes of operation for Jigjiga's administrators. Britons recognized that in the fluid situation of the Somali borderlands, there was "a better chance of obtaining a settlement locally... than by approaching the Central Government, whose power in the outlying districts is extremely shadowy."[43] Amidst this meeting of worlds, Jigjiga was a center in its own right as much as it was a geographical periphery of Ethiopia.

Jigjiga's increase in centrality, however, was contingent within the fluid borderlands political economy. Caravan trade could shift elsewhere. Because Somalis had access to pasture and agricultural lands, they were not forced to urbanize and could to some extent evade capture by Jigjiga's authorities (the Somaliland border assisted such evasion). Efforts in the direction of drawing Somalis into a more productive relationship with highland power structures emerged in the 1910s. Such struggles to constitute Somalis as participants and not simply colonized subjects ultimately bore little fruit in the way of what might be termed "Ethiopianization." Lij Yasu reached out to Somalis as part of a broader attempt to reconcile Muslim subjects to Abyssinian power during his brief rule as designated Emperor of Ethiopia (1913-1916). Tekle Hawaryat's autobiography records Yasu's activities in Jigjiga, where he presided over a *dabaldeg* ceremony in which some Somali

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[42]F.O. 401/8, Inclosure 2 in No. 87, C.O. to F.O., p. 66.
[43]F.O. 401/12, No. 10, General Report on Abyssinia for the years 1907-1908, p. 11c.

Figure 2.9: Section of the diagram "Abyssinian Telegraph System," 10th June 1919. Based on M.P.K. 1:351 in the British National Archives, Kew Gardens. Black indicates lines in operation, red lines under construction, and green lines projected.

leaders recognized his authority. Tekle Hawaryat's account also records some of Jigjiga's infrastructure as of 1915-1916: a telephone link connecting the town to the imperial center at Addis Ababa (Fig. 2.9), mixed areas of Somali and Amhara residence, and evidently a two-story command center. Such infrastructures of empire introduced heightened tensions between the requirements of spatial fixity and the continuing fluidity of trade and pastoralist mobility.

**Colonial layers in the city**

If Jigjiga today can be thought of as a palimpsest in which colonial and postcolonial spatial formations shaped urban development, the layerings are unusually complex for a century-old city. In the short time pe-

riod from 1917 until 1955, Ethiopian efforts to plan and organize urban-regional space were refigured under Italian and then British occupation before the territory once again returned to Ethiopian sovereignty. Beginning with Tekle Hawaryat, colonial administrators consciously leveraged the town's geography to shape broader configurations of rule. Tekle, a Russian-educated elite, returned to Jigjiga as governor (technically, still a sub-governorship under Harar) in 1917 after the Shewan nobility ousted Lij Yasu and replaced him with Empress Zawditu. Ras Tafari Makonnen (who had grown up in Harar) acted as her regent until his ascent to Emperorship as Haile Selassie a decade later. Tafari appointed Tekle to his position with explicit directions for governance:

> I have given the Bartire, ʿIse, Gadabursi, Abaskul, Habr Awal, Wera Harun to be administered by *Qegnazmatch* Tekle Hawaryat. The special status that Jijiga enjoyed during the period of Abdullah Taha must be maintained. It should however be noted that unlike other *abegaz*, he is not required to submit tax revenue. (Quoted in Eshete 2014, 21)

Whatever was collected in taxes was to be used to cover the salaries of soldiers stationed there, and Tekle himself was granted land in Hirna as compensation. This special status reflected that there was likely to be little tax collected from Jigjiga's population. When Tekle arrived in Jigjiga in 1917 he reports finding the town largely empty due to the power struggle over Lij Yasu's succession to the throne, during which Somalis left the area. About 30 Amhara still lived in the town, along with a number of Somali women and children who remained after the men had fled for fear of retribution after their support of Yasu. Tekle and his retinue of Amhara settlers worked with the Bartire to construct initial fortifications, and then set about to modernize administration. Consolidating an administrative hierarchy involved territorializing local clans into districts (*weredas*); clans Tekle mentions in this regard are the Gerri, ʿIse, Bartire, Abaskul and Rer ʿAli. "For every *wereda* and *qebele* [locality], leaders were delegated for customs, stores, prisons, and clergy positions." The administration then started to modernize the town itself, outlining five steps: (1) to design the town; (2) to solve the problems of water; (3) to incentivize agriculture; (4) to eliminate theft; and (5) to expand trade activity (Tekle Hawariat Tekle Mariam 2006, 355).[44]

   Whereas there are no records of Abdullah Taha seeking to plan Jigjiga, Tekle reports a town design as an important element of his modernization scheme: "I designed the city. For people who wished to

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[44]Selections from this text are translated from Amharic by Jemal Yusuf Mahamed.

build a walled building (from stone) I allocated a favorable plot of land. A market site was prepared, a customs office was built from stone, a church was built from stone," and other officials were given land and building materials (Tekle Hawariat Tekle Mariam 2006, 355). As far as continuing Abdullah Taha's efforts to incentivize agriculture, Tekle Hawaryat reports leading the way. According to a history of his adoptive Kotchoubey family from his Russian youth, "he would take from his Russian years a basis of reference for the administration of country estates or farms," and his "Russian roots would guide him in his vision for the various farms and agricultural enterprises he would oversee."[45] Tekle himself reports operating a model farm, imposing land tax, and stoking competition for grain production among Somalis, resulting by 1920 in the collection of about 450 metric tons of grain that were stored to feed Jigjiga's population.

Tekle Hawaryat's efforts towards productive governance unraveled under subsequent administrations, in part through heightened British interventions to undermine Ethiopian tax collection in the 1920s (Thompson 2018a). His successor, Gadla-Giyorgis, was dismissed after his soldiers attacked a British caravan traveling into the Ogaden. Fitawrari Tafessa's administration, as with Abdullah Taha's and Tekle Hawaryat's, was empowered to keep local tax revenues (though not customs revenues) to fund urban-regional administration. Yet the knockout blow for Ethiopian governance was the Italian invasion of 1935, which ultimately enabled Britons to re-assert their claims to the Somali interior after driving out the Italians in 1941.

The first map of the town located in historical sources at the time of research dates from the Italian occupation. By the end of Italian forces' five-year occupation (1935-1941), Jigjiga was clearly a grid-planned town, and has retained this urban morphology through the present. Across successive colonial occupations, the city retained a pattern of religious and ethnic segregation: Somalis and Arabs were concentrated to the south of the main east-west road. St. Michael church is clearly distinguishable in a 1941 map, indicating the settlement of Orthodox Amhara in the northern half of the town. This north-south segregation was likely reinscribed under Italian policy and was almost certainly exacerbated after the British ousted the Italians in 1941 in a counter-campaign for which the first detailed map of Jigjiga in British records was drawn (Fig. 2.10).

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[45]"The Raven Baron, the photo album, and a lost world recovered: Our brother Fitawrari Tekle Hawariat of Ethiopia." http://kotchoubey.com/select-biographies/petia-the-abyssinian-our-brother-tekle-hawariat-of-ethiopia/

**Re-making regional space**

Britons who occupied Jigjiga saw the town as a crucial site in forging a new project of Somali nationalism. While Britons occupying Ethiopia after 1941 returned Emperor Haile Selassie to the throne in Addis Ababa, the Somali-inhabited eastern regions were retained under two separate British administrations: the Reserved Area came under Hargeisa's Protectorate administration, while the Ogaden was placed under the British Military Administration (BMA) in Mogadishu. Britons celebrated the arrangement as a correction of the previous mistake the Home Government had made in allowing the disjuncture between territorial and social claims of sovereignty:

> At the outset it must be remembered that the grazing grounds of the British Protected tribes are not wholly contained in British Somaliland. Their traditional grazing grounds and the most valuable extend far to the South into what was Italian East Africa. The failure to include all their grazing grounds in British Somaliland was due to past errors of the British Government. The arbitrary boundary which divides Somali grazing grounds into two, has been the chief cause of



Figure 2.10: Jigjiga, 1941. Author's replication of inset from British military campaign map EAF 357 from the Royal Geographical Society, London.

our administrative difficulties in the past.[46]

With these "past errors" corrected under the BMA, administrators could turn to constructing assertions about an even deeper past, grounded in timeless nature and tradition: the constitution of Somali clans as a single "Somali nation." The concept built on racializing views but employed the language of a new international order: the term "nation-state" entered mainstream political discourse as the League of Nations formed and the post-Versailles, Wilsonian world order congealed (Kelly and Kaplan 2001, 2004). For the first time I discern in British records, a 1945 map marks out the boundaries of "the Somali nation" comprised of clan territories (Fig. 2.11). Anticipating decolonization, Britons pushed for the Somali nation as the unit of an ostensible racialized social contract, decrying the injustice of Ethiopian predations on Somalis.

This is not to say that the concept of a Somali nation had no purchase among Somalis. Certainly cultural and linguistic interconnections and experiences of colonial marginalization forged Somali support for decolonization—as Sayid Moḥamed famously asked his co-ethnics, "If the land is your land, why aren't you its government? If Islam is your religion, why submit to infidel overlords?" (Quoted in ʿAbdi Sheik-ʿAbdi 1993, 211). It is, rather, to suggest that concepts of ethnic self-rule were relevant to a new spectrum of postcolonial politics in which the nation became the unit in which global powers claimed sovereignty ought to inhere.

Whatever moral claims against Ethiopia the idea of a "Somali nation" enabled, taken as a whole British claims about arbitrary boundaries evinced hypocrisy and division among British administrators over how to carve up this space, perhaps mainly to further Isaq access to Ethiopian territory. While Britons were working to politicize Somalis against Ethiopians, behind the scenes, negotiations were tabled between the British and Ethiopian governments to exchange Somaliland's port of Zeila—and much of the ʿIse-inhabited areas in the northwest of the Protectorate—for parts of the Isaq grazing grounds (and in one formulation, Gadabursi grazing grounds and Jigjiga town as well)(Fig. 2.12). These discussions were mooted in 1952, when Ethiopia and Eritrea were federated, providing Ethiopia with access to deep-water Red Sea ports.

As with the breakdown in inter-ethnic relations in the 1910s-1920s, tensions and escalating conflict over the potential return of Somali territories to Ethiopia rendered Jigjiga a locus of political and economic struggles in the 1940s. For Britons, Jigjiga was a site from which to manage broader cultural change, and

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[46]I.O.R./R/15/2/545, "15/4 Tribes of British Somaliland," by Lieut.-Col. R. H. Smith, 1941. India Office Records and Private Papers, available online via the Qatar National Library. The analysis is echoed almost word-for-word in a government report four years later (Military Government of British Somaliland 1945).

Figure 2.11: Simplification and color-coded rendering of "Tribal Map of Somalia and British Somaliland," 1 Jan. 1945, with inset depicting the Jigjiga-Harar-Dire Dawa area. Map drawn by author based on E51(117) in Weston Library, Oxford. The map is essentially identical to that used by I.M. Lewis in *A Pastoral Democracy*.
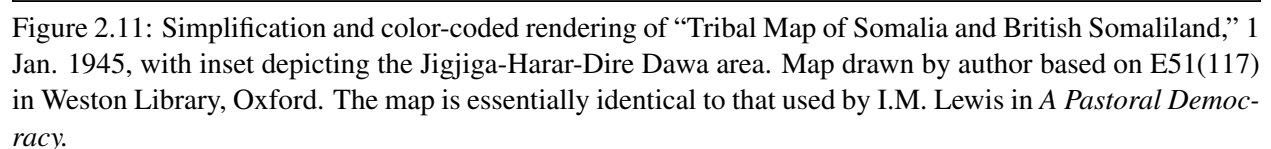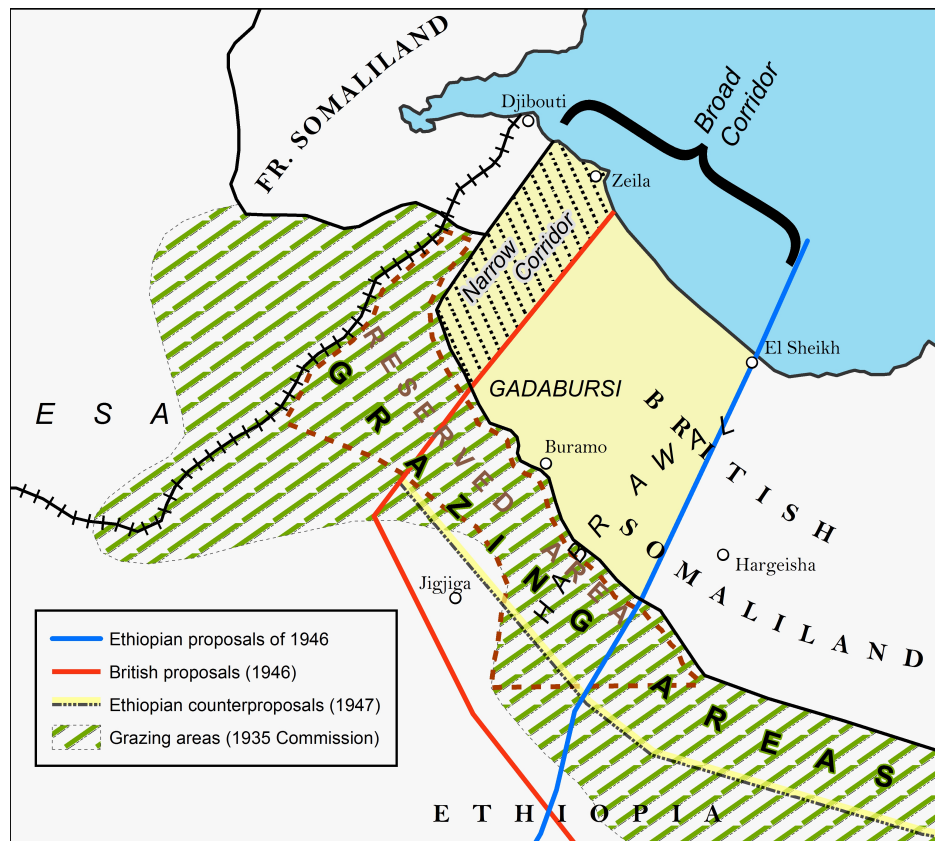
Figure 2.12: Boundary re-drawing proposals surrounding the Zeila exchange. Replication by author of section of map from the file C.O. 537/5917, BNA.

the threats of Ethiopianization were assessed with racializing candor:

> Somalis from the Mogadiscio region had many good qualities and were accustomed to doing a
> certain amount of honest work. Those in the Jigjiga region, however, had acquired all the vices,
> and none of the virtues of the Gallas and Abyssinians with whom they came into contact. They
> were lazy, vicious, and born politicians.[47]

Jigjiga, as a site at which such cultural mixing took place, was also a key locus at which Britons sought to effect separation and even breed animosity between Somalis and Ethiopians. Another report argues:

> We are now at the beginning of a new two year period of British control during which for polit-
> ical and prestige reasons it is essential that the R.A. administration be brought up to a standard
> which is a credit to British government. Particularly is this desirable in view of the presence

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[47]C.O. 535/127, p. 31

of Ethiopian officials in Jiggigga and the fact that during the recent negotiations the Ethiopians have been more or less told that we do not consider them competent to administer the outlying parts of their Empire and certainly unfit to rule Somalis.  Moreover, Jiggigga itself is a very important centre of Somali life with thousands of visitors from the Ogaden, British Somaliland and Harar and has important trade connections with Aden.  It is therefore well situated for demonstrating a progressive British policy for Somalis and what we accomplish there in the course of the next two years may well be an important factor when the time comes to press for the inclusion of the Reserved Area in any United Somalia project which may materialize.[48]

This description that draws together various socio-political fields articulating in the town reflects Jigjiga's centrality as both the theater and stake of a complex set of processes and strategies:[49] it was here that the push for a "United Somalia project" was to be focused, and also where the fruits of this project were to be reaped or lost.  If the Somali lands of Ethiopia were not united to a greater Somalia, Jigjiga, connected as it was to the neighboring highlands of Harar, would undoubtedly be one of the first sites handed back to Ethiopia.

Britons' efforts to politicize Somalis in the 1940s became increasingly problematic as it grew clear that the area would ultimately return to Ethiopian sovereignty.  When news leaked out in mid-March 1948 that the Ogaden and Reserved Area would be returned to Ethiopia, it was in Jigjiga that the Somali Youth League flag was hoisted in protest against Ethiopian rule; a fight ensued in which one policemen and over twenty Somalis were estimated killed (Barnes 2007).  As the Haud and Reserved area were returned to full Ethiopian sovereignty in February 1955, Britons complained about the risks to their protected clans and reported "an increasing volume of incidents of various sorts...  consisting mainly of attacks by British and Ethiopian Somalis on Ethiopian posts."[50] (The same document also records fighting among British-protected Isaq groups.  While Britons consistently voiced patrimonial views of their imposed peace, rebellions had erupted in British Somaliland well before the transfer of the Haud and Reserved areas back to Ethiopia were even tabled.)

As the Reserved Area and Ogaden were handed back to Ethiopian sovereignty, it was little surprise

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[48] W.O. 230/63, p. 5.

[49] My conceptualization here derives from two lines of thought.  Foucault (2007, 15) writes of capitals working to effect "the superimposition of the state of sovereignty, the territorial state, and the commercial state." Lefebvre (1996, 105) describes the city as "at one and the same time the place and the milieu, the theatre and the stake" of struggles over appropriation.

[50] F.O. 401/48, p. 13

that many Somalis were inclined to rebel against Ethiopian rule. Far from a "natural" result of racial or national antipathies, animosities were at least in part due to Britons actively incentivizing Somalis' rejection of Ethiopian rule. This is not to say that Somalis necessarily would have been fully incorporated as citizens in Ethiopia from the beginning; there is no way of confirming such a counter-factual proposition. In nation-building efforts across the world, there are examples of marginalized and stigmatized minorities. The point is that the politicization of Somalis as a nation in contrast to Ethiopians essentially precluded possibilities for shared sovereignty. Somali-Ethiopia hung in the balance for sixty years with its incorporation into one polity or another undetermined. How could such a dynamic have no impact on the affective loyalties of the population or on their modes of pursuing livelihoods through trade that Britons labeled legitimate and Ethiopians denounced as "contraband"? In Jigjiga, the nexus between trade, taxation and political loyalty continued to shape ethnic relations: soon after the town was handed back to full Ethiopian sovereignty, innocent Somalis were executed in response to the killing of an Ethiopian tax collector (Geshekter 1985, 11).

## 2.4 Frontiers of dis/possession

This narrative leaves several loose ends that deserve not to be tied up, but rather followed as they are woven into the fabric of the current situation on which the remainder of this work focuses. An often blurry overlap of ethno-cultural worlds, the European colonial era in the northern Horn was not characterized by the simple imposition of foreign modes of social organization onto Somalis. Rather, distinct ways of thinking about and enacting authority, responsibility, and exchange overlapped and interpenetrated. Rather than merely "incorporating" a new "periphery" into its orbit, the British-centered capitalist world-economy impinged unevenly on this space and society. Britons, though self-consciously agents of free markets, did not work to extend land enclosures, private property, or individualist ethics in their Somaliland Protectorate. European settlement was by and large disallowed; timeless visions of communal property and collective responsibility were upheld. Yet by attempting to enforce "traditional" modes of collective landholding and livestock economies, Britons sought to develop a broader sphere of circulation beyond their imperial borders (Thompson 2018b).

British assertions about natural antipathies between Somalis and Ethiopians, bleeding into British encouragement of Somali nationalism and politicization of Somali identity under the BMA, masked a broader-

scale side of the regional political economy, which Jardine pointed to and to which it is crucial to return. British favoritism towards "their" protected Somalis and efforts to expand opportunities within the transborder economy were not simply for the sake of either Somali pastoralism or Protectorate trade. Creating this frontier zone in the Horn enabled other frontiers of accumulation to unfold across other pieces of the British Empire: specifically, exploitation of Somali surplus labor, expulsion of Somalis from other British territories when convenient, and the legitimization of these forms of dispossession through appeal to the supposedly natural tendencies of Somalis to migrate home. Return migration itself, as a subject of the northern Horn's history, requires some historicization to displace the notion that migration cycles are a natural, inherent, and violence-free process of choice.

**Migration and the proper place**

In the context of Eurocentric white supremacy, writes Jemima Pierre (2013, 4), "any and all local configurations of race and racialization are structured in and through global hierarchical relationships." Such relationships are global not only because they include Britons' conceptualizations of their position at the apex of racial-political-economic power, or because Britons traveled the globe as they enacted empire across space. They are also global because other people who travel globalized circuits of trade are rendered out of place, inherently local and parochial natives, subject to colonial command not only within the colony, but even more so when they are found beyond its borders. From a world-systems perspective, such racialization processes rendered Somali and other African migrant labor precarious in core areas such as Britain, facilitating exploitation. Exchanging wages abroad for livestock at home—becoming "once again the normal nomadic tribesman"—was not always a voluntary decision. Yet from a different perspective, patterns of return migration can be seen generating a racialized counter-system in which wages abroad could be converted into capital within the Horn's cultural economy, characterized as it was by forms of command other than market exchange. In one way, London's Jermyn Street could become, as it were, a periphery of the eastern Ethiopian borderlands.

This racialized counter-system has tended to disappear from regional history, in part due to the demands of analyzing complicated ethnic and clan politics on the ground in the Horn, and perhaps partly also due to institutional divisions between regional studies of the Horn and studies of the Somali diaspora. In addition, the explosion of Somali migration after 1991 has tended to obscure deeper historical patterns of migration,

work, and return both voluntary and coerced.

The narrative of the native's voluntary return migration seeks to legitimize dispossession of people's rights to mobility and work across broader space. Arab and Somali seamen seem to have first settled in Britain around the mid-1800s, in ports including Cardiff and South Shields. Amidst World War I's shipping boom, Somalis "were generally treated as British subjects and stokehold crews were usually totally Somali or totally Arab" (Byrne 1977, 265). The subsequent contraction of shipping increased competition with foreign white seamen (especially Scandinavians), at the same time as global political organization began to shift more explicitly towards the racialized nation-state system. In June 1919, a scuffle in Cardiff led to a mob targeting colored men and demolishing lodging places where colored seamen were known to stay. In a footnote to his study *Negroes in Britain*, Little cites a newspaper report:

> Hadji Mahomet, the Somali priest, was reported to be living at 1, Homfray Street, and the rioters visited him. In response to the entreaties of his white wife to leave for a place of safety, the resourceful Somali clambered up a drain-pipe at the back of his house. He was immune there from the fury of the crowd while hidden on the roof, and with true Eastern Stoicism, watched his residence being reduced to a skeleton (Quoted in Little 1972, 80, note 1).

The following years witnessed heightening debate over the meaning of British nationality and a series of laws defining the rights of colored subjects and protected persons. The Aliens Order of 1920 permitted the deportation of any alien found to be relying on relief or "found wandering without visible means of sustenance."[51] A bundle of archival files from mid-1920 contains debates on the "removal of undesirable Somalis" who had reached Suez and fallen on hard times.[52] The Somaliland administration was quick to claim that certain of these Somalis were not British-protected subjects. Administrators sought to shift the financial burden for repatriation elsewhere.[53] In any case, many of the men apparently did not want to be repatriated, as over 100 ran away. The case both gives the lie to the idea of a natural homing instinct among Somalis and shows how Somalis, divided as they were between several imperial nationalities, utilized claims to nationality somewhat flexibly. (While the initial assessment suggested that all potential deportees were British subjects, some "may have subsequently claimed foreign nationality with an idea of escaping repatri-

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[51]Britain, Aliens Order 1920, Part II, Sect. 12, pt. 6b, quoted in Byrne (1977, 264)
[52]C.O. 535/60/39077
[53]C.O. 535/60/39077, Archer to Milner, 24 June 1920.

ation," since "they were extremely unwilling to leave Egypt.")[54] Such cases were apparently not uncommon. The political resident at Aden noted in May 1920 that "this Residency is often put to considerable expense in deporting [Somalis] to their homes."[55]

The 1925 Special Restriction (Coloured) Alien Seamen's Order, according to Little, signaled an ominous deepening of racial-territorial order. In practice, it translated into police targeting of colored people: the police, Little (1972, 87) writes, perceived "that these enactments automatically made an alien of every coloured seaman in Cardiff" and used the laws as justification to demand passports from non-white races. In general, "almost all the Negro seamen were British nationals, but the status of the Arabs was unclear. Both Arabs and Somalis came from British-administered territories, but the latter were defined as British protected persons and therefore sometimes, incorrectly, treated as aliens" (Byrne 1977, 264).

In 1928, a Somali seaman named Musa Ḥersi took his two sons, borne by his white wife in Britain, to Somaliland to live. In September 1929, Musa died at sea. Later in 1929, one of the sons died in Somaliland—in his mother's words in her letter to an M.P. in Britain, "from grieving after me."[56] Sarah Hersi appealed to the Colonial Office to bring the other son home to live with her in Cardiff, providing details that he was living with his uncle, "Ali Hersi, Tribe Dolbahanta Barasoma, Place called Nogal." The official position that the Somaliland Government took on this case is revealing of the framework for understanding people and place. The boy, one memo quotes the Governor as stating, "is to all outward appearances, a Somali." Besides, "according to Somali custom, the son is a member of his father's tribe."[57] Administrators found that the child "is looking healthy and well; that there is nothing in his appearance to indicate that he is not a Somali; that he does not wish to return to England and, in fact, denies that he can speak English, or that he has any recollection of England."[58] A handwritten note argues that "it will be better if he remains in Somaliland where he will fit happily in his environment."[59]

"A slum in Cardiff after the sun-washed spaciousness of this country!" This rhetorical remark at the end of Somaliland's Governor Kittermaster's letter considering Sarah Hersi's case[60] reflects the perceived options for Somalis: poverty abroad or freedom bounded within the Somalis' "natural environment" in the

[54]C.O. 535/60/39077, Enclosure No. 5 to Despatch No. 134, Fox-Strangeways to Archer, 10 June 1920.
[55]C.O. 535/60/39077, Enclosure No. 15 to Despatch No. 134, Barrett to Fox-Strangeways, 27 May 1920.
[56]C.O. 535/90/9, Sarah Hersi to Henderson, 19 March 1930.
[57]C.O. 535/90/9, unmarked page
[58]C.O. 535/90/9, Draft correspondence from Boyd to Henderson, 4 July 1930.
[59]C.O. 535/90/9, unmarked page.
[60]C.O. 535/90/9, Kittermaster to Green (C.O.), 9 June 1930.

Horn. Yet Somalis did leave the sun-washed spaciousness to earn cash, to seek fortune, to gain experience and prestige in European militaries. Some returned and converted cash into urban businesses or livestock.[61] Some "returned" to Kenya or other non-homeland spaces in Africa to pursue their fortunes in a different setting. The struggles of Somalis for access to opportunity in the world beyond the Horn shaped formulations of pan-Somali nationalism abroad while also creating new meanings and enactments of kinship as forms of entrustment and obligation stretched across greater distances and lengthy times of separation.

## Command over time and space

By the 1960s, claims about Somalis' timeless nomadism structured the folding of several temporalities into the northern Horn's towns. Nationalists invigorated by Britons' encouragement struggled for Somali unification—and the secession of the Ogaden from Ethiopia. International migrants at the end of distinct spatio-temporal cycles—retirement, deportation, voluntary return—sought to leverage their transnational connections by establishing trading enterprises or re-entered the livestock economy. Pastoralists moved back and forth between coastal ports, wells, and wet-season pastures in the haud, surplus stock production supporting both kinship organization and a growing export market while trying to avoid taxes on livestock capital.

Somalia's 1960 independence shifted struggles over space and time into a new register of international politics. In February 1963, Rer Isaq Ogaden leader Maktal Dahir led a rebellion against the re-imposition of livestock tax in eastern Ethiopia. Dhagaḥbur was, according to current oral histories, a hotbed of rebellion when Rer Isaq leaders declared independence and arrested the Habesha town administrator and a nurse.[62] Skirmishes along the still-undemarcated border between Ethiopia and southern Somalia (formerly Italian Somaliland) erupted into war in 1964, with a subsequent peace brokered by the newly-formed Organization of African Unity. In the Ogaden, Ethiopian governance was largely confined to garrison towns and tax-collecting raids that reinscribed ethnic conflict between Somalis and Ethiopians, now with national resonances. Clan, if not inevitably a "mainspring of existence" for Somalis, served as a mechanism of stability in an uncertain geopolitical environment (Ingiriis 2018; Kapteijns 2010, 2012; P. D. Little 2003; Luling 2006). Rather than taking this persistence as a natural tendency and simply part of Somali culture, it must

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[61]"Hersi Egeh and his lineage from Berbera who participated in the 1895 Crystal Palace Exposition on "Somaliland in London," were subsequently employed by Carl Hagenbeck's Tierpark Exposition in Hamburg. They accumulated considerable wealth in Germany and then returned to Somaliland in the 1920s and 1930s where they invested heavily in town properties (Geshekter 1985, 20)

[62]Field notes, 6/27/2018

be seen how kinship and its enactment through material entrustments of resources, obligations of sharing, provides an order of longer-term security in lieu of effective state-building.

An important reflection on the period of British presence in the Horn is the adamant stance of Britons against Somalis paying taxes to Ethiopians, contested over a half-century. From one side, Britons had interests in maximizing the surplus value that Somalis directed towards the Protectorate's markets and extending Isaq-dominated trade networks inland. Both Britons and Ethiopians sought to extract value from the livestock economy through taxation and "fining" while de-legitimizing others' efforts to control Somalis as "raiding." For Somalis, these payments extracted value from patterns of exchange mediated through kinship and clan-based trust, and forms of social payment that upheld these organizational modes. Livestock production and exchange, for which clan organization had proven a relatively efficient mode of protecting assets and ensuring reproduction, was now subject to new claims for payment from Britons and Ethiopians. Ethnicity then came to have new relevance through the requirements of taxation distributing value across ethnic borders in which Somalis were always subject, paying tax but receiving little or nothing in return. In this way, the very establishment of borders generated forms of accumulation by dispossession—dispossessing people of effective command of the livestock nexus, and thus over broader command over kinship and trade. This dispossession was not strictly speaking the creation of private property but rather forms of sovereignty entailed in alternative forms of coercion and dependence.

# Chapter 3

# Genealogies of Authority: Lineage and State in Somali-Ethiopia

*Ushada nin aad ka qaadan karta ayaa loo dhiibtaa.*
The staff (of leadership) is given to a man from whom you can take it away.

—Ethiopian-Somali saying

"We chose to be part of Ethiopia," the Regional Diaspora Bureau Head emphasizes as I introduce my research project. "Nobody made us join Ethiopia." Somali Regional leaders repeatedly voiced this bold assertion in public spaces and in small gatherings which I occasionally attended in their homes in Jigjiga. The official narrative describes a conference held at a village called Kali in 1948, before the post-World War II BMA handed the Somali-inhabited territory back to Ethiopia:

> During this meeting, which took place between men from the British colonial administration and most *ugaas*s, *garaad*s, *suldaan*s and other influential people in the region, the cultural leaders were advised to choose between the British colonial administration and Haile Selassie's Empire. The leaders preferred to throw in their lot with the Ethiopian Empire. The council of elders, seeing that they could gain from cooperation with Ethiopia, expressed the motto, "The staff [of leadership] is given to the man from whom you can take it away." (Maxamed Muxumed Galaal 2017, 72–73, my translation)

With this sentiment, the elders agreed that it was better to come under the sovereignty of a distant Addis Ababa than to subject themselves to the uncertain future of a British-driven Greater Somalia.[1] Though it is not specified in Galaal's written account, the man who voiced the motto is said to have belonged to the Rer Isaq clan of the Moḥamed Zubeyr clan-group, a branch of the Ogaden clan-confederation (for levels of clan organization, refer to Table 2.1, previous chapter).

The story's veracity is widely doubted among Jigjigans (one informant opined, "I never heard that story before the current administration came to power"). It rejects dominant historical narratives about the division

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[1] On this topic see Pankhurst 1946; Thompson 2015, 27–29.

of the Somali nation among colonial powers without Somali knowledge, much less consent (Hagmann 2014; Laitin and Samatar 1987; I. M. Lewis 2002, 61). It boldly defies the history of the Ogaden National Liberation Front's (ONLF) more than two-decade armed struggle for independence from Ethiopia (ca. 1984-2013). Yet its ubiquity in Somali Region's state culture under Regional President ʿAbdi Moḥamoud ʿUmar's (nicknamed ʿAbdi Iley) administration (2010-2018) reflects its importance as a legitimizing discourse amidst a dramatic reorganization of power. Since 2010, DDSI (the regional administration) has worked incessantly to "Ethiopianize" the region's Somalis as part of stabilizing Ethiopia's ethnic federal system that created the semi-autonomous Somali Region in 1995. The Kali narrative operates discursively not only to revise history, but to invite the region's current residents—especially Ogaden groups that long supported secession—to revisit their present allegiances. It replaces narratives of embedded ethnic animosities with an invitation to follow Ogaden leaders' precedent and embrace Ethiopia.

This chapter examines the interactions between clan-based politics and the struggle to forge an "Ethiopian-Somali" identity in current state-building efforts, connecting to the previous chapter by developing a genealogical approach to present authority structures. Employing data from ethnographic research in Jigjiga during the twelve months leading up to ʿAbdi Iley's August 2018 ouster and arrest, the chapter challenges narratives of a "return" to clan-based social organization in the Horn ( Ingiriis 2018b) by showing how state-building in Somali-Ethiopia has reshaped allegiances—to clan or otherwise—and patterns of social interaction. I suggest that while discourses about clans ("clan-talk") dominate regional politics (and political analysis), clans are not an unchanging foundation of politics. As in the colonial period, postcolonial political authority and ethnic and lineage identities mutually shape each other within relational geographies of power stretching beyond the immediate context. In order to understand these intersections between kinship and state as sometimes competing and sometimes complementary structures, we should understand their different roles in commanding resources, mobilizing entitlements and responsibilities, and playing stabilizing or destabilizing roles in people's lives.

Analyzing recent political shifts reveals how people mobilize kinship and political authority in everyday interactions in Jigjiga at present. While the focus here is on eastern Ethiopia, my narrative speaks to a massive literature on clan and ethnic politics in the broader Horn of Africa (e.g. Aalen 2011; Kapteijns 2012; Kefale 2010; Markakis 2011; Thompson 2015). In the wake of the 1977 Ethio-Somali Cold War conflict (the Ogaden War) and Somalia's 1991 collapse, accounts of Somali ethnic and clan politics amalgamated

into a bewildering mélange of explanations for war and state collapse, ranging from newspaper accounts mobilizing images of "tribal" Africa to intense academic debates about identity conflicts' real structures and causes. It is worth briefly revisiting these debates in order to clarify what we are talking about in the first place when we discuss Somali and Ethiopian ethnic categories, and Ogaden and other clan groups.

## 3.1   Clan, ethnic and state politics: anthropological reprise

The Kali narrative mobilizes a similar conceptual model of nested political levels to that which Britons perceived amidst efforts to construct colonial authority in the northern Horn: some organizational levels are inherited or ascribed (race, ethnicity, clan), and others result from various forms of what could be called (in a Western social theory vein) social contracts, voluntary and negotiated agreements to submit to political authority. In this oversimplified model, individuals are born into webs of kinship relations—among Somalis, formally organized into clans. These kin groups together make up an ethnic group with common culture and language. Kinship and ethnic groups exist prior to the state, and at some point, either voluntarily or through one group's forcible domination, join under a unified political authority constituted by a social contract. Within this encompassing society, a group may have more or less power, and relative power may shape the contractual relationship's terms: groups' positioning within the state structure may involve relative autonomy or degrees of domination and subordination. The conceptual model's most important feature is that inherited groups remain essentially the same, which makes political fragmentation appear as a temporal reversal to pre-existing and inherited loyalties. Whatever an individuals' relation to the state, his or her fundamental identity appears constant (Fig. 3.1).

Applied to the Horn of Africa, the oversimplified nested levels model purportedly explains three facts. First, it extends a mode of thinking outlined in the previous chapter, suggesting that inherent differences between groups cause ethnic conflict. Conflicts between *Habesha* and Somalis easily appear as ancient, deeply rooted oppositions. Second, the model can be scaled down to explain conflicts between groups at lower levels in the nested set: anthropological models of "segmentary lineage" societies describe clans within ethnic groups as the same sort of pre-existing identity structures. Finally, the intersection of these two facts can ostensibly explain state fragility in the Horn. Applying this model, I.M. Lewis (2010, 135) asserts that in 1991 the Somali state "disintegrated into its traditional clan components." Ingiriis (2018b, 61) reads in the contemporary Horn "a reversion to the pre-colonial period." Conflict likewise threatens to dissolve
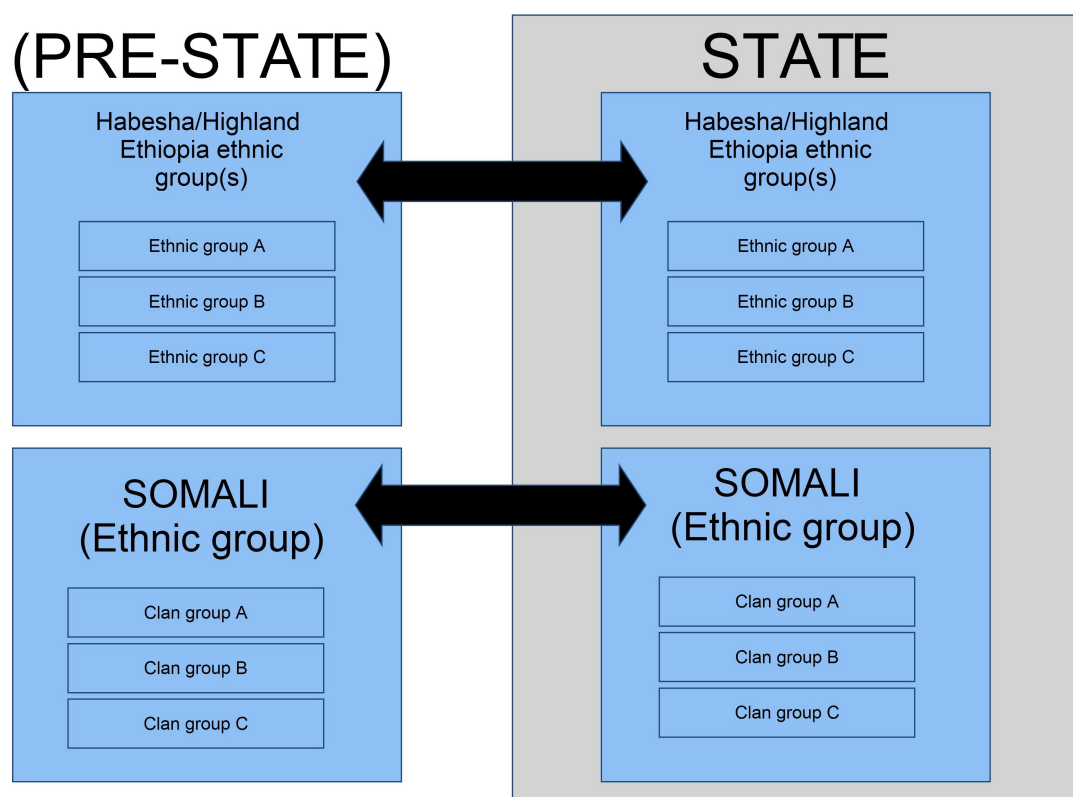
Figure 3.1: Visual rendering of a vastly oversimplified but commonly employed conceptual model of nested political identities or levels. Inherited or "ascribed" identity groups are in blue. As I suggest in the text, such a model is often implicit in analyses of regional politics and thus is worth rendering explicit in simplified form in order to clarify its shortcomings.

Ethiopia into its constitutive ethnic groups.

While appealing due to its simplicity, the conceptual model offers an unsatisfactory explanation for political shifts, and has been critiqued from several angles including its elisions of race and religion (e.g. Besteman 1999), gender (Kapteijns 2010), and international political-economic organization (Samatar 1989). As I approach them in this study, ethnicity, kinship, and state are all modes of organizing space as well as time: among other effects, they establish predictability, define the boundaries of social enforcement, and can enable the mobilization of value by establishing forms of trust undergirding credit and debt. People can continue to rely on such structures in similar ways as they have in the past, and past temporalities can inhabit the present in a variety of ways (memories of conflict, for example); but the concept of "going back" avoids explanation rather than advancing it. In addressing the model's shortcomings at clan, ethnic and state levels, three interlocking arguments can be formulated that move from a general assertion about the nature of social groups in the region towards a specific focus on how group identities are mobilized in eastern Ethiopia's cur-

rent political economy. These constitute the framework for understanding clan and ethnicity as subsequent chapters shift focus to urbanism and broader-scale economies that are intensifying amidst diaspora return and globalized trade.

## Clan politics: segmentary lineage and conflict

Somalia's "clan conflict" following the government's 1991 collapse is one empirical data point in debates over whether segmentary lineage societies—those in which kinship is of the utmost social importance—are more prone to conflict than others (Moscona et al. 2017; Schlee 2008). The basic idea of how segmentary social structures mobilize constituent groups is outlined in the previous chapter's critique of I.M. Lewis's famous dictum: "Somali political allegiances are determined by descent in the male line" (2002: 10). The continuity of British colonial narratives about clan as Somalis' existential mainspring is striking, even in the face of evidence regarding how kinship was politicized in new ways under colonial administration. For Markakis (1996, 570), "clannishness" is "the categorical imperative of Somali political practice." Menkhaus (2014) describes clan conflict as "endemic" to Somalia.

While few analysts today would employ as mechanistic an interpretation of allegiance as Lewis's, taken-for-granted concepts of clan and ethnicity infuse analyses of Ethiopian politics. Consider a passage from Abdi M. Abdullahi's thorough investigation of regional jostling in the 1990s:

> Initially, the ONLF attempted to mobilise the members of the Ogaadeen clan against what they consider to be the historical colonisation and marginalisation of the Ogaadeen by the Ethiopian state. Nevertheless, while the organisation claimed to represent the entire Somali people in the region, other non-Ogaadeen clans, including the Jidwaaq, Iise, Garre, and 'minority' clans and groups, withheld their support since they perceived ONLF as an exclusively Ogaadeeni political body. (Abdi M. Abdullahi 2007, 557–58)

This narrative suggests a clean split: Ogadenis supported the ONLF, non-Ogadenis did not. Clan affiliation is the implicit mechanism of allegiance. The fact that Ogaden individuals were supporting not only the ONLF, but also other insurgent groups such as *al-Itiḥaad al-Islamiyya* (al-Itiḥad), or even the Ethiopian government, disappears. An analytical discourse of clan masks the multiplicity of allegiances and their layering through clan, ethnic, and political party (or insurgent group) affiliations.

There is no denying evidence that conflict appears more common among segmentary lineage societies

than others (Moscona et al. 2017). The issue is causal relationship: there appears as much evidence that conflict heightens the importance of kinship-based cohesion as the reverse. And though clans pre-existed state organization, it is not only their function as political units that has evidently changed over the past century, as shown in the previous chapter. Their basis in genealogical relatedness has likely undergone shifts as well through more formal controls on and documentation of kinship as it became a political lever. In the past, founding legends appear to have connected unrelated lineages through mythical ancestries, a fact recognized by Lewis from his earliest work on (Lewis 1994, 19–22; cf. Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur 2016; Luling 2006; Kapteijns 2010). Distinct genealogical lines appear to have fused or fissured even in recent history. Asking different people to draw genealogical diagrams is likely to result in different constructions of relatedness and difference, and new identities can emerge in settings such as resettlement for minority clans or conferences structured by clan representation (Little 2003, 46–56). Indeed, the diversity of lineage configurations drawn by analysts is surprising (cf. Abbink 2009) (and none I have seen exactly match what Ogadenis in Jigjiga draw today) (Several examples of lineage diagrams are compiled in Appendix 1). Inter-ethnic relations are similarly blurry: Somalis have allied with and assimilated to neighboring Oromo groups (and vice versa), a fact explained according to historical circumstances that made inter-ethnic ties more immediately relevant than ethnic solidarity (examples include Aikishu, Balᶜad, and Garre clans) (Schlee 1989). Increasingly since Somalia's 1960 independence, politicians mobilized clan-based constituencies in their quest for authority, which accelerated as the Barre regime began to use clan-based violence as what Kapteijns (2012) terms "a technology of power." As the Barre regime collapsed, political entrepreneurs rallied followers according to clan identity and mobilized them against victims likewise defined by clan. In such a context, the threat of annihilation made kinship-based trust and reciprocity extremely important.

The chapter's first argument is this: clan politics do not solely reflect pre-existing social structures; rather, people actively modify not only the scale but also the content and meanings of the collective identity towards which they orient themselves situationally. Historical power relations and anticipations of the future imbue certain identities with more or less relevance, as does the "scaling up" of localized dynamics through their intersection with broader-scale geopolitics and markets. Lineage and ethnicity intersect flexibly with alternative, geographically broader or narrower forms of authority (Besteman 1996). Indeed, it might not be going too far to reverse Lewis' dictum and suggest that people's allegiance to power structures that are not strictly genealogical can reshape the relevance of Somali genealogies and constructions of ethnic relatedness.

In sections 3.2 and 3.3 below, I conceptualize shifting allegiances and internationalized networks that shaped the landscape of regional power as ʿAbdi Iley ascended to rule in 2010.

**Ethnic politics: ancient animosities?**

A rigorous theory of ethnic politics builds on this approach, foregrounding contextual changes in certain identities' valences. It is perhaps easy to imagine billiard-ball-like ethnic configurations that bump into each other while retaining their essential cohesion: Ethiopian politics are discussed in terms of Somali, Oromo, Amhara, and Tigrayan (the latter two sometimes grouped as *Habesha*). The reality of intermarriages, inter-group alliances, and historical ethnicity-switching renders group boundaries less fixed. In 2017-2018, Oromos around Chercher killed "Somalis" or drove them from their lifelong homes. Aggressors pointed to victims' Somali great-grandparents as proof of their identity, ignoring the fact that these ancestors, after moving into Oromo-inhabited areas, had become Oromo, culturally and politically. In such contexts, as Schlee (2008, 7) asserts, "no ethnic 'group' possesses a fixed outside border and that means that we are not dealing with groups at all, but rather with a continuum in which the border between 'we' and 'the others' shifts depending on the point of view of the observer." To say that boundaries of identity shift is not to say that one identity is left behind when another is adopted; as with kinship, ethnicity can become more important in some circumstances, leading boundaries to harden into fixed political representation and territorial arrangements when incentives exist (Kefale 2010).

This leads to the chapter's second argument, which extends the first: the reproduction of ethnic distinctions through various means is a foundation of regional power and contributes to ongoing clan reconfigurations. In short, groups holding power within Ethiopia's federal system in some circumstances have an interest in mobilizing ethnic animosities to solidify their claims to authority as mediators across ethnic boundaries. The colonial precedents of such dynamics were analyzed in the previous chapter, and subsequent chapters analyze how regional officials have used this authority as mediators to organize trade and political power. Collective experiences of ethnic violence are particularly strong among Ogadenis who faced severe violence from the Ethiopian military for decades and provided the largest support base for secessionism. People revisit and lay claim to these histories, positioning Ogadenis as both *more Ethiopian* than other Somali groups (the Kali sub-narrative of Ogaden leadership exemplifies this) and more deserving of regional leadership due to Ogaden *marginalization* in Ethiopia. Considering how people construct Ogaden identity

in daily practice, section 3.4 shows how much more than genealogical relatedness or cultural commonality goes into clan and ethnic identity. People selectively invoke genealogical ties in combination with geographies of origin and allegiance, and experiences of violence through which past temporalities inhabit the present.

**State politics: ascribed and contractual identities**

In the nested levels conceptual model, the state's appearance as a contractual relationship between identity groups is appealing for its potential inclusivity and its resonance with Western theories of statehood in which various interests negotiate their submission to overarching authority. Even if groups are violently incorporated into the political structure, their mere group-ness gives them some capacity to pursue collective interests. Yet when clan and ethnic identities are seen to be shifting constructs, the state's image as a superstructure that mediates between pre-existing ascribed identity groups no longer holds (Hagmann and Péclard 2010; cf. Krupa and Nugent 2015). Loyalties and power relations do not simply form among existing groups within the overarching state structure, but rather converge around multiple foci of which lineage, ethnicity and the state are three. The state's crucial importance involves political leaders' formal role in brokering group relations, both between constituencies constructed around clan and ethnic lines and within the international nation-state organization of power. Political leaders sanction or prohibit ethnicizing and racializing discourses that structure not only conflict between groups, but the very composition of the groups that are politically relevant. The Kali narrative mobilizes the ethnic division between Ethiopian and Somali as a foundation for Ogaden leaders' authority.

The narrative not only discursively constructs the relevant political groups, but also establishes authority through a strategic deployment of time, weaving together past and present to generate mutual dependence among interest groups. While it invites the region's residents to choose Ethiopia and root themselves in a historicized Ethiopian-Somali identity, it also explicitly suggests that the entire region could reject Ethiopian rule, "taking the staff back" from Ethiopia. The gist of DDSI's argument, as understood by many Jigjigans, is: "Let's see what we can get from Ethiopia, and if we don't get what we want, we can secede." This is the instrumental construction of power through balancing connection and animosity between groups, which is founded on maintaining the essential difference between these groups.

The chapter's third argument is this: ꜥAbdi Iley's DDSI, whatever clan elements it encompassed, is

poorly understood as a clan-based government. The administration was remarkable for fragmenting interest groups organized around ethnicity, clan and political parties even as it mobilized claims about these very groups' interests in order to legitimize its governance. ʿAbdi's DDSI functioned as a two-sided protection racket simultaneously integrating and differentiating Somali-Ethiopia from federal power. As ethnically Somali, it rendered itself understandable to the local populace, speaking their language and adapting existing social structures, especially clanship, to its purposes. Ethiopian as well, it granted federal authorities benefits for their "hands-off" approach to the region. Legitimacy operates in these two directions: DDSI must represent itself to Somalis as the best compromise that can be reached with highlanders who love centralized power, and to federal authorities as the only organization with the know-how to govern intractable Somalis. Section 3.5 analyzes government discourse and practice to show how a culture centering on excessive assertions of patriotism and disloyalty serves to legitimize extortion and force.

With these three iterations of argument framing our understanding of clan, ethnicity and state, let us return to the Kali narrative as a tool to uncover a genealogy of authority since the 1960s, where the previous chapter left off. Even if the narrative itself has debatable historical foundations, its emphasis on the ambivalence of the administration's connection to Ethiopia articulates valuable themes through which to interpret regional politics.

## 3.2   Somali-Ethiopia's landscape of power, ca. 1978-2001

The Kali story's appeal to Ogaden leadership gestures to competing political projects configured around clan, ethnic and "national" identities that have coexisted in Somali-Ethiopia for the past century. The 1897 delimitation of Ethiopia's eastern borders created a territorial corner in which the Ogaden, a branch of the Darod clan-family, were a majority. British favoritism towards Somaliland's Isaq clans and Ethiopian officials' gradual southeastward encroachment combined to incentivize cooperation among Ogaden lineages. Since this time, leaders at the Ogaden level of organization have, with relative success, competed with the Ethiopian central government for legitimacy and control over means of force.

Even if some Ogaden leaders resisted British rule and favored Ethiopia's fragile power in the 1940s, it was not long after the BMA ended that members of Ogaden clans took up arms against Ethiopian rule, battling the empire-state's *Habesha* forces. Low-level insurgency began in the 1960s and ripped wide open when the Republic of Somalia supplied weapons to rebels and eventually invaded, attempting to "re-unite"

Somali-Ethiopia with Somalia during the Ethio-Somali or "Ogaden" War of 1977-78. This unsuccessful bid to re-draw geopolitical boundaries was a defining moment in regional politics and in the memories of Jigjiga's residents. As Ethiopian troops supported by Soviet and Cuban forces marched down into Jigjiga and Somalian forces withdrew in March 1978, Jigjigans recount sitting on mountainsides to the southwest, watching bombshells shred the town, uncertain about their future as Somalis in Ethiopia. Young men ran to Hargeisa or Mogadishu. Nearly a million Ethiopian Somalis crowded Somalia's refugee camps. Some rebel leaders found Somalian government positions—especially leaders belonging to the Darod clan family that was increasingly mobilized to support Siyad Barre. Others sought asylum abroad, where secessionist efforts continued with the Ogaden National Liberation Front's (ONLF) establishment in 1984.

Siyad Barre's regime began fragmenting during the 1980s; Ethiopia's socialist Derg government was likewise weakening. As Siyad Barre's regime slid towards its January 1991 downfall, some officials in Mogadishu returned to Somali-Ethiopia looking for a new territorial foundation on which to build their power. In Ethiopia, meanwhile, coalition forces overthrew the Derg and entered Addis Ababa in May 1991. Facing little resistance, they assumed governance operations with surprising continuity (de Waal 2015, 160). The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that took control was comprised of several ethnic-based parties, led by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). While the ONLF was among the insurrections that contributed to the Derg's overthrow, Somalis' association with foreign aggression marked them as untrustworthy Ethiopian citizens and justified their marginalization in Ethiopia's new federal government. "If we had not fought in the 1977 war on the side of Somalia," said one Ogaden regional official who closely observed 1990s political shifts, "we would have been part of the EPRDF today."[2]

Ethiopia's Region 5, or Somali Region, provisionally set up in 1991 and officially established under the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in 1994 (formally instituted August 1995), seemed to hang in the balance between chaos to the southeast and bureaucratic order to the west. Regional governance after Somali Region's establishment blended elements of Ethiopia's bureaucracy with clan-structured, internationalized Somalian politics. Former Somalian officials, including some who fought against Ethiopia in 1977, became politicians in the newly established Ethiopian federal system. Somalian refugees flooded into Ethiopia. Many Somalis, even those who had been born in Ethiopia, remained ori-

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[2]Moḥamed, field notes, 1/24/2018
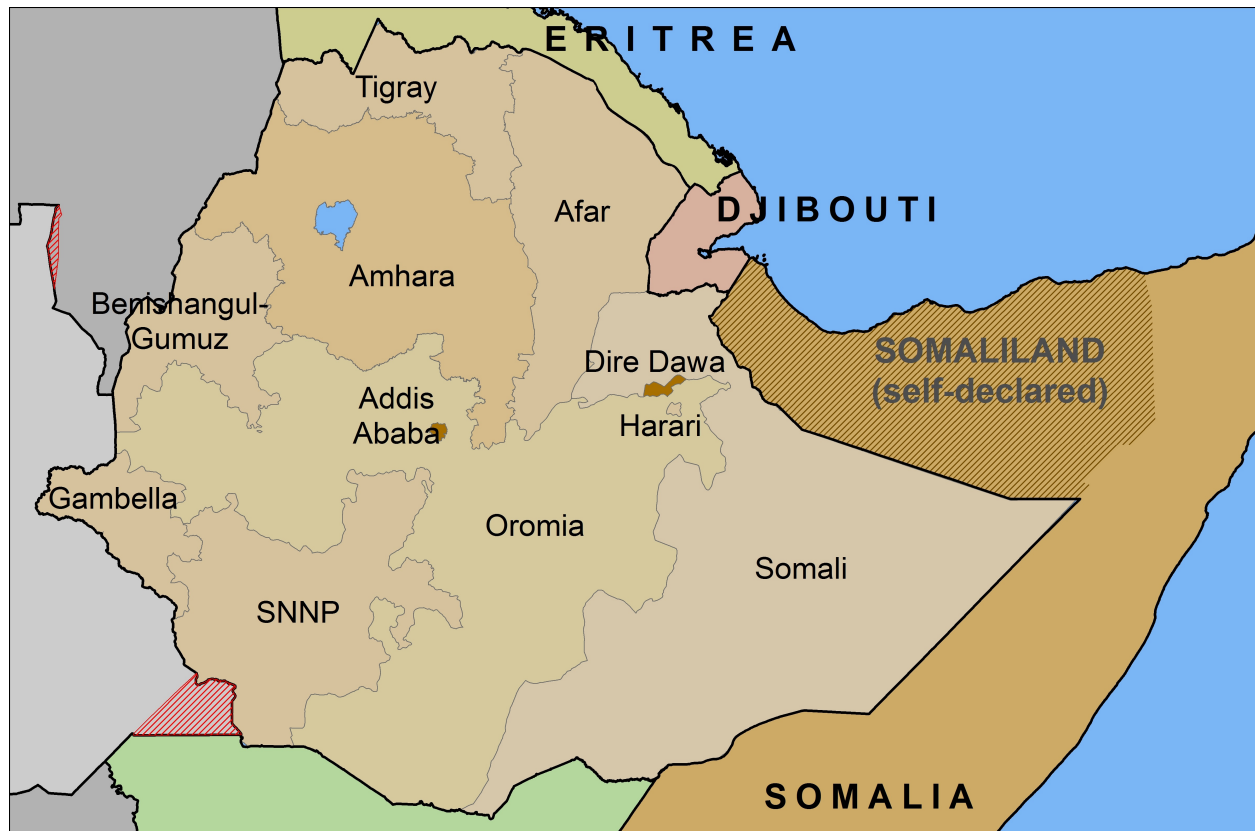
Figure 3.2: Ethiopia's federal geography. Map by author.

ented towards Somalia in their affective loyalties and expected that Somalia's chaos would be short-lived. Some retained material connections including assets such as houses in Mogadishu. In Ethiopia's federal system, people's orientations towards Somalia and their reliance on kinship support networks intersected with a heavily *Habesha* (Tigrayan-led) federal apparatus, replete with what many Somalis perceive as an overly-bureaucratic and overly-centralized political culture. Here emerges a second theme of the Kali narrative: the articulation between different levels of contractual relations: ethnically legitimate regionalized control for Somalis, and integration into the broader Ethiopian "multinational" state (Fig. 3.2).

### Identities and allegiances

Federal reorganization began to change people's views of eastern Ethiopia and possibilities for political inclusion, but feelings of discrimination against Somalis encouraged pro-Somalia sentiments—or at least support for regional autonomy—even among those who had stayed in Ethiopia during conflicts. Aḥmed, a former regional official born near Jigjiga, recounts that his parents "favored the independence of Somalis; they were always saying that we will be free [someday]." Aḥmed's father had initially joined Somalian

forces in 1977, but felt marginalized in Somalia as an Ethiopian Jidwaq Somali. He joined a branch of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) that fought "to oppose Greater Somalia." The rest of the family fled to Hargeisa, where Aḥmed recalls they were treated as second-class citizens. Federalism gave his family a place in the world: "Somalis were recognized as citizens. My father cried when he saw this, because previously even *being Somali* was a crime."[3]

Distrust between Somalis and Ethiopians as distinct ethnicities moderated feelings of inclusion in Ethiopia. Yet Somalis were far from unified in their approach to regional self-governance. Aḥmed describes federalism's initial years as a "transitional period" during which politics were structured by two divisions: first, a separation between those who had stayed in Ethiopia and the newcomers from Somalia, who took power. The second division was between clan groups, as 14 local political parties were established, mostly clan-based. Clan leaders and elders were alliance-brokers and gatekeepers, an authority structure which shaped overlaps between clan identity and political affiliation. The diaspora-backed ONLF, led by former Somalian Government officials, proved popular and took power. The new administration placed the regional capital in Gode, deep in Ogaden territory.

Federal meddling in the region undermined this Ogaden leadership, provoking resentment and calling to mind Imperial and Derg governments' "colonial" approach. Meles Zenawi's EPRDF intervened in 1993 to oust the ONLF, create a new regional government under the United Zones (UZ) group, and force the transfer of the regional capital from Gode to Jigjiga (Samatar 2004, 1139–40). UZ leaders proved sympathetic to ONLF calls for a referendum, holding a 1994 meeting in Jigjiga to discuss self-determination and the fight against the Islamist movement al-Itiḥad. Federal authorities again intervened in an attempt to create a coalition under the Ethiopian-Somali Democratic League (ESDL), with ʿAbdul-Majid Ḥussein (Isaq) as a key interlocutor between the federal and regional governments.

While most analyses of state and politics in the region have focused on the ONLF, during the mid-1990s al-Itiḥad was perhaps a greater threat; it was certainly a movement with a clearer anti-Ethiopian agenda and more threatening international connections. According to US analysts, al-Itiḥad, founded in the 1980s, sought to create an "Islamic Republic of Greater Somalia" embracing all Somalis—and perhaps all Muslims—in the Horn (Pham 2007). Among al-Itiḥad's leadership were Ogadenis who fought for Somalia in the 1977 war. Ḥassan "al-Turki" ʿAbdullah Ḥersi was among them—himself hailing from the Rer ʿAbdille

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[3]This and subsequent narrative from interview with "Aḥmed," 31 December 2017, written notes.

Ogaden clan (Rer Warfa subclan). During the early 1990s, al-Itiḥad attempted to control strategic ports and crossroads, temporarily holding Bosaso, Marka and Kismayo, but establishing longer-term control in Luq from 1991-1996 (Pham 2007).  The group's capacity to operate across a broad territory to some extent reflects the geographic distribution of relatives with whom alliances could be mobilized.  In 1994, UNDP reported that by local accounts, al-Itiḥad within Ethiopia were most active between Qabridahar, Qalafo and Dhagaḥbur (areas largely inhabited by Rer ʿAbdille and their Moḥamed Zubeyr cousins, Rer Isaq) (Bryden 1994). In 1996, al-Itiḥad operatives attempted to assassinate ʿAbdul-Majid Ḥussein in Addis Ababa, ostensibly to cut off his efforts to draw Region 5 more firmly into Ethiopia's federal system.

Federal authorities leveraged clan identities to marginalize Ogaden supporters of self-determination: "the Jidwaq became more dominant," Aḥmed says, as the capital was transferred to Jigjiga.  The ousted ONLF began to fracture into factions that were willing to compromise and hard-liners favoring insurrection. According to popular phrasing in Jigjiga, two Moḥamed Zubeyr clans—Rer ʿAbdille and Rer Isaq—were the most "troublesome," with many supporting al-Itiḥad or ONLF. Eventually, this would create a push to co-opt these groups into regional leadership to preclude secession.

Secession may have been supported by a majority of Somalis living in Ethiopia, but this was not a foregone conclusion determined by ancient ethnic animosities. Even within the Ogaden clan-confederacy, clans were far from unified. A 1994 conference of Ogaden diaspora in Germany yielded an intense debate, according to Jamal, a Rer ʿAbdille political activist in the regional diaspora who attended the meeting:

> One of my arguments was to become Ethiopian and recognized as Ethiopians by the rest of Ethiopia, [or] to become separate from Ethiopia will need the same length of struggle. But one, we will lose lives; one we will not lose lives. ... My suggestion was, let us fight for our rights as Ethiopians... let us build our society as an urban society (our society was always nomadic). ... Let us use the Ethiopian Army to defend the borders, and prohibit civilian army use, so that the inter-clan conflicts are controlled. ... For the first 20 years, I said, let us get whatever they give us.... After that 20 years, we will fight for our rights as Ethiopians, and we will get our full rights.[4]

The ONLF leadership took a different approach, declaring a referendum on independence from Ethiopia

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[4]Jamal, audio-recorded interview, 6/12/2018

and alienating not only people from other clans, but many Ogadenis. Federal authorities removed the regional government, installing the federally-backed Ethiopian-Somali People's Democratic Party (*Ḥisbiga Dimoqraatiga Shacabka Soomaalida-Itoobiya*, ESPDP). The ONLF plunged again into armed insurrection. Violence drove more people from the region. The Ethiopian Somali diaspora expanded in Europe, North America, Australia, and elsewhere. The diaspora became a critical base of support for rebellion. Still, Jamal points out, Ogadenis supported various sides in the conflict.

## Clan and power configurations

Multiple political projects coexisted in a social landscape that cannot adequately be described at the level of Ogaden animosity. Local discourse in the region takes shape around identities well "below" Ogaden in Somali genealogies. Three political groups at violent odds—a pro-Ethiopia camp, the ONLF, and al-Itiḥad—were all largely comprised of people identifying themselves as not only as Ogaden, but at a lower level as Moḥamed Zubeyr. Even going beyond the broad Ogaden clan umbrella into clans and subclans is not necessarily helpful in understanding allegiances: I regularly broke the 2018 Ramadan fast with Ḥersi—a government official and vocal DDSI supporter—and his cousins from a Rer ꞔAbdille Ogaden *jilib*. One cousin was a former ONLF fighter, the other a businessman from Mogadishu. Their regular co-presence and cheerful conversation amidst divergent allegiances attests to ways in which lineage and political affiliation transect each other rather than simply aligning as Lewis and others envision. Kinship mobilized through economic responsibilities and entitlements does not automatically translate into shared political affiliation. Nevertheless, for political leaders, *claims* about lineage allegiances constitute powerful means of discursively legitimizing and de-legitimizing groups of individuals.

Several colloquial words—*tol* (lineage), *qolo* (clan), *reer* (people), *beel* (community) or the Arabic *qabiil* (tribe)—are often used roughly synonymously and can refer to various organizational levels, depending on context. So there is linguistic slippage when talking about levels above *jilib*. The blurred conceptual language is compounded by the fact that a higher number of lineage levels are relevant among certain groups than among others, giving rise to the "long-branch" versus "short-branch" distinction discussed in Chapter 2. Consider a practical example relevant to Jigjiga's current politics: Within the Darod clan-family, Ogaden and Jidwaq are said to have been sons born to a man named Absame. Because Ogaden had more offspring (as the story goes), today there are many more relevant organizational levels in the Ogaden clan-confederacy
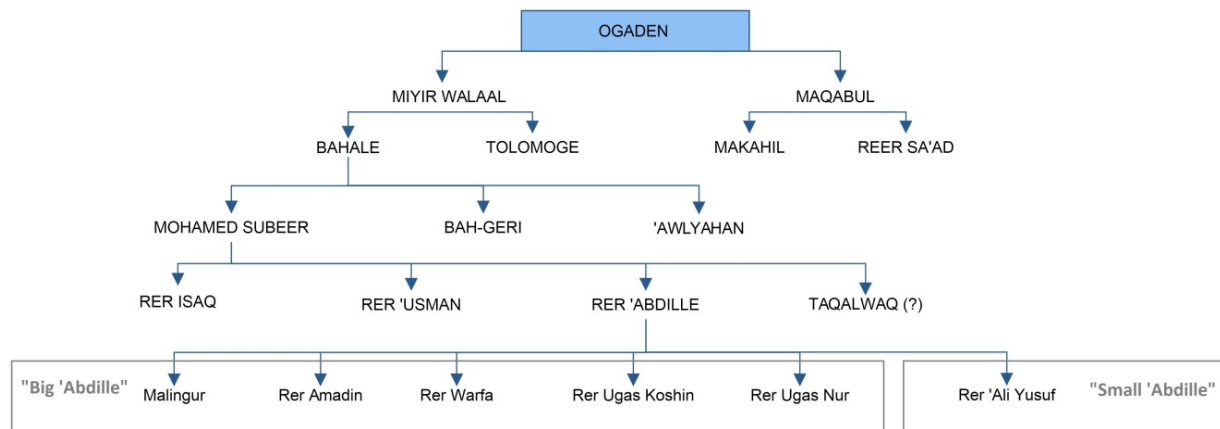
Figure 3.3: Branch lineage of Ogaden focused on Rer ʿAbdille as drawn by Malingur informant in consultation with Malingur elder, Jigjiga, 2018.  This figure should be read as one interpretation of Rer ʿAbdille organization and is not intended to replace alternative understandings of Ogaden lineages such as those presented in Appendix B, but rather can be usefully compared to them as understandings of genealogy shaped by people's positionality and the contexts in which they are drawn.

than in the Jidwaq.

In 2015-2018, the level within which Ethiopia's Somalis understood power to be concentrated was not Ogaden, nor even Moḥamed Zubeyr, but a level lower:  Rer ʿAbdille ran the government.  Government and public discourses juxtaposed Rer ʿAbdille power against that of their "cousins" the Rer Isaq, whom government officials stereotyped as ONLF supporters and whom the public pitied as the largest population in Jigjiga's "Jail Ogaden." If people were talking about clan (in any of the terms named above) generally in regional politics, it was this lineage level they were discussing.  Here I employ the vocabulary outlined in Chapter 2: Ogaden is a clan-confederacy, Moḥamed Zubeyr is a clan-group, and Rer ʿAbdille is a clan.  Yet due to the uneven distribution of levels among long-branch and short-branch lineages, groups that appear at higher organizational levels in Somali genealogies are also operative in regional politics as equivalent groups.  For example, Tolomoge in Jigjiga sometimes conceptualize their group not in distinction to the level of Bahale, but rather directly to Rer ʿAbdille.  This is not inherent to clannishness, but rather reflects a broader tendency of large political groups to fragment.  Rer ʿAbdille leaders claim authority over the entire Ogaden clan-confederacy to legitimize their predominance in regional government.  Figure 3.3 displays a branch lineage of the Rer ʿAbdille clan, as drawn by several Rer ʿAbdille informants (who had to consult together to name some of the branches and were not always certain about them).

Stopping at the Rer ꜥAbdille as the relevant organizational or discursive level is nearly as much an over-simplification as stopping at Ogaden. To narrate DDSI's rise through a local lens, we must go one step lower to Rer ꜥAbdille subclans. Most Rer ꜥAbdille in Jigjiga hail from five clans which they refer to as the "Big ꜥAbdille"—Malingur, Rer Amadin, Rer Warfa, Rer Ugas Koshin, and Rer Ugas Nur. People from these groups are often aware of the existence of other "Small ꜥAbdille" subclans but cannot necessarily name them specifically, other than the Rer ꜥAli Yusuf—ꜥAbdi Iley's subclan. Within the subclans, relatives identify each other according to lineages and sublineages, at which point they reach the *jilib*. As observation of Ḥersi's relationships with his cousins suggests, even at this level relationships and reciprocity do not necessarily translate into political unity. What can be said regarding *jilib* identity as a mechanism of political allegiance is that membership reflects certain common interests since members will literally pay for political instability that results in their group killing someone else. However, every community encompasses diverse individual interests. "Clan-talk" is a predominant local mode of describing the concentration of political power, but this does not mean that political and kinship groups are synonymous.

Rejecting the assumption that Somali clan organization is simply something "out there," timeless identities grounded in Somali culture, re-invites a question raised in Chapter 2: are clans the same thing now as they were over the past century? If not, then what patterns of interaction tend to reinforce clan-focused allegiances where they do exist and infuse them with new content? Ogaden conflict has been anything but a self-contained, localized conflict based on always-already-existing clan and ethnic differences. Debates between Ethiopianizing and seceding involved more complex calculations, international connections and affective experiences of violence. Because discussing clan and clan discourse is such a loaded affair and subject to accusations of perspective bias based on clan positionality and age, I list key informants quoted in this chapter in Table 3.2 in order of appearance. Note that along with Ogadenis, I employ testimonies from two Bartire men who have been involved in DDSI, one of whom (Kemal) remained a vocal supporter of ꜥAbdi at the time of the interview, while the other (Aḥmed) was in opposition.

## 3.3  The War on Terror and ꜥAbdi Iley's rise

The year 2001 was a turning point in the regional political scene, but one that in retrospect had been on the horizon. Al-Itiḥad's 1996 attacks in Addis Ababa intersected with a regional build-up preluding the American-declared War on Terror. While al-Itiḥad was recruiting in Ethiopian territory, Ethiopian military

Table 3.1: Key informants quoted in this chapter's analysis

| Pseudonym | Age | Clan | Social/political position | Interview details |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aḥmed | 46 | Bartire | High-level member of regional opposition, former regional department head | Multiple conversations and formal interviews, Jigjiga and Addis Ababa, 2015-2018 |
| Jamal | 60 | Rer ʿAbdille (Rer Warfa) | Diaspora political activist working to broker regional power transition in 2018 | Multiple conversations, formal interviews, attendance at meetings in Jigjiga, February-July 2018 |
| Ḥersi | 28 | Rer ʿAbdille (Rer Amadin) | Municipal official | Numerous discussions, 2016-2018 and one formal interview. Also regularly accompanied and observed carrying out official duties |
| Kemal | 40 | Bartire | Former member of regional parliament, former bureau head | Multiple conversations and one audio-recorded interview, Jigjiga, November-December 2017 |
| Muna | 50s | Rer ʿAbdille (Rer Warfa) | Diaspora returnee who grew up in Qabridahar during 1970s-1980s | Discussion with lineage elders, Jigjiga, July 2018 |
| Musa | 34 | Rer Isaq (Rer Guled) | Diaspora returnee who grew up in Dhagahbur during 1990s-2000s | Audio-recorded interview, June 2018 |
| Warsame | 29 | Rer ʿAbdille (Rer Ugas Koshin) | Diaspora returnee who grew up abroad | Multiple audio-recorded interviews, October 2017-July 2018 |

reprisals in 1996 focused on the al-Itiḥad-occupied town of Luq, Somalia, from which Ethiopian troops ousted the movement (and initiated a tradition of cross-border intervention in "Stateless" Somalia) (Ingiriis 2018a). Other shifts in the broader region were unfolding at the same time: a battle for supremacy between Islamists in Sudan's government, the US embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, and—most immediately for Meles and Ethiopia's state-building strategies, the 1998 Eritrean War.

Ideologically, ONLF leaders could look to Eritrea's 1993 secession as a comparative case of an Ethiopian province breaking away, suggesting the possibility of success in their secessionist quest. Eritrea's breakaway provided not only an example and moral support for the ONLF, but also material provision. The Eritrean government's bid in a showdown for regional dominance, especially as its war with Ethiopia ground towards a stalemate in 2000, included supporting the ONLF via Somalia. ONLF leaders were no strangers to proxy war and foreign connections. It was from the beginning a largely diaspora-funded and –motivated movement and included politicians and military officers who had lived through the Cold War. This is not to deny the ONLF's popularity in Somali-Ethiopia, but to point out that ideological divisions of space (local versus international) mask the difficulty of analytically distinguishing the multi-scalar means of support behind the ONLF. Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) operations in the Ogaden and nearby areas were not conceived by Ethiopian leaders simply as putting down a locally-supported insurgency, but as a conflict in which broader interests were at play. The standoff on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border was just beginning, and proxy-war dynamics in the Ogaden nascent, when two planes struck New York's World Trade Center in September 2001, unleashing new international forces.

Within five months of the attacks in New York, the US National Security Agency established Lion's Pride, a signal intelligence operations center in Addis Ababa. It was also reported that US military instructors were in Gode in 2002 training pro-Ethiopian Somalis. Lion's Pride expanded to Dire Dawa in 2006, shortly preceding an expanded ENDF offensive against the ONLF. A US memo details the rationale for the expansion: "The [Country Team] and Sub-Saharan Africa Divisions requested that. . . [signals] collection from Somalia be extended down to Mogadishu." Yet Somalis in Ethiopia were also suspect: the operation "also required close-in collection for terrorists in eastern Ethiopia."[5] At a May 2006 planning conference, it is reported, American and Ethiopian officials agreed to expand cooperation to target "eastern Ethiopia's

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[5]"Expanding Joint US-Ethiopian SIGINT Collection" 2006 https://theintercept.com/document/2017/09/12/expanding-joint-us-ethiopian-sigint-collection/

Ogaden region and the nearby Somali borderlands."[6]

Also during May 2006, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) secured their hold on Mogadishu and threatened to pursue action against Ethiopia.  One leader in UIC'S military wing was none other than the Rer ʿAbdille figure Ḥassan al-Turki, designated a terrorist by the US Government in 2004.  In December 2006, ENDF forces were in Mogadishu (with tacit US support), ousting the UIC. UIC's armed wing broke away from the political movement and fought back as a new movement—al-Shabaab.  Meanwhile, whether by calculus or not, calls by al-Qaeda to defeat "the crusader Ethiopian forces"[7] provided legitimation for the Ethiopian government's claims that the Somalis waging insurgency in Ethiopian territory were "terrorists." Peter Pham testified before the US Congress in 2007 that "anti-Ethiopian forces" sponsored by Eritrea "include elements clearly linked to al-Qaeda and other jihadist movements." In 2006, he said, there were "at least 2,000 ethnic Somali fighters, trained and armed in Eritrea to fight alongside the Islamic Courts Union forces last year and documented by the UN Monitoring Group at the time," who "subsequently entered Ethiopia after the Islamists were routed at the beginning of [2007] and linked up with the ONLF forces already operating there" (Pham 2007).

The ENDF markedly stepped up counterinsurgency against the ONLF in May 2007.  Humanitarian organizations claimed that their operations in the region had been restricted, and accused the Ethiopian government of blockading the Ogaden.  By mid-2007 a food-security and humanitarian crisis threatened to erupt in the ensuing dry season.  Military operations focused on five zones in Somali Region: Fiq, Dhagaḥbur, Wardheer, Qoraḥey, and Gode.  The ONLF retaliated against Somalis cooperating with Ethiopian federal authorities, attempting to assassinate regional president ʿAbdullahi "Lugbur" in Jigjiga in 2007.  A US cable from late 2007 notes that "two senior members of the Somali Regional cabinet have fled the country, and the Governor of Gode has quit, all citing their unwillingness to carry out security functions for the [Ethiopian Government]."[8] The situation spiraled into an authority crisis: in December 2007 "traditional authorities" complained of losing influence and "blamed this authority vacuum, as well as discontent over the lack of effective government—either 'modern' or 'traditional'—for clan and ethnic conflict and general

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[6]"How the NSA built a secret surveillance network for Ethiopia," *The Ethiopia Observatory*, https://ethiopiaobservatory.wordpress.com/

[7]Barbara Slavin, "U.S. Support Key to Ethiopia's Invasion," *USA Today*, August 8, 2007. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-01-07-ethiopia_x.htm

[8]"Ethiopia: USAID OFDA Report - Update of Ogaden Situation" 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07ADDISABABA3584_a.html

lawlessness."[9]

By 2009, however, US intelligence officers began to notice a potential reconfiguration of leadership around the young regional security head, ʿAbdi Moḥamoud. A July 28 confidential cable from a political officer says that local partners were reporting "a power struggle between Somali regional President [Daʿud] and regional security chief Abdi, and an unclear chain of command within the regional government. For example, the partner had witnessed Abdi interrupting [Daʿud] in public meetings." At this point, the cable engages in the broader speculation about politics "behind" politics: "it is unclear who controls Abdi. It is possible that he is receiving orders from the ENDF, or from National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister Abay Tsehaye in Addis Ababa."[10]

ʿAbdi Iley "was not anybody important" when the War on Terror was declared, Kemal—a regional MP at the time—tells me. An electrician from Dhagaḥbur, in his first government job with the Revenue Authority (a federal institution), ʿAbdi had contact with Tigrayan military leaders who came to like him. "They chose him, from that time—before he became head of regional security, they had him picked out." In the geopolitical landscape, too, he was "the right guy," as numerous people have told me. He came from a small Rer ʿAbdille subclan, the Rer ʿAli Yusuf, living around Qabridahar, but was raised in Dhagaḥbur—thus he had connections with people who might otherwise lean towards the ONLF. Furthermore, his mother's family was Jidwaq (Abaskul). This would give him family connections among non-Ogaden groups and business interests in Jigjiga. Most important, however, were federal leaders. As Kemal says: "the Tigrayans were behind him, telling him, 'Don't worry; you are the one with support.'" Behind the Tigrayan-led EPRDF government was the US Government, with its eyes on al-Qaʿida.[11]

What unfolded from 2009 onwards was a sort of mimesis in which the regional state retained a violent relationship with (Ogaden) society while itself undergoing a shift in ethnic composition. Recognizing that federal military presence was provoking rebellion, ʿAbdi oversaw the Liyu Police's establishment. The paramilitary force was composed primarily of Ogaden soldiers who would fight their own "cousins" in the ONLF and al-Itiḥad, and secure the border against al-Shabaab infiltration. The calculus of political allegiance changed; as one official pointed out, "the Ogaden were killing themselves on three sides." By all

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[9]"Pastoralists Highlight Ineffective Governance and Conflict Concerns" 2007.
  https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07ADDISABABA3466_a.html
[10]"Increased ONLF Activity, Police Presence Reported in Somali Region" 2009.
  https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09ADDISABABA1797_a.html
[11]This and subsequent quotes from interview notes, "Kemal," 12/31/2017

accounts, the Liyu Police's counterinsurgency against the ONLF and al-Itiḥad from 2009-2012 was brutal (Hagmann and Korf 2012; Hagmann 2014).

While condemned by humanitarian organizations and analysts, in the view of many Jigjigans today—and all else being equal—the campaigns were probably necessary. Previous regional governments' unwillingness to put down rebellion had only entrenched the stalemate between Ethiopian state and Somali society that made the region a permanent frontier of state-building (cf. Hagmann and Korf 2012). Thousands of civilians had died. From Kemal's standpoint, ᶜAbdi "knew what it would take. He was ruthless; he killed a lot of people." Kemal continues: "What was needed in this region—but also what was needed for Ethiopia—was security... He was a dictator, he was a brutal guy—he killed a lot of people—but that was what was needed at the time." Aḥmed, now an opposition leader who condemns ᶜAbdi's leadership, concedes this point. The federal military, he says, realized that they could not maintain peace and that their activity was militarizing the Somali-Habesha ethnic boundary. "ᶜAbdi negotiated with the federal government," Aḥmed says, "saying we can bring peace without the federal institutions." ᶜAbdi worked with PM Meles Zenawi to develop a strategy prioritizing security. In the words of numerous Jigjigans, ᶜAbdi was, in a twisted sense, initially a hero whose godless brutality created possibilities for a new Ethiopian-Somali politics. Many Somalis had to be killed in order for regional residents to accept the administration's Somalization and recognize that Somalis, too, could be Ethiopians.

While humanitarian organizations decried the counterinsurgency and analysts discussed the Ogaden conflict's "indigenization" (Hagmann and Korf 2012), here a fine-grained analysis is needed to indicate the situation's complexity and to discern the regional administration's strength deriving from its position of mediating between federal security needs and regional discontents. ᶜAbdi was described by Kemal as chosen by Tigrayans—this is a common view. The flipside is Aḥmed's argument that ᶜAbdi "handled top military generals—Ethiopians—through financial benefits." As he succeeded with counterinsurgency through the Liyu Police, the federal authorities granted him more power. In the words of several informants, ᶜAbdi "rents" Somali Region from the Tigrayans—effectively arbitraging between financial incentives for federal elites and his own regional political power. (This formulation and the concept of arbitrage between domains of power will be taken up in Chapters 5 and 8.)

ᶜAbdi became president in 2010 and advanced the Ethiopianization campaign that his predecessor Daᶜud had initiated, bringing his military-security experience and connections to bear on governing strategies.

Facing criticism for their violence against their own people, officials and state-run media outlets mobilized a clan and ethnic discourse to legitimize their leadership. The Kali narrative partakes in a broader discourse about Ogaden clans choosing Ethiopia. Another intent of Galaal's book (and discourses among high-level leaders) is to legitimize the Rer ʿAli Yusuf subclan's specific connection with highland Ethiopian power through a history of maternal connections:

> Yusuf Maḥad-Roob ʿAbdille, the man to whom most of the Rer ʿAbdille community trace their ancestry, was a leader blessed by God with people and livestock, on account of which the governor of Harar, in order to connect with him, gave him [his daughter] Ḥaddiya in marriage. Ḥaddiya, who was the youngest and the last wife of Yusuf Maḥad-Roob ʿAbdille, bore a few daughters and ʿAli Yusuf, most of whose descendants now live in Qoraḥay Zone (Maxamed Muxumed Galaal 2017, 31; my translation).

Among Rer ʿAbdille outside the Rer ʿAli Yusuf subclan, the narrative is seen as little more than a blatant attempt to curry highland Ethiopian favor for a weak "small ʿAbdille" subclan that has no democratic right to power. Here it is worth recalling the proverbial injunction: "Either be a mountain, or lean on one." Well below the Ogaden clan-confederacy level often touted by analysts, here we have a small subclan discursively constructing power through maternal connections and marriage ties. Lineage histories take on new life as "clan-talk" legitimizes current political connections to highland power structures.

## 3.4   Ogaden identities

For many Ogadenis, ʿAbdi's path to presidency involves a double contradiction that connects to core dilemmas of becoming Ethiopian. First, it was regional conflict's Somalization (increasing intra-ethnic aspect) that enabled the project of Ethiopianization (increasing ownership of Ethiopian national identity within the federal framework) to proceed. As long as predominantly Habesha federal forces were trying to put down regional insurgencies, insurgencies continued. When a Somali force began fighting in the name of Ethiopia, the calculation of interests shifted. Relative peace came, though not without heavy cost. This cost infuses a second contradiction: a basis for the Ogaden-led project of Ethiopianizing Somalis is the moral claim that Ogadenis' (ongoing) marginalization in Ethiopia secures Ogaden—and specifically Moḥamed-Zubeyr—rights to centrality in regional leadership. While some people invoke principles of majority rule

to legitimize Ogaden regional leadership, a more common claim among Moḥamed Zubeyr is their suffering in the struggle for autonomy. "Jigjiga never had their boys being killed by each other," Jamal protests vehemently against Jidwaq leadership of regional opposition in 2018. "20,000 Ogadenis killed each other. [Jigjigans] never had bodies of their boys laying down on the central square of the city and told, 'You can't bury them.'"

Here I offer two short narratives that explain elements of Ogaden identity and its relationship to violence and marginality in Ethiopia. I then demonstrate how Ogaden identities are reproduced in government practice in Jigjiga in ways that infuse identity with emotive content far beyond simple *abtirsiin* (lineage) connections.

### "The Ogaden boy and the five-birr lij can never live together"

A group of Ogaden social leaders—people not directly involved in politics, but who hold public esteem and whose daily speech and practice involve a political vision that differs from state discourse—constantly invoke a life-cycle gap between the age-forty-plus generation and the region's young, inexperienced politicians. One does not have to be forty-plus to have experienced violent occupation in the Ogaden, but this group that came of age before federalism carries social weight. Their views and experiences, intentionally marginalized in public discourse by the administration comprised of young men who grew up in the federal system, invoke threads connecting experiences before and after the federal transition.

Muna, middle-aged matron of the house where I occasionally chewed *chat* with these leaders, is a recent diaspora returnee seeking to rebuild a life in a country she left forty years ago. She is also Rer ʿAbdille. While the shift to peace under ʿAbdi's rule appeared at first a break from the past, the longer she stays, the more discontent she becomes. Current dynamics of militarized governance in the region (particularly the Federal Government's policy surrounding newly opened oil and natural gas production near Gode) dredge up visceral memory. She recalls her father's limp form hanging from a wooden beam in the middle of Qabridahar. After he was hung in the 1980s, Derg administrators left his body to rot for a week in full view of the small town, forcing the populace to smell the price of defiance. "This is colonialism—terrible colonialism (*gumeysi xun*)," she says of the current situation.[12]

Members of the generation who came of age during the 1960s and 1970s tell apocryphal jokes and personal stories revealing their perceptions and expectations about ethnic boundaries between Somali and

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[12]Field notes, 7/2/2018

Habesha. Jamal (among those sitting in Muna's house) sums up ethnic divisions in a nutshell: "The five-birr *lij* (boy) and Ogaden boy can never live together." The five-birr *lij* is the term for a (Habesha) prostitute's son. When he reaches age six and goes to school, "the kids will say: where is your father? He comes home, he will ask his mom: where is my dad?  'Oh,' she says, 'the Ogaden killed your father.'  ...  The five-birr boy will grow up to grade 8; the only job available after grade 8 is the army." His first post would be in the Ogaden—"the Ethiopian army never had a fight with anybody else," Jamal says—and the five-birr boy is out for revenge. On the other side, the Ogaden boy is told from the time he can speak that he must protect the household and livestock from two things: the hyena and the Amhara, "his only enemies."[13]

Whatever the public discourse about "choosing Ethiopia" may say, the older generation passes down through their oral histories a visceral ethnic boundary between Somali and Ethiopian. This does not mean that the older generation is against Ethiopia as a political project; Jamal has for thirty years supported pursuing Somalis' rights within the Ethiopian federal framework. Political rapprochement within Ethiopia, however, does not mean an immediate possibility of rapprochement between ethnicities, especially among the Ogaden's population. Abdullahi continues a passage cited above by arguing that a rift between Ogaden and non-Ogaden Somalis resulted in the ONLF "predominantly fighting in areas that are inhabited by the Ogaadeen clan, such as Dhagahbour, Fiiq, Godey, Qorahay and Wardheer zones" (Abdi M. Abdullahi 2007, 558). Fighting in these areas may have less to do with their de facto clan composition than that they are centers of traumatic memories that constantly rehash, for their residents, the boundary between Somali and Ethiopian as ethnic categories. Here Harrison's (1993:18, quoted in Schlee 2008:50) summary of his findings in Melanesia is applicable: "It is not so much groups that make war, but war that makes groups."

### "The Habesha tortured your father"

Younger Ogadenis recount similar experiences that testify to the continuity of militarized ethnic tensions under federalism. While the advent of ethnic federalism represents an imagined break towards self-governance, migration due to conflict and oppression continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Musa, a 34-year-old diaspora returnee, began his story of migration and return by recounting his father's senseless beating by Ethiopian soldiers in Dhagaḥbur, around 1992:

> I remember when [my father] came to our house, it was *asar...* let me say approximately 5 or

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[13]Jamal, audio-recorded interview, 6/12/2018

> 6 PM. When he came to our house, he was vomiting blood.... He asked my mom, 'Please put
>
> for me... a mat, outside of the house.' She put it there for him, and he slept there. He would
>
> get up every few minutes and vomit blood. I asked my mom—I was young, around seven
>
> years—'Mom, what happened to father?'
>
> She said, 'The Habesha tortured him,"—you know, "the soldiers tortured him today because the
>
> goats went into the [military] base."[14]

An impressionable seven-year-old, Musa watched his father die on the porch. With such visceral experiences common among Ogaden civilians who were not politically involved, it is little surprise that the populations of Ogaden towns such as Dhagaḥbur were largely sympathetic to the ONLF cause and oriented against the Ethiopian government, perceiving Ethiopia as colonial and heavy-handed even under the federal system. In 2005, the second time Musa was arrested as an alleged ONLF supporter, he was kept in the very military base where his father had been tortured. When he was released, Musa did not wait to get arrested again, but fled abroad.

The affective distance between Ogadenis and Ethiopians, as felt in Region 5, was hardly closer under the federal system than it had been under previous administrations. This is not to say that tensions defined or pervaded all personal interethnic relationships; Ogadenis both at home and in diaspora recount friends among Habesha. In describing these very friendships, however, Ogadenis point to how divisive politics have created the hard ethnic boundaries, reinforcing a regional tendency to view centralized Ethiopian state-building through an ethnic lens. Ethnic distance itself is mobilized by the current administration to construct its authority as a locus of mediation. Government-sponsored media stoke visceral memories and paint DDSI as the only entity capable of leading Somali-Ethiopia through the political impasse. A popular song, for example, begins with a series of lines about historical residues in the region:

> *Waxaa lagu sugnaa shaley selel iyo coolaadan*
>
> *Sebiga iyo hooyada midna samatabbixi jirin*
>
> *Intaa lagu sifaada suldaamada la laayi jiray*
>
> *Sidoo kale hablaha ugu xuman lagu sameyn jiray*

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[14]Musa, audio-recorded interview, 6/25/2018

"What is certain of yesterday is hatred and animosity

Neither infant nor mother used to escape

Amidst insults, the *suldaan*s were slain

And women used to be raped."[15]

The song proceeds by detailing how DDSI has overcome this past, positioning the party as the only entity that can address Somali-Ethiopia's divisive history.

## Officializing Ogaden identities

Because Ogadenis were involved in diverse political projects, the *content* of an individual's lineage identity is at least important as the individual's structural position in clan and subclan genealogies in shaping individuals' interaction with official DDSI structures. Officials employ clan identity as technology of power in two ways: first, as a means of mobilizing constituencies by discursively construing certain groups as (un)trustworthy; and second in a colonial mode of command by rendering people responsible for their relatives' behavior rather than upholding individual rights. Nevertheless, an examination of official discourse and practice shows how wrong it would be to describe DDSI simply as a clan-based (whether Ogaden or Rer ꜥAbdille) government. ꜥAbdi's DDSI constructed its power, in fact, by working to fragment lineage groups based on non-lineage factors (political loyalties, geographical connections, and experiences of violence) even as it leveraged lineages when they were useful to control individual behavior (for example, by threatening relatives based on clan).

If clan did not determine allegiance to the regional administration, it was nevertheless a convenient tool of delegitimization in public discourse that self-consciously sought to divide Ogaden clans against each other. Arguably, the Rer Isaq—the Rer ꜥAbdille clan's closes genealogical "cousins"—have borne the brunt of a targeted ideology that rendered individuals belonging to this Ogaden clan highly suspect. Officials and regional-state-run media outlets discuss the ONLF in terms of a derogatory nickname—UBBO, *Ururka Baabbi'inta Beesha Ogaadeen*: The Organization for the Elimination of the Ogaden Community[16]—and ostracize the Rer Isaq by blaming this clan for Ogaden violence:

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[15]"DDSI – Shaley iyo Maanta" ("DDSI-Yesterday and Today"), Liyu Band. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7IIMzBOIAc. I thank Jemal Yusuf and Kader Mahamoud for assistance with translation.

[16]Though I did not meet anyone in Jigjiga who explicitly claimed to support the ONLF during ꜥAbdi's administration, I have heard some people modify this name to *Ururka Badbaadinta Beesha Ogaadeen*, the Organization for the Salvation of the Ogaden Community.

> [T]he anti-peace organization UBBO which brought killing, rape, looting and robbery against
> the helpless civilians of the region claimed their ancestry from the Ogaden community, but
> when we look lower, they are from the Moḥamed Zubeyr, generally the Rer Isaq and Rer
> ʿAbdille—which were those upon whom they inflicted the most destructive problems. And
> it was notably first said by the previous national Prime Minister Meles Zenawi that "Rer Isaq
> are UBBO," which was something certain and well-founded because the Rer Isaq of UBBO
> killed those tribes who opposed the Rer Isaq. ...although on the other side there were youth
> born into the Rer Isaq community who were martyred through the problems inflicted by UBBO
> upon the patient people of the country and abroad.[17]

The article proceeds to knock the legs out from under the Rer Isaq—"the clan that drives terrorism, anti-peace and Somali expansionism"—and then to build up the specifically *Ethiopian* Rer Isaq and their collaboration with the regional government as a foundation of the current peace. If discourses distinguish even Ogaden clans for potential disloyalty, generalizations about non-Ogaden clans are similarly prominent. During the course of fieldwork in Jigjiga, Ogaden officials and businesspeople publicly and privately derided groups including Jarso, Jidwaq, ʿIise, and Isaq for the activities and viewpoints of individuals belonging to these groups. A major effect of this clan discourse is that members of ostracized clans who support the government (e.g., pro-ʿAbdi Bartire) are painted as exceptions that prove the rule. The delegitimization of their clan places them in a precarious position, heightening their reliance on administration elites to secure their positions and property since they can easily and believably be labeled as disloyal due to their inherited identity.

Under ʿAbdi's administration, officials employed clan identity as a tool to regulate social relations: by registering people's clans, power-holders could pressure family members of individuals who were particularly threatening. This came to bear on diasporic family networks when return migration to Somali-Ethiopia accelerated, which ensued as ONLF conflict ground to a halt in 2012-2013. Relationships between diaspora and families at home had long been beyond the realm of state surveillance and security, employing informal remittance networks and visits to Ethiopia mediated by federal immigration institutions (since 2002, a Federal Ministry of Diaspora). DDSI administrative tactics to deal with diaspora from 2010 onwards utilized

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[17]"Baaqii Odayaasha Beesha Reer Isaaq ee DDSI" ["Announcement by the Reer Isaaq community elders of SRS"] *Cakaara News*, December 7, 2016, http://cakaaranews.com/index.php/wararka-separator/wararka-degaanka/6276-baaqii-odayaasha-beesha-reer-isaaq-ee-ddsi.html. My translation. In translating I have preserved some of the original syntax, which reads as rambling.

colonial-style strategies of rule: individual rights were basically void; people in SRS were liable for their relatives' activities (Human Rights Watch 2016). In the Regional Diaspora Bureau, returnees complain of having to register family and clan information in extensive logbooks. If they "misbehave" in Ethiopia or abroad, their local relatives will be held accountable. In 2016, a Diaspora Bureau Head who was amenable to my research allowed me to browse these books, though I was eventually prevented from recording details. Clan, subclan, lineage, closest relatives in the region, contact information—all were recorded by the Diaspora Bureau as means of knowing and regulating diaspora involvement. Administrative process based on the idea of clans reproduces clans as collective interest groups by treating groups as responsible for their constituents' behavior.

While framed in clan-talk, these officialized identities are not actually based strictly on lineage. Like the narratives of Ogaden suffering, clan identities are connected to a metageography[18] of allegiance and experience. This can be illustrated by a diaspora returnee's narrative. Having spent his youth abroad, Warsame sought to register at the Diaspora Bureau in Jigjiga. In diaspora, Ogaden is a relevant category, and he named it as his clan when asked. This astonished the office workers. They expected him to begin with Rer Ugas Koshin and detail his lineage from there. (Even naming oneself as Rer ʿAbdille in public is regarded as an affront, as Warsame noted, recounting a different context: "When I first came, I was sitting with some other guys and they asked me my clan. I told them I was Rer ʿAbdille, and some of them got visibly upset and started berating me. One told me, 'There's no need to beat your chest and tell us you're better than us!'"[19] Had he jumped straight to the subclan, people would have recognized that he was Rer ʿAbdille, but this would not have been seen as claiming affinity with government elites.) Warsame, having made the blunder of naming himself as "Ogaden," but then clarified his Ugas Koshin lineage, continued recounting his registration: "Then they asked me where I had come from. I took the question as if a Western immigration officer had asked it, so I told them I had just come from Kenya." If officials regarded that reply as suspicious, it was compounded by what came next: "Then they asked me my hometown, and I told them Mogadishu, because that's where I was born. In their thinking, by saying I came from Kenya and my hometown was Mogadishu, I was basically confessing that I was al-Shabaab, but I had no idea!"[20]. In

[18]By metageography I intend, following Lewis and Wigen (1997, ix), a "set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world: the often unconscious frameworks that organize" people's understandings and conceptualizations of how society, the economy, and politics operate.
[19]Field notes, 5/15/2018
[20]Field notes, 5/15/2018

regional parlance, one's hometown means the location where one's lineage originates.

To be "proper" Ogaden in Somali-Ethiopia means to know these geographic origins. This is not a neutral, administrative georeferencing. By grounding Ogaden identity in Ogaden locations, it connects people to their (or their ancestors') historical marginality, experience of occupation—and to Ogaden leadership, grounded in the implicit claim that suffering for Somalis' rights in Dhagaḥbur, Qabridahar, Gode, or other Ogaden areas engenders a right to rule. Thankfully, Warsame's "local" cousin was present with him in the office; he told Warsame to wait outside while the cousin explained to Diaspora Bureau officials that his diaspora relative was a bumbling but harmless man who knew nothing about local politics or the clan system.

While paternal clan homelands are relevant, maternal family geographies and connections are significant and recognized as such, though as Hoehne (2016) suggests, such cross-cutting ties can be threatened by practices of endogamy in some areas. Among the current regional administrators and Jigjiga's well-connected businesspeople one can find a significant number of Ogadenis who grew up in locations such as Jigjiga or Dire Dawa, and even non-Somali territories such as Harar or Adama (Nazret). There is some sense in which people from the Ethiopian highlands or the mixed-ethnicity administrations of Harar or Dire Dawa have advantages as brokers of Ethiopian-Somaliness. Ḥersi, during one *chat*-chewing session with his Rer Amadin cousins (the Somalian businessman and the former ONLF soldier), told me that his Ogaden kin regarded him as "more Ethiopian" because he speaks Amharic and Oromo fluently, having grown up in his mother's home area around Dire Dawa.

Such constructions of connections between people, places, and loyalties—amidst conflict and political jostling—are the stuff that clans are made of. Boundary-drawing discourses define certain clans as inherently more or less loyal, though this does not directly translate into believing the clan's constituent individuals are as (dis)loyal as their clan is made out to be. It renders individuals and family groups constantly vulnerable to the re-drawing of allegiance's boundaries in the face of the reality that individuals from the same clan often support vastly different political projects. The shifting nature of the actual configuration of power produces a constant need for new alliances and new narratives to legitimate them. Government discourses legitimizing Ogaden rights to rule based on their numerical majority and suffering for Ethiopian Somalis' rights masks what "everyone knows" about ʿAbdi's regional administration. His accountability is not only to Somali society. He was placed in position by Tigrayan military leaders. The Somalization of the region since 2009

was two-sided: Somalis in government found more power and autonomy in their decision-making and daily operations, but this autonomy was very visibly connected to a network of interest that was distinct from the population (including the Ogaden majority) to whom the government was ostensibly accountable.

## 3.5   The mafia state and clan administration

In January 2018 I was walking for a short stretch down a main road with a prominent public figure attached to the administration. I asked him who owned a massive building under construction nearby. "It's a Tigrayan, a young guy," he told me.

"How did he get his money?" I ask.

"I don't know—nobody knows," he shrugs, but the look on his face is uncomfortable.  He proceeded to tell me the extent to which Tigrayans were dominant in the country, sticking their hands in every region and taking opportunities.[21]  Since Ethiopian politics had begun to shift in favor of Oromo leadership in September 2017, more people were openly talking about "the Tigrayans" and the use of the state as a means of accumulation (so-called "state capture"). As Warsame points out, "certain people are given LCs [import licenses] to bring in certain things.... Now, in America, Australia or the UK, that would be—like a mafia sort of business." He continues reflecting on the opportunity: "within two months you have a couple of million birr. And you had zero yesterday."[22] There is a common colloquial term for the government-allied business figure, including the building's young Tigrayan owner: *maalin-taajir*. A millionaire-in-a-day.

Many residents see Jigjiga's skyline as a telling portrait of DDSI's structure: a multi-ethnic mafia rather than a clan-based network.  In the center of town, the finishing touches were being put on the exterior of Hassen Wali Hotel in July 2018 (Fig. 3). Hassen is Abaskul, part of the Jidwaq frequently derided by current regional officials because of vocal diaspora support for regime change.  As the Hotel was being finished, numerous Jidwaq leaders—even those who are not themselves vocal critics of the administration—were either in jail or taking shelter in Addis Ababa (including the Abaskul *suldan*, who fled to Addis Ababa). Even as politicians accuse Jidwaq of being anti-patriotic "*megefayaal*" (human traffickers), ʿAbdi Iley's maternal family is Jidwaq, and certain loyal members of that family continue to reap the benefits of regional patronage.  A block east of the Hassen Wali building is Zuhura's Hamda 2 Hotel—and across the street,

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[21]Field notes, 1/13/2018
[22]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

her husband ꞓAgaweyne's nearly-completed hotel, both built with the profits of a virtual monopoly on chat export in past years. On the west side of town, the more recent controller of regional *chat* quota markets, Zamzam (herself Ogaden), has built herself and family members large houses. This list goes on. But the Tigrayan-owned buildings in towns were especially prone to verbal abuse among many urban markers of the mafia-state structure in which Ayn Abdi worked the interface between political power, rents, and market exchanges.

The structure of power might be thought of as a set of exchanges through which power is converted between economic and political spheres: the concept of "buying off" support through financial kickbacks. Such transactions may take place. Yet considering the element of time and the mutual dependencies through which support is constructed suggests the usefulness of a concept of arbitrage—making promises in multiple domains (to Tigrayans at the federal level, to Somalis in the region; through political arrangements and market exchanges) that create power through dependence, without power in one domain disappearing when it is utilized (we might say leveraged) in another. ꞓAbdi's efforts to ground his prominent supporters' interests in Jigjiga's urban space reflects a strategic deployment of time to create businesspeople's dependence on him even as he allegedly profited on his investment by asking for contributions when necessary. Federally-connected Habeshas obtained real estate opportunities and safe passage for goods through the region; ꞓAbdi's family and regional notables with the proper political outlook (*aragtida habboon*) had access to urban real estate, as well as federal trade licenses and minimal interference in their affairs. The region's residents and diaspora get peace and security, as long as they echo DDSI discourse—a protection racket par excellence (cf. Tilly 1985).

Even if the structure of patronage that extends from federal military elites through the regional administration is not centered on clan, ꞓAbdi and his allies have worked to place Ogadeni clients in gatekeeper positions throughout the regional administration. As I have argued throughout, clan identities and networks of association cross-cut and intersect in a variety of ways with political loyalties and non-clan configurations of power. Through the *maalin-taajir* economy, economic power is distributed to non-Ogadeni clients. Despite the real need for kickbacks to Tigrayan military interests and non-Ogaden business elites, however, ꞓAbdi's power remained discursively founded on a claim of Ogaden regional leadership. Maintaining Ogaden support required constructing leadership positions for large Ogaden populations—including Rer Isaq and other Ogadeni groups who needed to be co-opted. Here the formal administrative structure has

Figure 3.4:  Hassen Wali Hotel, Jigjiga, nearing completion in June 2018. Photo by author.

been used to place Ogadenis in key positions within an elite network that is relatively autonomous from the relationships that connect regional business elites to the federal military.

Beginning around 2013, ʿAbdi Iley gave a new meaning to the theme of "renaissance" developed by the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi: *dib-u-ʿurasho*, a term intending rebirth of the region after decades of conflict, has come to denote a strategy of rotating officials out of their home areas into other parts of the region in the name of fighting clannishness. Ostensibly, a Bartire leader placed as Mayor of Gode has less chance of family pressure affecting his policy choices since he is in a predominantly Ogaden area; in this regard, the policy is widely hailed as an appropriate way to combat the scourge of tribalism. Yet current and former regional officials as well as civilians criticize the strategy on two sides: one, it serves as a legitimation of anti-democratic practices of appointing officials without taking local opinion into account; two, it legitimates placing regime clients in positions of strength such as the Fafan Zone and Jigjiga City

Administrations.

*Dib-u-ʿurasho* policies are a significant factor structuring the political-economic landscape of Jigjiga. Before ʿAbdi Iley came to power, Jidwaq mayors were elected to the office; since 2010, Ogaden mayors have cycled through the position, alternatively rotating into other cabinet positions or, in some cases, being arrested on charges of corruption. The Ogadenization of administrative positions enables state-centered client-patronage networks to extend into lower levels of clan and family organization. Ogadenis placed in positions of control do not necessarily have access to the financial resources of business elites connected to the president, but those in higher levels have access to significant budgets, and often recruit relatives to lower positions around them.

This structure tends to blur expectations of sharing and redistribution in family networks with the requirements of administration. Consider this example: Ḥersi, whom I have mentioned already, is a city official occasionally tasked to collect voluntary contributions for the Abbay (Blue Nile) Dam project from Jigjiga's businesspeople. Businesspeople tell me that he forces them to pay the maximum amount they can afford, much more a tax (in addition to existing taxes) than a voluntary donation. His personal interest in collecting the money is inseparable from a dual network of expectations in which he operates—formal expectations associated with administration, and expectations of relatives within and outside of this administration. Several of his cousins are high-level officials who expect him to fulfil his authorized duties; losing their favor may result in loss of opportunities and even loss of his current position. His immediate superiors, who are not relatives, but report to his relatives higher up in the hierarchy, will expect the maximum amount of contributions to be collected. If he returns with less, he can readily be blamed for disloyalty, accused of keeping money for himself. So he collects the money, gives it to his superiors, who in turn give it to theirs. He can then request family favors from his relatives higher up in the administrative hierarchy and accept gifts in cash or in kind even though these are partly funded through his own participation in formal administrative activity. Such kickbacks, when viewed from a normative perspective of statehood, constitute corruption; when viewed from a normative perspective of clanship, they constitute sharing. In this way, the sharing of power with highland elites creates conditions for the reproduction of clan networks through what might be construed as "traditional" redistributive practices, though these practices take on new forms.

Paralleling these "informal" intersections with lineage networks, DDSI unabashedly provides financial kickbacks for "traditional" clan leaders to align the formal clan leaders with state initiative. Ideally, clan

leaders are independent of government and historically relied on the local community for their sustenance (in return for providing leadership, settling local disputes, and liaising with the government). Clan leaders are now bought off by the DDSI administration in several ways. One is an astronomical (by local standards) payment for attending periodic meetings at which the *suldan*s purportedly represent their clans to the administration—*suldan*s report receiving 10,000 birr (about $380) per day of meetings. This is equivalent to the *monthly salary* of high-level officials (the official salary of the regional president himself is about 13,000 birr monthly). Another is the use of financial contracts for development projects. *Suldan*s are granted contracts for construction projects such as dams or government-funded housing in Jigjiga. Even if *suldan*s retain an independent mind amidst being thus "bought off" by DDSI leaders, they can hardly express opposition in public: they can simply be jailed or replaced.

Through this combination of threatening force and financial incentive, DDSI purchases the (temporary and superficial, at least) allegiance of clan leaders even while often marking these very clans discursively as disloyal to the project of Ethiopian-Somali nation-building. Alternatively incentivizing and marginalizing clan-based forms of collective activity, regional elites fragment Ethiopian-Somalis' interests in working as a collective ethnic interest group even as government discourse prioritizes ethnic autonomy and rights for long-marginalized Somalis. Critics of ⁽Abdi's administration call it "colonial," pointing to the divide-and-rule strategies and practices of collective punishment employed. Yet supporters of the administration—or those who used to support it, before the upheavals of 2017-2018—point out ⁽Abdi's unique ability to handle the federal authorities, granting them economic benefits while sidelining their direct political involvement.

Even if face-to-face contact with Habesha soldiers and administrators has dissipated in favor of Somalized administration, Jigjigans pose another question in ethnic terms: are federal military-connected elites getting exactly what they want in Somali Region—that is, not peace or the incorporation of Somalis, but money and proxy actors to carry out their interests? Here again we can return to the narrative history of Kali and of the Rer ⁽Ali Yusuf, and point out that such histories of connection that legitimize alliances also have their downsides. Locally, ⁽Abdi's power is almost universally described in connection to an Ethiopian "deep state" centered in the Amhara and Tigrayan highlands. This deep state is not regarded by Jigjigans as a patriotic embodiment of conservative (Habesha, Orthodox) values, but as essentially a mob: "The guys at the top—because they are sucking up the wealth by themselves—they don't care what's going to happen tomorrow," says Mahad, a diaspora investor from the UK. "They have houses everywhere: Paris, London,

United States, wherever. So they don't care if it collapses."[23] In Jigjiga, residents often come by experience to the same conclusion: there is no system—clan-based, legal, or otherwise—only this one guy, above clan and law but using both to secure his place in patronage networks connecting him to military interests—and via these interests, to a world of patrons and foreign bank accounts beyond Ethiopia. A common refrain among disaffected people in Jigjiga is that ʿAbdi's "true" parents (by allegiance) are not his Ogaden clan ancestors, but Tigrayan generals. The state, in local parlance, can become a lineage all its own.

## 3.6   Rethinking clan politics

"*Waa wiil Ogaadeen*"—"He's an Ogaden boy," is the phrase one politically-connected contact (himself not Ogaden, but Weyteen) used to introduce me to a diaspora returnee visiting Jigjiga to support the regional administration during a tense political time. The anthropologist is often put in the position of being inadvertently placed in such a category. While sometimes awkward, it provides opportunities to parse apart some meanings attached to such identities. In context, what my contact meant is that I had trust with regional officials, that I spent significant time with Ogaden friends, and that I knew the situation on the ground—that I was a "local boy" in my connections and loyalties. In such framings of identity, as in stories such as the narrative of the Kali Conference, there is an invitation to a political orientation of affinity for Ethiopia and felt connection to place.

While regional politics are often described in terms of clans supporting one or another political movement—clan-talk—I have shown that even delving to low levels of clan organization, lineage identities do not translate directly into political allegiances. Focusing on the Ogaden Moḥamed Zubeyr clans in particular, it is evident that the 1991 collapse of Siyad Barre's government, dynamics of Ethiopian federal state-building, and interests at play in the War on Terror have reorganized power relations in ways that make speaking of Ogaden allegiances as a whole practically meaningless at present. Following ʿAbdi Iley's 2018 ouster, local notables describe Rer Isaq as ascendant in regional politics; if Rer Isaq and Rer ʿAbdille animosities continue, it can hardly be attributed to "pre-colonial" forms of social organization, but must be traced to the ways in which history and identity have been mobilized to construct political power in the present. While it may be true on a general level that, as Ingiriis (2018b, 69) argues, "clan never loses its relevance and reality," the relevance of different levels of identity is situational, and the reality of certain forms of social organization may take

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[23]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017

shape in different forms at different times. Lineage and ethnic political formations may be politicized or depoliticized, territorialized or deterritorialized in a variety of ways.

Political analysis in the Horn should focus not simply on the structure of lineage- and ethnicity-based political organization, but also on the changing meaning and affective content that political realignments and jostling infuse into ascribed identities. Amidst the politicization of Rer Isaq and Rer ꜥAbdille lineages, it remains to be seen whether a viable "Ogaden" politics will be reconstituted in the region (if such a politics truly existed in the first place). The fragmentation and conflicting interests centered around clan and ethnic identities which the DDSI created over the past decade already complicate the possibilities for a broader Ethiopian-Somali politics: ꜥAbdi's project of state-building, while distinguished from previous regional governments by the loud claim of being proudly Ethiopian Somali, has in large part reaffirmed people's belief that being part of Ethiopia inevitably involves the marginalization of Somalis. With a new Oromo leadership in 2018 and Jigjigans foregrounding "Cushitic" lineage connections between the new Ethiopian state and Somali-Ethiopian society, it remains to be seen whether state-building dynamics will further entrench ethnic and clan political divisions or mobilize existing constituencies centered around other facets of identity and political participation.

In focusing on lineage dynamics and regional politics, this chapter bypassed a critical examination of a crucial point: ꜥAbdi's authority was intimately connected not only to TPLF networks, but also to new forms of governance over, and reliance upon, diaspora Somalis. These are the next chapter's subject.

# Chapter 4

# Spatializing the diaspora state: the making of an economic frontier

"Most of the people who lived outside were opposition—were against the government—because the government was very... you know, a dictatorship." Musa pauses to hear the wind howling along the walls and driving June rain beating the roof of his new house in Jigjiga's upscale *Badda ⸳As* (Red Sea) neighborhood. He was jailed during 8th grade in Dhagaḥbur, accused of supporting the ONLF. The military put him in the same jail where he father was tortured to death. Upon release from a second jail term during 10th grade, in 2005, he ran—first to Hargeisa, then on to the Persian Gulf, where relatives facilitated a visa and helped him start a business. It was only five years later that ⸳Abdi Iley went to meet with Somalis there as part of a broader push to engage the diaspora and cut ONLF support.

> He came and, you know, he knows everyone who was from the country. He asks the people, "Who from our region lives there?" You know Somalis, they know each other... They call you. By force you have to come to that meeting; otherwise your people [i.e., relatives in Ethiopia] will get arrested.

Through this approach, Somalis from Ethiopia—once forced migrants—were "forcibly" constituted as a diaspora: "By force we came to the meetings," Musa repeats for emphasis. (Both interviews and third-party documents suggest how families of Ethiopian Somalis abroad are sometimes essentially held hostage to pressure diaspora activists [Human Rights Watch 2016].) Yet once Musa arrived at the meeting, DDSI officials switched to a marketing strategy: "They started advertising. They started showing a video, showing us videos from rivers, how opportunities are there: 'Come to your country; no one will touch you; you are safe. This is your country, come and invest!'"[1] Thirteen years after his most recent imprisonment, though the regional administration is still autocratic, Musa is looking to pour the bulk of his savings into opening businesses in Jigjiga. He has engaged investors from Middle Eastern countries to partner with him in seeking

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[1]Musa, audio-recorded interview, 6/25/2018

profit on this market frontier. While beginning to rebuild a life and an enterprise in Jigjiga, he envisions his presence and investments working to open up the market, internationalize the city, and pressure the regional administration to democratize.

This chapter is about how, after decades of violent conflict, people with differing political visions engaged together in a project of re-making Somali-Ethiopia as a homeland, political territory, and market frontier. It examines the efforts of officials and emigrants with conflictual visions to re-configure SRS as a site in a new relational geography, and focuses on how these relationships are negotiated in the city of Jigjiga as the node connecting Somali-Ethiopia with the "other places" of highland Ethiopia and the outside world. Three intertwined conceptual geographies frame this re-making, all of which have grown in potency since ʿAbdi Iley took power.

First, from the secessionist war zone described in the previous chapter, SRS was to become the territory of an "Ethiopian-Somali nation" within Ethiopia's multinational federal system. In fact, the region was renamed Ethiopian-Somali Regional State (ESRS), a name that became a subject of intense debate in 2018. ʿAbdi's Faustian bargain with the federal military initiated a new regional power-geography. Federal finances, previously withheld amidst conflict, flowed into Jigjiga as the federal military withdrew and the Liyu Police violently put down the ONLF and al-Itiḥad rebellions by 2013.[2] As finances and day-to-day government controls came to rest in Jigjiga's regional government offices, however, it became more and more clear that *this* federalism was not what many people had in mind. Federalism is simply an idea. Though the concept is almost universally embraced among Jigjiga's Somalis, struggles emerge in its translation into daily practices and connections through which Somali-Ethiopia operates as both part of Ethiopia and distinct from "other Ethiopia—or highland Ethiopia" (Faisal's words). Jigjiga is where the articulation—the simultaneous incorporation and distancing—between Ethiopian state-building and Somali life is negotiated in regional government offices and felt most tangibly in daily life. It is where federalism is forged in practice. Diaspora returnees are increasingly key players in this spatial reconfiguration. Understanding how the residues of historical experience and the temporalities of migration inform their visions of place-making in Jigjiga is the starting point for conceptualizing the terrain of a new transnational politics.

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[2]For Ethiopian Financia Year (EFY) 2007 and 2008, the subsidy from the Federal Ministry of Finance was 5.9 billion and 6.9 billion birr, respectively. This represents a 16% YoY increase a near-doubling of the federal subsidy from 3.7 billion in EFY 2003. Subsidies from the federal level dwarf regional revenues of 1.8 billion birr in EFY 2008. Sources: subsidy data for EFY 1998-2006 from Ethiopian Economics Association dataset, in author's possession. Subsidy data for EFY 2007-2008 from Regional Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, "2008 EFY Progress Report Towards GTP II Targets," 2017.

Ethnic federalism, in order to succeed, required the buy-in of a disaffected diaspora, largely composed of refugees who had fled the region in earlier years. "The diaspora" (*qurba joogta*) was hitherto known for undermining Ethiopian authority: diaspora Somalis were known as anti-Ethiopia agitators and ONLF financiers. Returnees argue that without diaspora support, state-building in Somali-Ethiopia would inevitably be plagued by violent opposition. One of the productivities of the federalism imaginary was the way it enabled the second conceptual geography, which re-framed Somali-Ethiopia as a homeland for the diaspora, even Somalis who had never actually called it home. Faisal—an earnest and friendly Ohioan in his 40s—describes the content of one of DDSI's outreach meetings in Minnesota quite differently from the meeting Musa recounted:

> What really changed [my mind] is the president of this region, who came over there, and enlightened us that things are different. [He said,] "If you knew the Ethiopia that oppresses people, and people used to be—the army used to kill and stuff—that's no more. We Somalis took things—our administration—on our own hands. It's here, and it's our land. It needs you... this is your country..."[3]

As federalism placed Somali-Ethiopia in a new relationship with highland Ethiopia, DDSI officials mobilized the new geographies of authority to place Somali-Ethiopia in a new relationship to the adopted home-spaces of the global Somali diaspora. A significant portion of so-called diaspora return was, in fact, not "return migration" in any meaningful sense. Many so-called returnees had little recollection of Ethiopia, having left as children or even been born in Somalia. Most had no affective connection to Jigjiga. Their engagement with the regional administration and their efforts to carve out a home-place must be understood through returnees' visions of what type of place Somali-Ethiopia could become in comparison to, and in connection with, other places. Ethnic federalism enabled Somalis abroad to envision Ethiopia as a potential homeland, and DDSI's outreach efforts appeared to engage them in state-making, to give them some say over the future of this place.

A stable territorial base for Ethiopian-Somali identity reoriented circuits of Somali transnational capital towards Jigjiga. The third framing of the region pertained to the mechanisms and benefits of new diaspora-homeland relationships. As Musa describes, a key strategy for re-engaging diaspora with this homeland

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[3]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017

was to foreground investment opportunities. Officials not only framed the region as a market frontier; they also used their political command over regional trade and property to offer market incentives: tax breaks, exclusive business licenses and property grants incentivized return migration. Returnees flooded into Jigjiga armed with capital and foreign connections, ready to remake the "way-behind little town" (Faisal's words) into an international city. Yet their visions of Somali-Ethiopia's future were frequently in tension with those of DDSI.

Efforts to reengage diaspora in post-conflict state-building converge in struggles over the realization of these three imaginaries. Who is included in the Ethiopian-Somali nation? How should efforts to include Somalis abroad be balanced with considerations of locals' belonging? How should market access be structured? What emerges is a contested politics of *state-making as place-making*: political power is constructed through efforts to manage Somali-Ethiopia's location in a relational geography, to establish command over forms of exchange, payment, and arbitrage across borders and between legal and political domains. On the one hand, the articulation with Ethiopia must be managed in a way that maintains Somali autonomy while ensuring the federal subsidy continues. The region and its capital city, historically the seat of highlander-dominated government, must be Somalized. On the other, the population and diaspora must engage with the region as part of Ethiopia, no longer as a secessionist territory or as a place that should be part of Somalia. There is little agreement on the balance of these imperatives, still less a unified diaspora stance in relation to government. Diaspora groups, returnees, locals and officials engage each other in a variety of ways, pursuing competing visions of place-making and supporting different forms of state-making.

## 4.1   Diaspora place-making as state-making

Commentators from across social science disciplines have highlighted shifting relations between power and space in a world of diasporas, transnational social movements, and international organizations such as the World Bank and the UN.[4] In today's context, localized power is constituted not only through the support of a place-bounded population, but through the capacity to manage flows and mobility that intersect in localized spaces (Mazzucato and Kabki 2009; Quayson and Daswani 2013). Massey (1993, 66) conceptualizes "place" as "constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations, social

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[4]Studies inspiring my approach here include: Ali-Ali and Koser 2002; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 2005; Brinkerhoff 2017; Datta 2013; Gupta 1997; Hammond 2013; R. King and Christou 2011; Kleist 2008; Ong 1999; Vertovec 2009

processes, experiences and understandings" that converge in a space of co-presence. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) build on Massey's work to show how different types of authority can be spatialized. They argue that states are conceptualized and made socially effective through officials' capacity to (appear to) manage social relations in sites where multiple geographical imaginaries converge. What come to the fore in these ways of thinking about place-making and state-construction are ways in which people's *claims* to authority—the authority to manage social relationships between interior and exterior, between the local and the global, between state and non-state spheres—orient collective activity in ways that reinforce or undermine power configurations.[5]

Considering claims, posturing, and struggles over legitimacy enables analysis of politics as more multi-directional, inclusive of a broader set of power relations, and less determined than a model based on a state/non-state binary (Abrams 1988; Gupta 1995; Krupa and Nugent 2015). As an imaginary, the state form stretches beyond the government apparatus: it is about who communities ("the nation") *desire* to be, what forms of social cohesion and collective responsibility *should* exist, how a polity *ought* to constitute itself in a world of delimited territorial units (Ramírez 2015; Tate 2015; Thompson 2017a). Struggles take shape around such imaginaries as they are implemented in particular sites; as much as struggles to forge power, they are also struggles about the ends to which power is directed in an interconnected world (Massey 2007; Howard 2010). In these struggles for the legitimacy of a collective vision, driven by a more or less dense network of people with common interests, diaspora groups may claim for themselves forms of legitimacy in tension with government officials' claims, an alternate vision of what the state ought to be and how it ought to relate to its citizens and to other states. For decades, the most powerful collective vision of diaspora Somalis from Ethiopia was secession. As shown in the previous chapter, the calculus of support for secession began to change around 2010.

While emigrants have returned to Somali-Ethiopia from abroad over previous decades, return migration surged in response to DDSI efforts to re-engage Ethiopian-Somalis abroad from 2010 onwards, raising possibilities for new political-economic linkages. By 2015, the SRS Diaspora Bureau had an electronic registry of 595 returnees from 23 countries (Fig. 4.1). (Several registries exist, and the paper registry appears much longer than the electronic one but was less accessible during fieldwork.) Diaspora return is a critical

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[5]Weber (1991, 78) in his essay "Politics as a Vocation," conceptualized the state as a group of people that (successfully) claims a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in a territory. I extend a previous emphasis (Thompson 2017a) on assertions, projections, and struggles for legitimacy across multiple scales of activity.

event, a moment at which power relationships are reconfigured.[6] The very constitution of the diaspora as a group to be engaged involves the conscious rearrangement of relations between DDSI and Somalis outside of Ethiopia, as Musa's account suggests. Numerous social scientists and applied development thinkers have considered the possibilities of diaspora politics, generally employing "the diaspora" and "the state" as categories configured in one of several possible relationships. In recent decades some have highlighted the possibilities of diaspora-state cooperation for economic development. Programs such as remittance-matching projects have garnered widespread attention (Burgess 2012; Orrenius et al. 2012; World Bank 2001), and World Bank publications tout "diaspora for development" (Plaza and Ratha 2011). The most basic diaspora contribution is remittances, but facilitating return migration and dual citizenship have hit the agenda more recently, with some governments (e.g., Morocco and Ghana) enfranchising emigrants (see Mohan 2008).

In such narratives Diasporas appear as the latest agents of development in a historical shift from the developmentalist state to multinational development agencies, to market liberalization policies. Critical voices question the efficacy of return migrants as "the new developers," pointing to diverse, not universally positive experiences and impacts of return migration and investment on local economies (Åkesson and Eriksson Baaz 2015; al-Sharmani and Horst 2015). This critique can be taken farther by examining the framework that underlies the analytic distinction between state and non-state: this distinction shapes the expectation that diasporas and states have distinct responsibilities and interests that can be maximized by facilitating their cooperation. At the core of concepts like "new developers" or "developmental diaspora" are tensions regarding who is responsible for providing a population's welfare and addressing international inequalities. African states (and states in the global South generally) are in crisis and unable to provide for their populations, as the narrative goes, but emigrants reliably provide ("privately") for their families back home. Since the state's responsibility is to oversee the welfare of its population, emigrant-state engagement can direct some of these family-network financial flows towards public impacts. Governments in the global South have introduced dual citizenship programs, sought to collect taxes, and engaged other models of re-assigning collective responsibilities to the diaspora. Even where dual citizenship is not offered (and Ethiopia does not offer it) officials seek to create an environment conducive to cash-infusing diaspora investment.

Ethiopian-Somali diaspora returnees describe affairs quite differently than this conceptual picture of

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[6]Cf. Roitman (2005), p. 8.
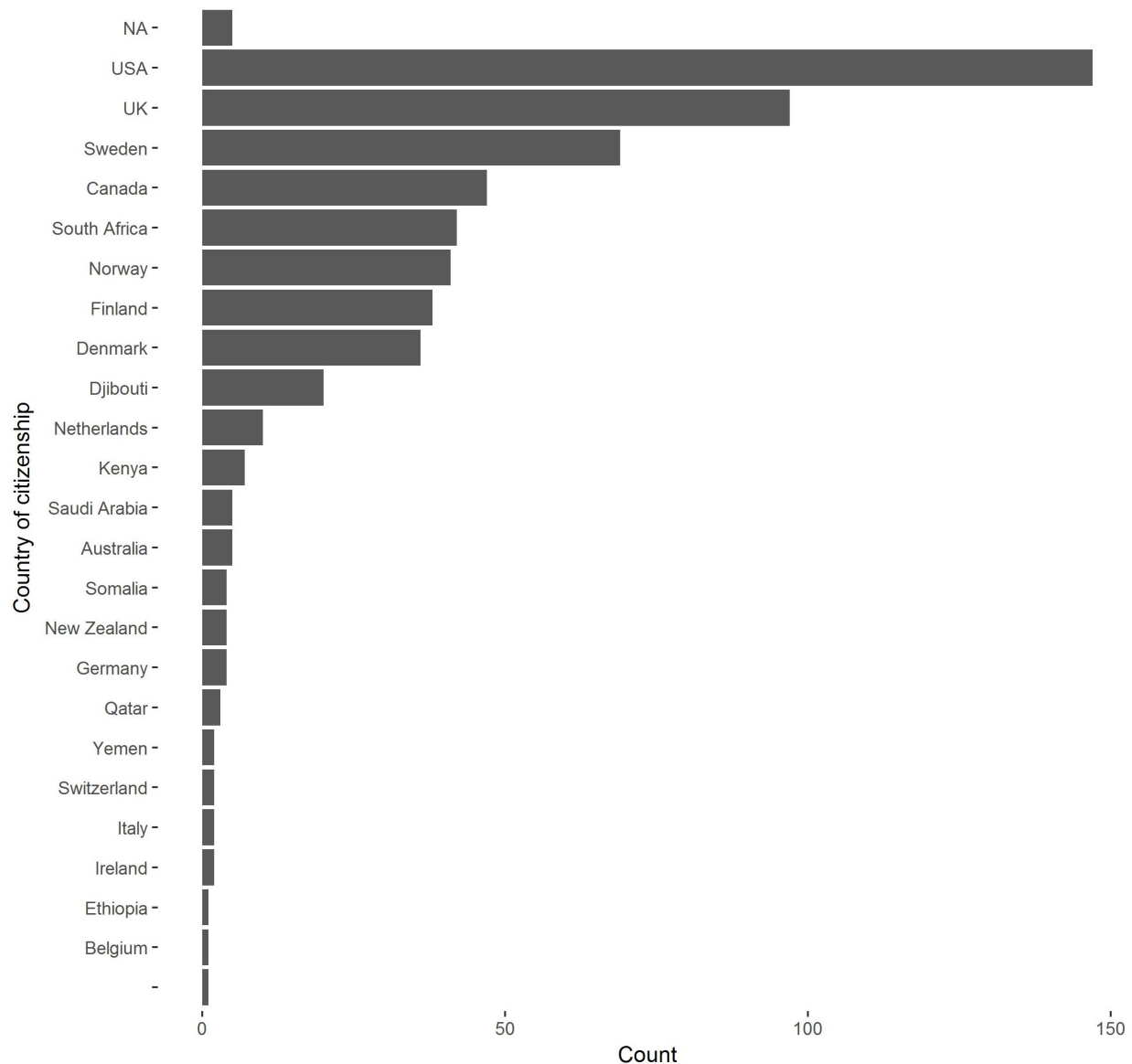
Figure 4.1: Country of citizenship for diaspora returnees in Jigjiga, based on Diaspora Bureau records, 2015.

diaspora as private actors and the state as an entity pursuing public interests. In their view, diasporas struggle

for the public interest of their homeland, against governments composed of irresponsible and individualistic

agents using state power for private gain. The inversion through which many returnees conceptualize the

diaspora-state relationship frames the terms of a rivalry within an uneasy alliance: by agreeing to politicians'

terms and "staying out of politics," Jigjiga's diaspora investors can further collective regional interests in

spite of officials' efforts at extraction and obstruction. They can do much more for families and also develop

markets in the Horn of Africa better than they could while based abroad. In doing so, they may pursue a

political vision of liberating the people and the market from government hyper-regulation. Returnees work to manage trans-local relationships that articulate in Jigjiga, especially transnational finance and trade that could bring some of the outside world's wealth into the long-marginalized borderlands. Diaspora returnees, in other words, are engaged in their own forms of state-making through place-making.

While people disagree on the costs and benefits of the new diaspora-government relationship, few would dispute that it has reshaped boundaries of regional government influence—both by creating a new set of citizenship-like relations stretching into emigrant communities, and by blurring conceptual boundaries between "politics" and "the economy" as realms of activity (cf. Roitman 2005; Mitchell 2002; Callon 1998). Many SRS full-time residents feel that, whatever diaspora returnees' stated affinities, the government's *legitimacy was outsourced* through the new alliance between the state and diaspora capital. "The diaspora are constantly close to the government," says Yakob, voicing a widespread opinion. "They were helping ONLF. But now they are helping the government... and when they enter the market (*suuqa*), the economy (*dhaqaalihii*), enterprise (*shaqadii*), they are close to the government."[7]

For businesspeople, at stake in new relationships between officials and returnees is the establishment of what Roitman (2005, 13) calls "the frontiers of wealth creation, which include the literal frontiers of the country as well as the conceptual frontiers of the economy." Re-engaging the diaspora involves new horizons of wealth accumulation for officials—both in terms of diverting diaspora resources into official networks and in terms of legitimizing a lavish lifestyle in relation to international standards of wealth. (Officials must be respectable to diaspora returnees. An impoverished African native holds no sway over a wealthy Somali-American capitalist.) Diaspora returnees often find themselves implicated, supporting the legitimacy of what some regard as illegitimate authoritarian rule, benefiting from government control over the economy and from their unique relationship—mediated by foreign passports—with the geopolitical borders across which Jigjiga's lifeblood flows. As I show in the next chapter, diaspora return has intersected with new territorializations of authority in the form of strict border controls that favor government and diaspora interests over opportunities for locals. As a point of departure here, however, I take a step back in time and show how current diaspora returnees' approaches to re-grounding their interests in eastern Ethiopia are shaped by past experiences of borderland politics.

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[7]Yakob, audio-recorded interview, 12/3/2017.

## 4.2   Diaspora roots: space and identity in the Horn

Returnees describe the Ethiopia of their childhood in terms of a distant government whose territorial claims to the Somali borderlands were little more than delusion. Where Ethiopian presence was felt, such as in Jigjiga and nearby border areas, government territorial claims were both a source of opportunity (for smuggling) and the central object of political opposition, especially after Somalia's 1960 independence. Cross-border trade was a source of livelihood and an expression of Somali identity, and although connections to highland bases of consumption were essential, people sought to trade on their own terms. Trade regulation, in turn, was a key facet of what Somalis describe as a regime of oppression. Yusuf, who grew up in Jigjiga but has lived in the US since 1994, recounted how his father was shot by "Ethiopians" while exporting goatskins. The assailants "came from Amhara Region—we don't know, really; that is, non-Somali Ethiopians."[8] Jigjiga's society was connected to northern Somalia, but it was also loosely integrated socially, and more tightly economically connected, with Ethiopia via the Harar connection. Jigjiga "was always a trade city," Yusuf's cousin Aden (also based in the US) reflects, "so people were always coming with contraband and selling it."[9] The town reaped the trade benefits and bore the costs of mistrust and political marginalization in its borderlands milieu.

**Jigjiga, Ethiopia and the world**

On a map Jigjiga was squarely within Ethiopian territory—and yet in the recollections of many residents from the 1960s-1970s, its place in the world was more complex than simply a periphery of the Ethiopian state. Children paid a few pennies to crowd into a makeshift movie theater near the Milk Market (today's CBD) and watch movies they called "Texas," starring John Wayne and Clint Eastwood. They did not know much about America—only the Texas on the screen, dry western landscapes resembling Jigjiga's surroundings. As older residents recollect, neither did they know much about Ethiopia. In town, the distance between Ethiopia's central provinces and the eastern borderlands was localized in the social distance of segregation: 15 meters of dirt and gravel, the width of the east-west road running from Harar to Somaliland, reinscribed the 450 kilometers between Jigjiga and Addis Ababa. *Suq Somali* in the south, *Suq Habeshi* in the north. Looking at a map, Aden points to the northern section: "That's St. George Church.[10] That's where Ethiopi-

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[8]Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017
[9]Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017
[10]He gestured here to St. Michael church.

ans, you know, they buried—their cemetery for them; the church for them." In fact, the religious divisions did not reflect a uniform ethnicity on either side. The southern, Muslim section of town also had a population of Arab merchants up until the 1970s. Some of Jigjiga's original import-export traders were Arabs and Indians, but in terms of ethnic or national diversity, the town was not as cosmopolitan as the railroad hub of Dire Dawa, nearly a day's journey by car northwest over the treacherous roads through the eastern highlands.

Jigjiga's segregation was a division of power. This is not to say that all *Habesha* were wealthy and powerful, but that the social landscape of the city was tied to a structure of governance that residents perceived as emanating from the central highlands. No Somalis went to the north section of town, Aden says, "unless you had something to do with the government." Lefebvre (1996, 141) argues that such localized strategies have important connections to broader distributions of power: "the *democratic* character of a regime is identifiable by its attitude towards the city, urban 'liberties' and urban reality, and therefore towards *segregation*." While Lefebvre is focused on capitalism and class relations, Jigjigans describe daily life in the segregated town as a reflection of their understandings of Ethiopian inclusivity. Ethiopia was separate, powerful, exclusive. Jigjiga was a cog in the organizing machinery of occupation, a base for a project that territorialized Ethiopia by disconnecting the region's Somali inhabitants from the Ethiopian land. Attempts to reorient allegiances and trade connections towards this entity "Ethiopia" of which Jigjiga was ostensibly a part were undercut in daily life by the feeling that Ethiopia was a quite different place from Jigjiga.

When Haile Selassie's regime crumbled in 1974, it seemed natural to many Jigjigans to head for Somalia. Aden moved to Mogadishu to live with his elder sister in 1975; her presence there is testament to pre-existing interconnections. "A lot of people wanted to get an opportunity to go to school in Somalia—they wanted to go to Somalia. And everybody said, 'We're going to Somalia,' just like everybody wants to go to America now." In the early 1970s, he says,

> It was a lot of opportunity to go to Somalia, at that time. Nobody was going to Addis Ababa.
> Those people who are in power—and Somalis in the government—they'd send their kids to
> Harar for school. But most of the Somalis, they'd say, "If we send them to Ethiopia, they're
> going to be Christian."[11]

Jigjiga seems to disappear, in a sense, between two larger places. People's everyday experience reflects this

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[11]Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017

ambivalence and uncertainty: their orientation was towards other spaces.

To the east of Jigjiga, away from the garrison towns and the roads that conveyed Ethiopian troops, the daily experience of geopolitical ambiguity was even more pronounced.  When I asked Faisal during an interview to tell me some about where he was born and grew up, he said, "Basically, I was born in the northern—um, old Somalia. Now, what they call Somaliland." Since he had previously named Ethiopia as his birthplace, I asked him to clarify: "So were you born in Ethiopia, or in Somaliland?" His response is revealing of the ways people thought, and still think, about the place of these borderlands:

> I was born in Ethiopia—I mean, the Somaliland area—they call it. . . I mean, people are inter-
> connected. . . . It's Ethiopia—the area of Wardheer-Danot region is the place where I am from,
> and born. And that's where my family and the rest of them were born. That's the frontier. But
> back in the time—not even; like, about—a few years ago, everything was just connected to
> Somalia there. So everybody knew it as Somalia. Not as Ethiopia.[12]

That belief and the material interconnections that underpinned it are crucial to understanding people's subsequent decision-making as things in the Horn began to crumble.

### Ethiopians and Somalis in a war zone

In August 1977, forces of the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) took control of Jigjiga, driving out the "Ethiopians" living in the northern section of town and, in terms of Somalian Government propaganda—as well as some people's current descriptions of events, "liberating" the town. The history of the Ethio-Somali War (the Ogaden War) and its place in Cold War politics have been told elsewhere, and I will not detail them here.[13]  When fighting broke out, most of Jigjiga's residents fled. Elders describe searchlights and gunshots, hiding in shadows and creeping down streambeds to get clear of the town before making a dash for the Somaliland border or for inaccessible rural areas over the Gureis Range to the south of town. Yet amidst the war, people were not simply displaced straight to Somalia, never to return. Many expected that Jigjiga would become part of Somalia—and in a way it did, from August 1977 until March 1978.

Yusuf was one of those students whose parents had sent him to Hargeisa for education.  He had subsequently gone to Mogadishu to look for work, but when hostilities broke out, he returned to Hargeisa

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[12]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017.
[13]See Bereket Habte Selassie 1980; Tareke 2000; Woodward 2006

and crossed the border near Qabri Bayaḥ, walking three days from there to a rural hamlet southwest of Jigjiga called Shabelleh. He took his father—crippled by the old gunshot wound—by mule back to the border, from where they traveled to Galkaʿyo. While they were there, "the Somalis said they liberated Jigjiga"—that would be August 1977. Yusuf's father "got homesick, and I took him back to Jigjiga." Apparently anticipating a stabilizing situation with WSLF and Somalian Government forces in control of much of eastern Ethiopia at the end of 1977, Yusuf returned to Mogadishu. But in March of 1978, Ethiopian and Cuban forces, backed by Russian advisors and intelligence, re-took Jigjiga. The whole process was repeated: Yusuf's relatives ventured carefully across the border to once again collect his father from Shabelleh, and sent him from Hargeisa southwards to join his sons in Mogadishu.[14] Such trajectories are far from uncommon.

Yusuf's father passed away and was buried far from home, as were thousands of elderly people who fled eastern Ethiopia in 1977-78. Younger Somalis from the Jigjiga area adapted to life in Somalia's towns and adopted them as home. In the larger picture, hundreds of thousands—perhaps over a million—refugees fled from Ethiopia to Somalia in the wake of the war, creating the highest concentration of refugees to indigenous population in the world (Woodward 2006, 59–60). Some borderlands groups such as Garre and Jarso were jarred, on arriving in Somalia, with the complexity of their identities. Elders from these groups report picking up arms to support Somalia, but then realizing that they were regarded as doubtfully Somali—they were too Ethiopian (some, though Somalis, did not speak Somali). Some joined branches of the WSLF that were oriented against the Greater Somalia project. Many Ethiopian Somalis idealize Somalia, consider it home, and tell stories about the good old days in Ḥamar (Mogadishu). Yet, especially as the political and security situation in Somalia deteriorated during the 1980s, people began to rethink their place in the world once again.

**A place in the world (first iteration)**

Some Ethiopian Somalis who had registered as refugees in Somalia moved on to Europe and the US during the early 1980s. Aden had a chance to follow his older brother to the US in 1984. He understands himself as fully American, but when he talks of Somalis going to the US, he mentions the same story during multiple conversations, including in an audio-recorded interview: "Did you know they brought some people from Somalia to an exhibition in Chicago in 1905?" he asks.

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[14]Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017

"No, I didn't know that."

"Yeah, these people here"—he shows me an old black-and-white photo on his phone—"Exhibition in Chicago. Yeah—Somali Afro. They brought them to an exhibition, but those people never came back to Africa. We don't know what happened to them." During a later discussion, he talks about how these Somalis were kept as a zoo exhibit, for (white) people to gawk at.[15]

Perhaps not knowing himself if he would ever return to Africa, Aden boarded a Somalia Airlines flight from Mogadishu to Frankfurt in 1984, I-20 student visa and passport in hand, with a connecting ticket to Atlanta.  There were already Ethiopian Somalis living in the US, including Aden's uncle who had gone during the 1960s as a diplomat, but this mid-1980s wave of Ogaden and other Ethiopian Somalis to the West began to open new spaces for the flood of Somalis that followed in 1991.  The experiences of this early diaspora were marked by racism, but not always of a negative sort. One returnee from Norway recalls his experience after his arrival in 1984 thus: He and another Somali were the only black people in the town where he settled.  "People loved us; we were popular.  I had a Norwegian girlfriend, and her mom used to tell her that she was so lucky to have a black boyfriend."[16] Somalis' differences from Habesha had marked them, in the eyes of Ethiopian officials, as not belonging in Ethiopia; abroad, these early emigrants found that elements of difference in some cases made for a pleasant reception. Many would observe this reception change as hundreds of thousands more Somalis fled abroad the following decade.

## 4.3   Diaspora trajectories: across the borders of the world

A variety of trajectories and a range of time spent abroad—from a few years to decades—led from Ethiopia to Somalia to Jigjiga's current return migration influx.  Faisal took the same Somalia Airlines route as Aden—Mogadishu to Frankfurt—six years later, in December 1990. The two men are currently in similar positions: they are both heavily invested in Jigjiga, regarded by locals as wealthy diaspora returnees. They both have wives and college-age children living in the US. Yet Faisal's trajectory between Mogadishu and the US offers more fascinating insights into experiences of forced migration—which, though "forced," paradoxically involves decisions with incredible power to shape people's subsequent lives (Steinberg 2016). Faisal had invested his life in Somalia as his homeland, and even after the dramatic violence he witnessed

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[15]Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017
[16]Field notes, 1/20/2018

amidst Siyad Barre's collapse, Ethiopia was hardly on his list of destinations.

Faisal's family had gone from the Wardheer-Danot region to Lower Shabelle, an agricultural area south of Mogadishu, in 1975.[17] Around 1980 they moved to Mogadishu, where Faisal finished school and began university, funded by his father, a former pastoralist now working in Saudi Arabia. Before completing his studies, he found a great opportunity to work for a prominent merchant in Mogadishu, starting around 1989. Faisal made quick money and bought a house in Mogadishu for his family. "In Mogadishu, it was just—just, like—kind of a dream. You know, to get that [job and income] while you were still going to school." He paid for the house in cash, 8 million shillings (about $10,000 in early 1990). He laughs as he tells it. "And that was, by the way, my first job ever." At the same time as he made this investment for his family, however, "the situation was getting worse. I am talking about 1990 now."[18]

## Things fall apart, again

Having invested in a house and established himself and his family in Mogadishu, as things began to get worse in 1990, Faisal considered going abroad. His boss had rapport with the US Embassy due to business connections, and "was the only guy who could get a visa anytime for anybody, for the US...." Faisal wrote support letters for Mogadishu's elites at his boss's direction, but had his own hopes: "I wished that one day he would write me a letter." Today, a straight-laced middle-aged guy, he gets nervous reliving the day he took his future into his own hands: "I wrote my own letter. I knew Mogadishu was bad, and things were getting out of hand, and there was civil war on the way... People are being killed, you know, a lot of things were happening. ... So I wrote my own letter that I am going for business to the US." He laughs at the audacity. The American Embassy returned his passport with the visa inside. "One year visa. Multiple visa—multiple entry visa, one year! I swear... Go and back, go and back! They stamped it on my passport." He laughs again as he tells me, as if still amazed at the good fortune afforded by newfound international mobility. Around Christmas 1990, he boarded a flight to Frankfurt.

His trip to the US, however, turned out to be a disappointing encounter with forces of exclusion. In Frankfurt he was arraigned by immigration officials suspicious of Somalis: unbeknownst to Faisal, people were bringing passports from Somalis abroad to friends in Somalia so they could get out. He was unaware

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[17]Though Faisal was young at the time and does not explain this move, it was likely part of one of the Barre government's resettlement schemes for drought-stricken pastoralists, which resulted in pastoralists from the Ethiopian borderlands being settled on the land of, and significantly displacing, indigenous farmers in the inter-riverine area of southern Somalia.

[18]All quotes in this section from audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017.

that a letter he was innocently delivering for a friend contained a request for passports. A translator read the letter to an immigration official, who turned Faisal over to an American representative. Operation Desert Storm was under way, and transit was buzzing. Hours later an American official came to examine him. Faisal recalls the conversation thus: "[he said,] 'We have got a big, big problem with the people who are doing what you're doing here. So I'm sorry, but I cannot let you proceed with your journey.' And I said, 'What?'" On the recording, he sounds disbelieved, 27 years later.

> "Please; this is not me. It has nothing to do with me. I am just... you can throw it in the trash, you can tear it up, but it's not me!" ... I was so honest. And he said, "No. I'm sorry." He crossed out my visa. My heart broke. I have no... all my dreams were shattered. I was so f—ed up. I didn't know what to do. And I know where I came from, I can't go back. Where I came from and how I cheated [my boss] and all that stuff.

"So you had to fly back to Mogadishu?" I ask.

And here is perhaps the most striking part of the story in hindsight: He did not *have to* return to Mogadishu. "Germany, they came to me—the immigration—and they said, 'OK, now your visa's canceled. You have two choices: We know there is a problem in your country; there are a lot of asylum seekers here. We can accept you as an asylum-seeker here.'" His explanation of his thinking belies post-hoc explanations of state collapse and feelings of you-should-have-seen-it-coming. "I was young, with money. I wasn't—I mean, I thought I could do it again, in a different way, you know? So I said—and I was so pissed off, also—I said, 'No! Shit. There's no problem in Somalia. I don't need no f—ing asylum; I'm not an asylee. I'm going back.'" The next morning Faisal was on the Mogadishu flight. "And this is the funny thing," he tells me on the recording. "That was the last commercial flight that came from Europe with Somali Airlines. Back to Mogadishu."

"Analyses of Somalia," Alex de Waal (2015, 109) writes, "routinely make the elementary and irritating error of dating the onset of the crisis, or even the war, to the overthrow of Siyad in January 1991, ignoring the reasons why the country reached this position." It is easy for de Waal, writing after the fact, to see this view of Somalia's politics as elementary. A change in government was predictable; businesspeople living in Mogadishu in December 1990 recognized that things were deteriorating. People were aware of the Somali National Movement (SNM) rebellion's acceleration and the Somalian Government's destruction of Hargeisa

in 1987-88. Southern militias were nearing Mogadishu. Yet foreseeing a change in government does not equate to foreseeing a 30-year absence of centralized administration. The fact that highly intelligent people in Mogadishu had not secured assets in external accounts suggests a gap between people's daily reality and post-hoc analysis. "The chaos coming in," Yusuf says, "you can't imagine—it came in ten days. We lost everything!" Yusuf and his brother ran a multi-million dollar business. Not only did Yusuf experience the chaotic violence as a rupture, but even in the midst of it he anticipated that Somalia would stabilize. "Even when I was in Kenya, I went back. I didn't want to come to the United States, really. Because I knew I could do better here. So I just—I put the children and the family in Kenya, and I came back [to Kismayo]." Ongoing fighting prevented his work. Eighteen months later, Yusuf arrived at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport with his wife, three kids, and $20 in his pocket for taxi fare to a resettlement agency in an Atlanta suburb called Clarkston.[19]

Returning to Faisal: as soon as he landed in Mogadishu, he scrambled to get a new passport in order to try a different exit route. He describes his mentality about Mogadishu, saying to himself "The time will let you in"—"the time will wait for you." He had money to go through other channels. Time, however, did not wait: "Just within, like, one o'clock, we hear 'boom, boom. Boom, Boom. BOOM, BOOM.' Mogadishu, everywhere is crashing. ... I went on foot out of Mogadishu, and then rode on top of a lorry, to Kismayo." He chuckles at the wild disparity between what could have been and what was—as if to say, there's not much one can do now but find some humor in it.

The exit was a world away from the TWA flight to New York. He survived where thousands of others died, fleeing in overcrowded, leaking boats from Kismayo to Mombasa, Kenya. Five years of refugee-camp life followed. He married. He had a child. Having never finished university, he found an opportunity to go on an education scholarship abroad, and later managed to make it into the US, where he received asylum in the late 1990s and began working to rebuild his life. "For me it was a struggle," he recounts, "because I had to work two jobs and stuff. But still, I mean, I was happy, because I knew that someday I would bring my family. I was happy because I wasn't worried about my family starving in Africa, in the refugee camps. I moved my family from the refugee camps; I took them to Uganda—to the capital city, Kampala." Faisal directed his family's movement from abroad, and supplied them with means to survive in Kampala. Working two jobs, he could send $300 per month, probably a tenth of his gross income. He had to buy a car

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[19]Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017

to drive to work, and get settled, and prepare things for his family to come. He paid all the fees for them to join him in the US in 1999.

## Transnational connections and belonging

While individuals who made it overseas often brought their nuclear families with them, extended family connections began to re-connect people with Ethiopia via the thousands of Somalis who fled back across the border into eastern Ethiopia in 1991. Sadam had spent part of his youth recruiting Ethiopian Somalis to pro-Somalia militias during the 1977 war. After five years in Mogadishu, he left for education in the U.S. in 1983. His father was in Mogadishu, his mother and siblings living in Arabsiyo, northern Somalia. His belief at that time: "I would never go back to Ethiopia." He and his family "felt Somali," and the socialist Derg regime added to this feeling with their strict approach to governance and marginalization of Somalis in the wake of the war. The coincidence of Somalia's collapse and the federal system's establishment in Ethiopia re-initiated his connections there:

> When the Derg fell, and I heard more about the new federal government coming to power, I got a sense of hope. ... In January, Siyad Barre was deposed. The fighting broke out in Somalia. So people were coming back. Most of them went to Kenya, but a lot of them—either through Kenya or directly from Somalia, crossing the border—came back. So it just happened, my family—my mom, my dad, my siblings—they all came back. ... And all of a sudden, our Ethiopianness came back, because we came back to our original country.

A conversation with his father, who had returned to Jigjiga—a place where he had held political office, but had also been arrested and imprisoned wrongfully—seems to have had particular impact on Sadam's view. He asked his father over the phone what he would do "if there is a war in Ethiopia again, or an overthrow of the government. And his response was, 'Now I'm back home. I will never leave Jigjiga... We've seen Somalia, we've seen everything; this is it.'" Sadam reflects on the conversation: "And then I just realized, you know, how Ethiopian I am."[20]

Up until 1991, Somalia was the only "homeland" that many current diaspora returnees had ever seen and towards which they felt affective loyalty. State-building in eastern Ethiopia always took the form of unwanted occupation, and what peace did exist there was only in spite of Ethiopian governance, not because

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[20]Sadam, audio-recorded interview, 3/30/2018.

of it. The federal system had opened the possibility of a space of more permanent belonging for Ethiopian Somalis, but the realities of governance reflected continuity on the military frontier that Somali-Ethiopia had been for decades. Similar to the way that exclusion from the Ethiopia of their youth had reinforced their Somali identity, diaspora experiences of exclusion abroad combined with family connections in the Horn to reinforce boundaries around Somali emigrant communities. Studies of Somalis in diaspora suggest that a combination of racist exclusion and (anticipatory) self-exclusion infuses patterns of settlement and social identities in multiple locales abroad (al-Sharmani 2007; Kusow 2006; Thompson 2016). Desires for an ethnic homeland, commonly expressed by diaspora returnees, are structured by experiences of racism in the Ethiopia of yesterday as well as abroad. At least five returnees who told of their novelty and acceptance—even popularity—as black people in white countries in the 1980s began to feel increasingly out of place in a world of *Black Hawk Down* and *Captain Phillips*, where they were no longer only black—but also potential pirates and terrorists.

A careful look at receiving contexts, however, shows that feelings of being out-of-place arise from the intersection of multiple causes, rather than the single explanation ("being Somali" or "being black") that some informants offered. Though family connections at home were a source of joy and meaning, obligations also created financial burdens that affected many Somalis' capacity to integrate economically into their countries of refuge and citizenship. In addition to channeling remittances to family members in Ethiopia, after the ONLF's ouster from politics in 1995, thousands of diaspora Somalis supported the autonomy movement. Before turning to the impact of migration and remittances in Somali-Ethiopia, it is worth considering the impacts of transnational finance on life and opportunity in diaspora countries of citizenship.

Transnational strategies tend to require, on the one hand, emigrants to develop strong connections to the receiving context: obtaining citizenship and developing strong connections in North America or Europe helps people pursue their interests in their regions of origin (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 2005; Hammond 2013). On the other hand, cash transfers exacerbate structural inequalities within which migrants find themselves. A recent analysis develops a concept of "reciprocal embeddedness" to argue that diaspora-homeland interactions via "intercultural channels" work to "economically equalize so that the core and non-core countries are more like economic peers" (de Lange 2013, 14). This is a tempting belief for those who lament the growing disparity in wealth between different regions, and there is an element of truth

to it when viewed from certain standpoints. Somalis in America, for example, have more wealth on average than populations in the Horn—and they do engage in redistribution. Studies have shown that Somalis in the UK frequently send up to 10% of their monthly income as remittances, and North American Somalis often report sending 15-20 percent of their household income ($200-$300 per month) to family members in the Horn (Hassan and Chalmers 2008; Hammond et al. 2011). However, such generalized assumptions about wealth redistribution elide two important considerations.

First, a geographically finer-grained analysis reveals the economic inequalities within which diaspora groups are embedded in the global North, which may discourage integration and orient people towards return migration. The demands of working two jobs and sending $300 per month in remittances, as Faisal did, tend to detract from first-generation Somali migrants' capacity to accumulate wealth and productive assets in receiving countries. In contexts already characterized by significant class inequality, such transnational demands exacerbate existing inequalities in human and financial capital—though older diaspora Somalis interviewed in this project generally reported that their Western-educated children were likely to be highly successful. In the major US metropolitan areas in which Somalis are concentrated, most live in neighborhoods with median incomes well below the metropolitan average. In Minneapolis, for example, Somalis are concentrated in neighborhoods where median incomes are over 20% lower than the median for the entire metro area (Fig. 4.2). (While many Somalis in the US and other Western countries appear to earn relatively low incomes compared to the native-born population, even those who have acquired assets sometimes report living in low-cost areas in order to direct more of their incomes towards families and investments outside of the US.)

Somalis tied to these family support networks express a keen interest in the political-economic stability and development-oriented governance of the regions towards which they are directing their money. Their long-term interests in origin regions are also connected to migrant life-cycles, especially the costs of retirement in America or Europe. Diaspora Somalis could build a comfortable house in Jigjiga or Dire Dawa for $40,000 and retire comfortably on $500 per month, with physical assistance from family members they had supported through remittances. (Compare this to financial planners' recommendations of at least $1 million for retirement in much of the US!) Numerous returnees' hopes for political change in Somali-Ethiopia were connected to their long-term desires including retirement, especially when their savings in Western banks were jeopardized by the 2008 financial meltdown. ʿAbdinur, from London and now in his 40s, was working
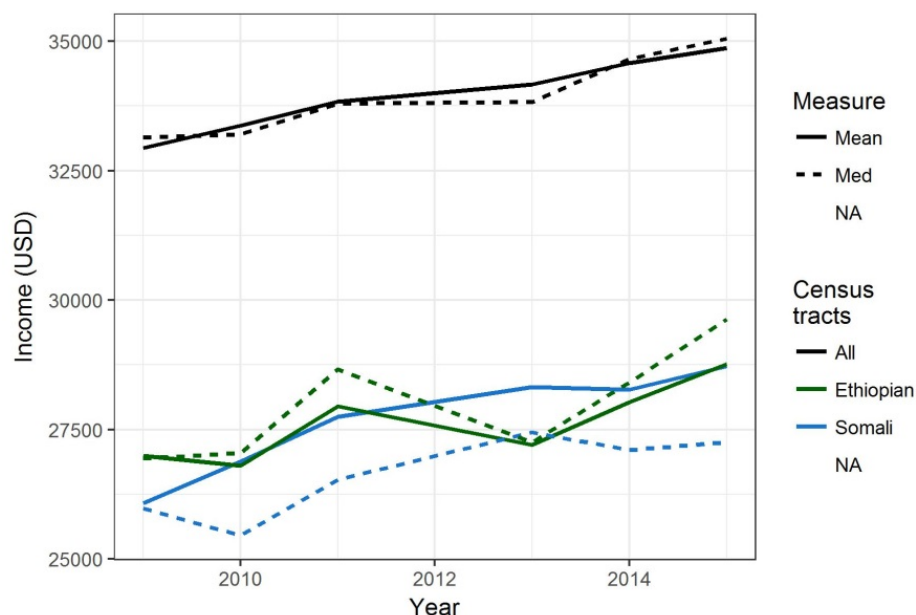
Figure 4.2: Mean and median income for Minneapolis metro area, all census tracts (black), and tracts with estimated populations of at least 100 Somalis (blue) or Ethiopians (green), 2009-2015. Data from American Communities Survey, 2017.

in a bank at the time: "The whole economy of the Western world was going crazy then—2008, 2009," he reflects. He visited Jigjiga at that time, looking for opportunities and a stable place to build a life long-term, but "it was scary then. Outside there was a bomb, there was this and that." It was only shortly after the crisis that diaspora opportunities in Ethiopia emerged, a point he connects in his subsequent sentence: "And then, 2010, ꜥAbdi came to the UK."[21]

The second element that escapes a "reciprocal embeddedness" model is that patterns of investment and remittance are not linear: diaspora investors in Jigjiga show a proclivity towards multi-sited investment strategies that place Jigjiga in a complicated field of transnational connections. Facing rising costs of living and weakened trust in the Western financial system, and seeing opportunities in emerging markets connecting Africa with South and East Asia, some current returnees were looking by the mid-late 2000s to move close to the Horn. In the 2000s, Kenya became a hotbed of diaspora investment, even among Ethiopian Somalis. "Ethiopia is probably—just in the last five years; it's pretty fresh," says Warsame, from Australia, "where Kenya has been the safe option to invest for the past 20 years... I'd say 80% of the people that are investing in Ethiopia right now had some sort of investment in Kenya beforehand."[22] A number of returnees

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[21] ꜥAbdinur, audio-recorded interview, 01/17/2018
[22] Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

have investments in Somalia, including Mogadishu real estate purchased during the 1980s. Others are shareholders in businesses located in countries that they transited en route to Western destinations: Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania are also sites of the Somali "refugee capitalism" (Thompson 2016).[23] These multi-sited investments offer opportunities to connect Jigjiga with trade elsewhere, but transnational exchanges—particularly those across the Somalia or Somaliland border—are often disrupted by regional officials' suspicion of foreign connections and policy of tough borders (explored in Chapter 6).

**Diaspora place preferences**

Studies of return migration often assume, rather than ask, a key question: Where would you consider going, if you were to move? Jigjigans (like probably most other people) envision their lives in worlds that stretch beyond the duality of "homeland" and "abroad." In order to investigate the conceptual geographies and their link to material circulations, I began interviews with diaspora returnees and relatively wealthy "local" businesspeople by asking them two survey questions:

1. Name the top five countries in which you would prefer to live, if you could live anywhere in the world that you would like.

2. Name the top five countries in which you would prefer to do business, if you could do business anywhere in the world that you would like.

In conjunction with ethnographies of transnational mobility, the surveys offer a conceptual map locating Jigjiga in a transnational system of relationships, business networks, and possibilities for Ethiopian-origin Somalis.[24]

A number of studies have focused on the importance of remittances from diaspora Somalis to the Horn and of return migration (Lindley 2010; Hammond et al. 2011; Hansen 2014), but diaspora Somalis with North American, European or Australian passports have also played increasingly important roles in the local economy by employing their capital elsewhere. Returnees' capacity to travel to hubs of manufacturing, trade, and finance have developed connections between these sites and cities of the Horn. A significant number of diaspora Somalis in Jigjiga had traveled to source goods in China, Thailand, Indonesia, and the

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[23]The term indicates stratification among Somali refugees and employment patterns characterized by Somali capitalists in the global North often investing in businesses in southern Africa that employ more recent refugees.

[24]Methods and expanded data from this subsection are in Appendix C.

UAE, developing trade relations with Somali middlemen or suppliers in these locations. Mathews (2017) describes a number of Somalis from the global North living in Guangzhou and working as middlemen, for instance, one Somali from northern Virginia who positioned himself amidst multiple options:

> But he would rather be in Eastleigh, the Somali area of Nairobi, because of the money that can be made there. These traders have chosen to forsake their developed world careers, both because more money can be made as a trader and also because of a sense of wanting to contribute to the home country they had earlier fled. (Mathews 2017, 47)

Conceptual comparisons between life-options in different cities and countries, and the material connections that develop as people and money move between these places, constitute an intertwined conceptual-material geography of which Jigjiga's trade and migration flows are part.

Comparing place-preference rankings for business and for living reveal Jigjiga's location as a frontier between markets and kinship obligations spread across the globe. Businesspeople's preferences for business investment reveal an orientation towards Africa and Asia (both Southwest Asia and East Asia). Survey responses were placed in an adjacency matrix that enables visualization in terms of a network geography in which each link (edge) represents an explicit ranking of one country over another (Fig. 4.3). The predominance of red and yellow edges in the visualization reflects a collective preference for *doing business* in Africa and Asia. Jigjiga's businesspeople conceptualize business opportunities largely in terms of the East Africa, the UAE, the US and China. When calculating mean ranks for each country named, Ethiopia was ranked highest, followed by the UAE, USA, China, Kenya and Somalia (Table 4.1; full rankings included in Appendix C).

Table 4.1: Mean rank of top countries preferred for doing business, calculated using a Plackett-Luce ranking model.

| Country | Freq. mentioned | Mean rank |
|---------|-----------------|-----------|
| Ethiopia | 29 | 2.12 |
| UAE | 16 | 2.44 |
| USA | 18 | 2.47 |
| China | 14 | 2.71 |
| Kenya | 13 | 3.00 |
| Somalia | 18 | 3.65 |

After describing his trips to China to develop trade connections there, Mahad details his considerations in pursuing transnational investment: his first option for business, he says, would be the UAE. He weighs

Figure 4.3: Network visualization of business place-preferences among mid-level businesspeople in Jigjiga. Node size is a function of the number of times the country was mentioned in 39 surveys. Each network edge represents an investors' expressed preference for the country at the edge origin over the country at the edge destination, with the edge colored by the country at which it originates and thicker nodes denoting a higher number of expressed preferences. The predominance of blue and red edges in the visualization reflects investors' expressed preference for doing business in African and Asian countries over European and North American countries, with the notable exception of the USA.

the cost of business against Dubai's accessibility:

> Of course, you need a lot of capital when you're doing business in a country like Emirates. But there are other opportunities that do not really need that much capital. I mean, and the easiness with which you can travel anywhere in the world—both in our home countries here in the Horn of Africa, or to the outside where we have got relationships, like the United Kingdom, the United States. It's easily accessible to basically anywhere in the world.

Trying to understand his decision to invest in Jigjiga given his expressed preference for investing elsewhere, I asked him if he was doing business elsewhere. "I've traveled; I mean, I've visited Emirates not less than 30 times since 1994. You know, so I like the place, but there were always things that I could not—reasons that I could not establish myself there. One being the capital—you know, you need huge capital to do a vibrant business there."[25]

Relative business startup costs are a crucial consideration for diaspora investors, many of whom were well educated in Mogadishu or Hargeisa prior to Somalia's collapse, but lost most or all of their material wealth and worked their way up through menial jobs and then small-scale entrepreneurial ventures abroad. Faisal, after arriving in the US, began as a night security guard in San Jose, CA before opening his own shop in Columbus, OH ("because San Jose was so expensive; I couldn't afford to have a family there") while also working an accounting job. He eventually quit his wage job in order to invest fully in the specialty supermarket.

Returnees are not the only ones thinking globally. Yakob had traveled to Hargeisa, Dubai and Addis Ababa, but had never lived abroad. Nevertheless, he summed up the importance of converting wages abroad into capital at home:

> Investment and employment are different, aren't they? Are they the same places, where I'd invest or work [for someone else]? For example, you want to make money abroad and you want to invest in your homeland. Isn't it? Now, I don't want to invest in America. ... Most people invest in their homeland. Right? Most people are like that. For example, if I work for myself in Jigjiga to accumulate money, I won't invest in Hargeisa. But if I work for someone else to

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[25]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017

accumulate from Hargeisa, I'll invest here. It's the homeland. Because I believe this is my last destination.[26]

Unlike Yakob, diaspora investors are frequently less connected affectively to Ethiopia. Yet there is an underlying commonality: a common (often implicit) belief that property investments are more secure in Jigjiga due to one's connection with the local community. Diaspora conversion of labor abroad into capital in the Horn has frequently flowed into two spaces: into the relatively unrestricted business contexts of regional cities like Hargeisa and Nairobi, where researchers have described the draw of relatively free markets (Carrier and Lochery 2013; Hansen 2004); and into clan homelands where property investments rely not on formal government protection but on social ties to the community and investors' trust in their ethnic or clan belonging (Hoehne 2016).

In contrast to business place-preferences, living place-preferences among Jigjiga's business class reflected a widespread preference for the perceived high quality of life and educational opportunities in the global North. This is manifest in the predominance of blue-colored edges in the network visualization of living preferences, Fig. 4.4. Here Ethiopia, the US and the UAE remain common choices, but Southwest Asian countries tend to fall below those in the global North in rankings. East Asia features much less prominently, corroborating Mathews' (2017, 157) argument that most Africans he encountered "would rather not make China their home in the future." Mathews attributes this not only to exclusion, but also to African traders' own racializing views.[27] In South Africa, too, I found racialized narratives explaining why Somalis perceive Johannesburg and surrounding townships as good for business, temporarily—but far from an ideal place to carve out a future (Thompson 2016).

In general, then, quality-of-life comparisons among Somalis tend to position cities in the Horn against European, North American and Australian locales. In the living place-ranking set, the USA has a slight edge on Ethiopia as a preferred place of residence, and subsequent preferred countries show a much different conceptual geography than do business rankings, featuring northern Europe, Canada, Australia, and Saudi Arabia (see Table 4.3).

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[26]Audio-recorded interview, 11/28/2017. Yakob uses two variations of the verb to work, which denote working for oneself (*shaqeyso, shaqeystaa*) versus working for someone else (*shaqee, shaqeyaa*). While the latter is sometimes translated as simply "to work," I have emphasized its meaning as salaried or wage labor under someone else's supervision since Yakob juxtaposes it with the former.

[27]He quotes a Somali trader's perception that, "It should be black for black, yellow for yellow, white for white, when it comes to marriage. It's because of the culture—people should stick to their own culture. When it comes to business, they can mix, but not marriage" (Mathews 2017, 206).
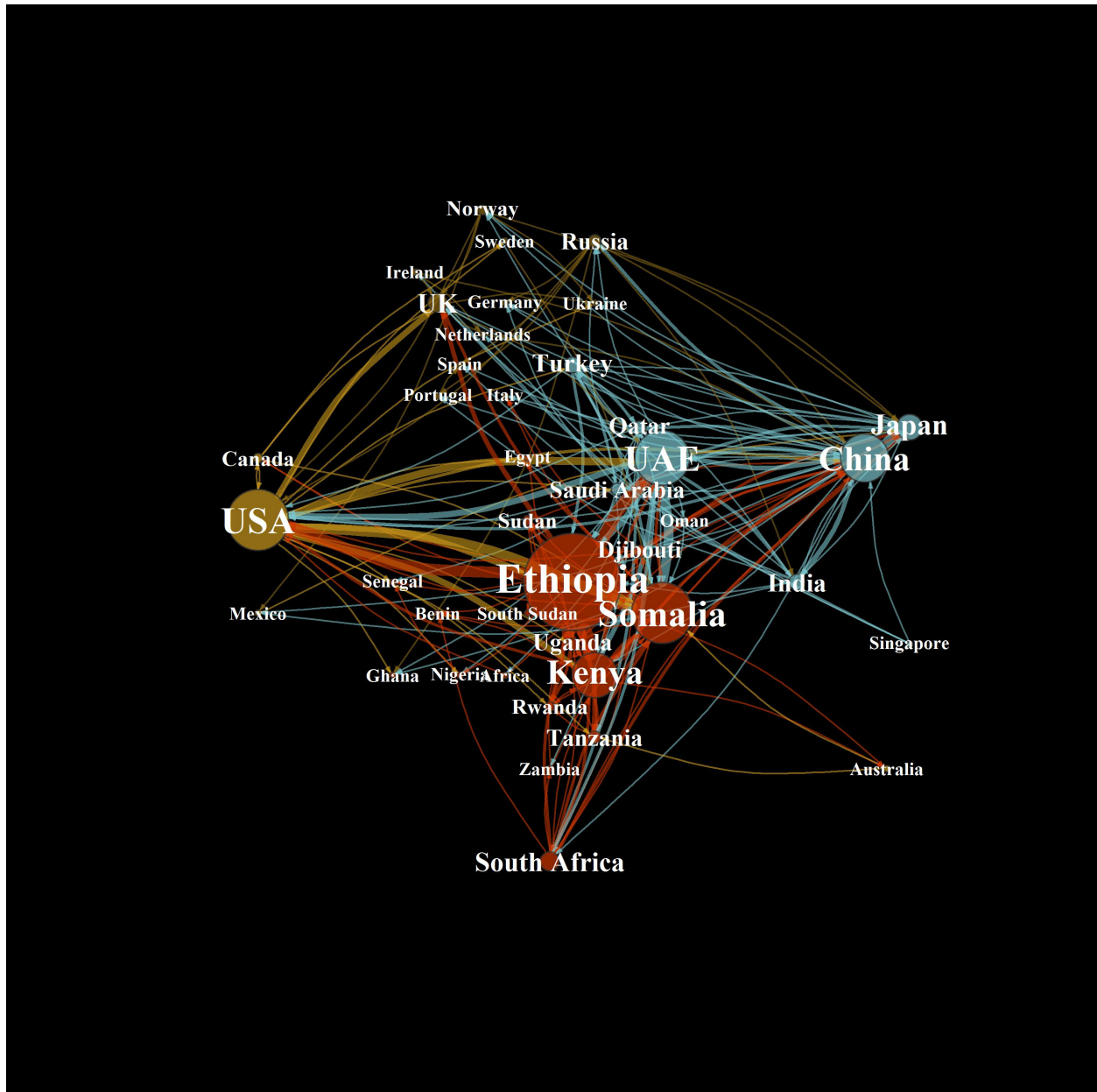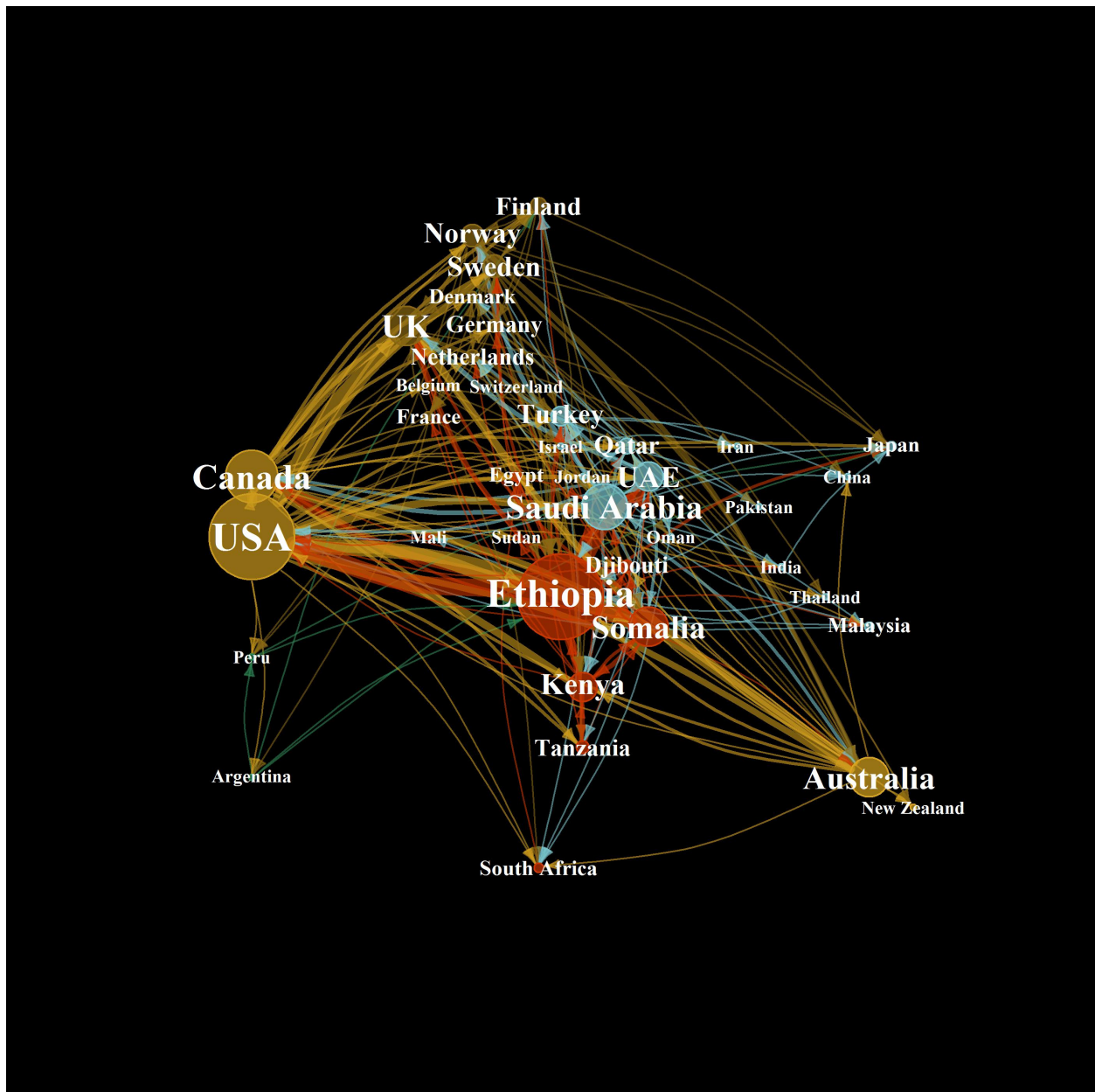
Figure 4.4: Network visualization of living place-preferences among mid-level businesspeople in Jigjiga. Node size is a function of the number of times the country was mentioned in 39 surveys. Each network edge represents an investors' expressed preference for the country at the edge origin over the country at the edge destination, with the edge colored by the country at which it originates. The predominance of yellow edges in the visualization reflects investors' expressed preference for living in Europe, North America and Australia over Asia and Africa.

Table 4.2:  Mean rank of top countries preferred for living, calculated using a Plackett-Luce ranking model.

| Country | Freq. mentioned | Mean rank |
|---|---|---|
| USA | 25 | 2.04 |
| Ethiopia | 25 | 2.08 |
| Norway | 6 | 2.5 |
| Canada | 15 | 2.6 |
| UAE | 8 | 2.625 |
| Saudi Arabia | 13 | 2.75 |
| Australia | 11 | 3.09 |
| Somalia | 11 | 3.45 |

While it intuitively makes sense to suggest that diaspora returnees' decisions to invest in Ethiopia are shaped significantly by affective ties to the "homeland" and the profit possibilities on an emerging frontier of the global economy, these conceptual geographies point to the need for additional theorizing about the uneven terrain of the global economy. The transformation of Jigjiga from a war zone into a diaspora investment hub reveals how the homeland and the "rest of the world" do not exist independently but are produced as spaces in relationship in part through the activities of these mobile businesspeople forging social and financial ties across space. One potential motivation for diaspora investment in the Horn is the anticipation of stability and the use of investment as a vehicle to create political stability, rather than waiting for stabilization prior to investing. The predominance of investment in real estate and trade, similar to initial diaspora investments in Hargeisa, reflect both continuing uncertainty and the new material interests diaspora Somalis have in Ethiopia's stability. Jigjiga's position as a frontier of capital investment exists in relation to the continuing insecurity of Mogadishu, perceptions of exclusion abroad, and the over-competitive markets of Hargeisa and Nairobi.

**A place in the world (second iteration)**

The War on Terror provides a context framing the financial pressures and transnational business interests incentivizing investment in Ethiopia. Warsame's view ties together the opportunity, security environment, and sense of belonging in one fluid stream of thoughts. Before coming to Jigjiga, he lived temporarily in Eastleigh, Nairobi. Having indicated that his family saw opportunities in the Horn of Africa generally, he began comparing Kenya and Ethiopia:

We complain about a lot of things, and say a lot of things about Ethiopia, but Kenya's so advanced that—and there's investors from all around the world—that if you're a small-timer with

a couple hundred grand, or even a hundred grand, you're not going to be [successful]—unless

you come up with a brilliant sort of niche market or product. Security as well. As a Somali from

this area, Ethiopia is a lot better in terms of security. Kenya used to be good, but nowadays I

think with the whole aftermath of all these different terrorist organizations, with Somalis having

their own one now, Kenya's not as friendly as it used to be... And that even goes to Australia.

Here he situates Ethiopia as a space of not-quite-belonging, but perhaps the best case in the current global scene: "This is the time where, you know—you might feel like you don't belong in Ethiopia; I say that. But then, Ethiopia is the only place where if somebody commits a crime that happens to be Somali, my house won't be searched."[28]

While perhaps "more Ethiopian than before," Somalis are still not quite Ethiopian—but then again, it is better than other places. Within the whole Ethiopian system, however, Mahad points out their continuing marginalization:

Somalis in Ethiopia, now they know that they are Ethiopian. They have no problem. I mean—they are, kind of, happy to be Ethiopians, just like anybody else. But the elite will not accept Somalis as equal citizens to other ethnic groups, because of the history between the Somali proper state and Ethiopia.[29]

Mahad's return migration was driven in large part by his considerations of quality and cost of life in Scotland, where he had successfully run a business for nearly 20 years before investing in Jigjiga. As he invested, however, he discovered the economic controls and military interests in regional trade increasingly onerous to his business and threatening to his life. The majority of diaspora returnees interviewed, even those expressing support for ʿAbdi's regime, complained of the government's approach to economic regulation that simultaneously incorporated the diaspora and marginalized them. Many, whether overtly or covertly, began discussing and working on attempts to push for alternative modes of governance.

## 4.4 Re-spatializing Diaspora Interests

As the implementation of federal decentralization since 2010 gave Ethiopian Somalis a place to belong, their investment and return migration lent legitimacy to the administration, serving as a material vote of

[28]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017
[29]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017

confidence. Warsame reflects on the significance of diaspora support: "without them, nothing will work. Who was supporting the militia [the ONLF]? It was the diaspora... the locals over here followed whatever the diaspora leaned towards. So if the diaspora said, 'Look, we're behind ⸂Abdi,' the people over here will follow as well."[30] The success of claims to legitimacy in Somali-Ethiopia, in other words, depends significantly on the diaspora. ⸂Abdi's strategy realigned the official approach towards garnering diaspora support, combining controlled opportunities and coercion to reterritorialize diaspora interests in Ethiopia. DDSI encouraged investment in grounded sectors such as real estate, hotel and restaurant services, and construction—sectors that would give diaspora capitalists a vested interest in the security and stability of Jigjiga.

**From remittances to return migration and investment**

It can be tempting to view the shift from remittances to return migration as a transformation from fluid, deterritorialized interactions via family and financial networks (frequently conceptualized as lacking grounding in place) towards a re-grounding of emigrants in their homeland. Yet this would be only partially true. Remittances in the Horn have for years gone towards investments in immovable property and funds for political movements grounded in delimited spaces. Generally, debates in academic and development circles have tended historically to be less concerned with spatializing effects of financial flows in countries of origin, following a popular conception of migration as fundamentally an unmooring of people from place. Yet as early as the 1980s, studies of migration from Mexico indicated that local landholdings in some areas were concentrated in the possession of emigrant-sending households, and that the longer the period of migration, the more land accumulated (Mines and Massey 1985). While foreign investment and trade generally reduce emigration—evidence around which the "diaspora for development" model is built—investment opportunities in countries of origin may incite increased migration as people work abroad for development capital to start small businesses at home (Lindstrom and Lauster, n.d.; Durand, Parrado, and Massey 1996). Another study in Mexico indicated that remittances from younger migrants who were not heads of household tend to be channeled into construction, especially houses to which migrants hope to return (Gabbarot and Clarke 2010.) Studies of remittances to the Horn's Somali-inhabited territories show similar recent tendencies towards investments in land and housing, and also point to ways in which such spatially-fixed investments tend to remake the political-economic landscape. From large towns like Hargeisa to villages, money sent

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[30]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

from abroad has driven up real estate prices as families have shifted investment from mobile livestock herds towards fixed assets, especially land and housing (Lindley, 2010).

Beyond generating investments in fixed locations, remittances intersect with political configurations in two significant ways. First, structures of obligation and entitlements to shared wealth defy neat categorization as "private" transfers or "public" social provision—the latter of which is commonly considered in Western models to be (at least somewhat) a responsibility of social-contract states. While remittances in Hargeisa flow mainly to medium- and higher-income families, remittance-receiving households may be more likely to give charitable gifts to those in need than others with comparable resources (A. King 2003; Orozco and Yansura 2013). During hours spent in MTO offices and among diaspora Somalis in Atlanta, I have also found people occasionally sending small sums to non-family contacts in need in the Horn. Whether provided by diaspora members themselves or by remittance-receiving families in the Horn, patterns of redistribution indicate that international transfers intertwine with debts and obligations at a more localized scale.

Second, recent studies have highlighted how receiving groups have used remittances to further projects of political territorialization. Perhaps the most basic form is community investment in rural infrastructure such as building or repairing water reservoirs. Hoehne's (2016) work, however, shows how such apparently livelihood-based rural development projects may be leveraged for claims to territory and deployed in contests over state-building. Hoehne connects shifts towards political territorialization among Somalis with a changing vision of geographic space "as the bounded basis of competition for power, including control of people and resources" (Hoehne 2016, 1379). Through this "bottom-up" territorialization, a logic of boundaries, fixed territories, and exclusion comes to define mini-state formation by groups who can claim and defend territorial rights. Such (diaspora-backed) mini-states have appeared across northern and southern Somalia since the 1990s, from the self-declared Khaatumo polity on the Somaliland-Puntland border to Azania in southwestern Somalia.

In sum, remittances and so-called return migration involve efforts to *construct* homelands—that is, not only build *in* them, but actually territorialize, demarcate, stabilize homelands. They are not inevitable results of a bi-directional connection with the homeland As Warsame argued (quoted earlier), when one has small capital and cannot afford to lose much, one invests where one (potentially) belongs, where one's property has a decent chance of being protected, at least for as long as it takes to turn a profit. An estimated 80%

of all business investment financing in Somalia is diaspora money, demonstrating the massive commitment that Somalis have to business development and generating markets in the Horn (Sheikh & Healy, 2009:5). A survey of private investors found that 16 of 18 respondents in South/Central Somalia had previously lived abroad, predominantly in the UAE or UK, but also in Canada, Kenya, Sweden, Uganda, and Yemen (Hammond et al., 2011: 85). Diaspora returnees investing in Jigjiga come from a similar range of countries and have begun to pour millions into the town (Fig. 4.5). Despite the visibility of diaspora investment in Jigjiga's landscape, amounts of investment are uncertain because government data on investment do not necessarily reflect actually implemented projects and may under- or overestimate capital amounts.
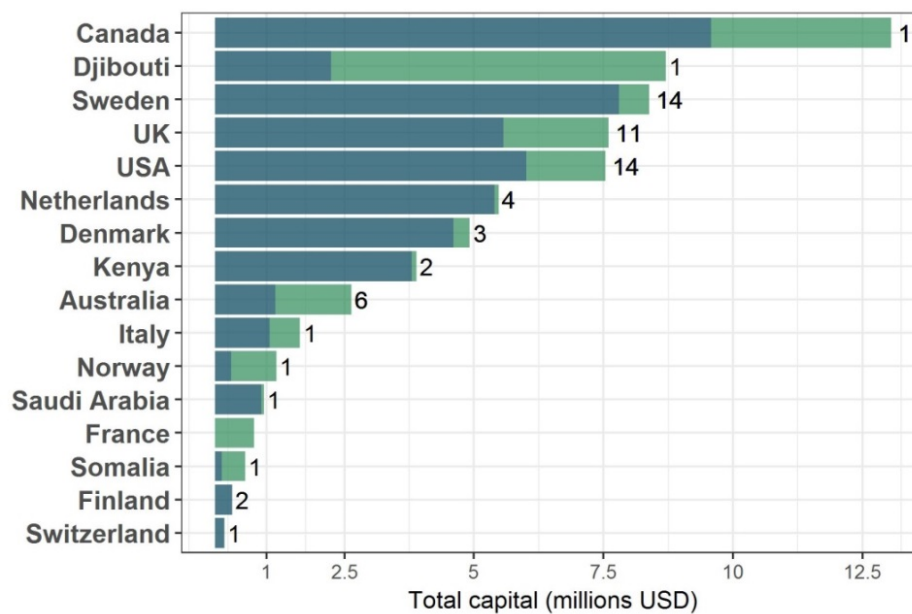


Figure 4.5: Capital registered for diaspora investment projects in Jigjiga (blue) and SRS total (green), by country of diaspora citizenship/residence and number of investment projects. Data from SRS Diaspora Bureau, 2016.

Diaspora investment in Somali-Ethiopia is heavily concentrated in urban property and industries that seek to profit from, but also reproduce, Jigjiga's rapid urban development. Hotels, restaurants, and real estate (including multi-use buildings) are favorites, and are often tied to investments in machinery and supplies that are employed in Jigjiga's ongoing construction (Fig. 4.6). For Warsame, investment in real estate reflects a hedging strategy based on uncertainty regarding the political situation. "With the businesses that we mostly run over here," he says, "it's sort of the safer options. In Africa in general, it's real estate."[31] Ethiopian law restricts alienation of rural lands, ensuring that market opportunities in real estate are restricted

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[31]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017
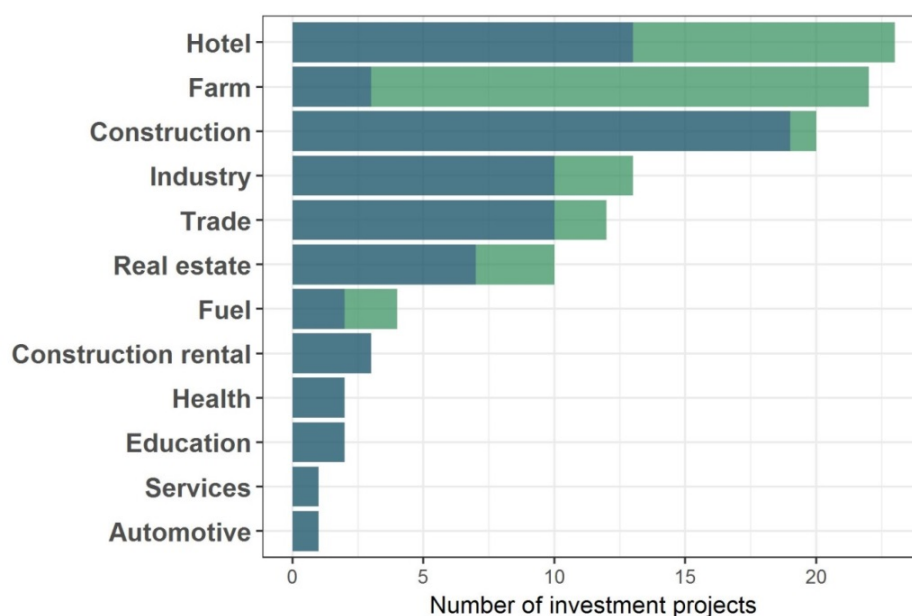
Figure 4.6: Number of diaspora investment projects by sector for Jigjiga (blue) and SRS total (green). Data from SRS Diaspora Bureau, 2016.

to development *within* Jigjiga's planned urban development boundary.  This spatial market control and the implementation of a master plan since 2012 make the city a key site of negotiating local citizenship rights (Emmenegger 2014) as well as the stream of diaspora money into the local economy.  Diaspora demand has been one factor driving inflated land prices.  Prices for urban plots rose far faster than salaries or costs of consumer goods as return migration accelerated after 2010 (see Ch. 7).  Investments in farms around Jigjiga—but more commonly in Godey—are popular diaspora channels, but tend to be open primarily to people originating in those areas (as their clan homeland).  Urban investments in Jigjiga are also relatively quickly accessible from abroad via three flights daily from Addis Ababa.  The fact that many of Jigjiga's diaspora returnees hold properties or run businesses in multiple countries makes accessibility an important consideration. Hargeisa is only a three-hour minibus-ride away.

Somewhat tempering Emmenegger's (2013) suggestion that Jigjiga's urban land is a key site of local state-building (at least with regard to diaspora return), investors in urban real estate, hotels and restaurants argue that they do not have to rely on large networks of government or business contacts to secure invest-ments. "It's I think the only thing in Jigjiga that is purely competitive," Warsame argues. "The reason why it's the safest and the easiest is you don't need anything, apart from the initial start-up, you don't need some-

thing from abroad—which means you don't need the government."[32] This sector is relatively safe for both the investor and for officials trying to regulate wealth accumulation. It does not necessarily involve granting access to the limited number of government contracts or tax-free trade licenses, and there is little regulation of competition. As one hotel owner from Europe told me, wise investors stay away from politics completely.

Not all diaspora investors, however, have pursued "safe options." Businesspeople with visions for economic development have sought to build up the region's industry, and diaspora returnees from Europe, America, and Australia have invested in production and processing. Nine diaspora shareholders invested in the Jigjiga Export Slaughter House (JESH) project, with backing from USAID. Not only do several of the owners have business investments in multiple countries, but they also have multiple investments in Ethiopia: in Jigjiga, Dire Dawa, or Addis Ababa.  The slaughter house has not been an immediate success, however; Somaliland exporters still manage to attract much of Somali-Ethiopia's livestock, and owners are still seeking to build a market in the Middle East. Returnees also invested in the Jigjiga Foam Factory and construction materials manufacturing.  Both materials production and construction services in Jigjiga offer the potential for value-added industry in the region, but, as I show in subsequent chapters, many investors have found it difficult to succeed without government contracts.

Investment opportunities in trade are both the most difficult to access and, if found, probably the most lucrative opportunities in the region.  Ideally, import-export licenses are reserved for "locals." Implicitly, people complain that increasingly since around 2013 licenses are reserved for people who support the administration, and as I suggested in the previous chapter, are often held by supporters and family members of high regional officials. Not only in Somali Region, but throughout Ethiopia, licenses to import tax-free goods are granted to government clients.  Someone might receive the license to bring sugar or cooking oil tax-free to a specific zone or *qebele* (district).  Warsame indicates the possibilities for diaspora capital to fund these lucrative opportunities: "even if you have zero money, as soon as people find out that you have the LC for that, credit will come pouring in..."[33] I spent significant time over 2017-2018 with ⁊Abdinur, from the UK, who works through a broker in Dire Dawa. The broker pairs ⁊Abdinur with people who have import licenses to bring goods to Oromia. He has the capital and foreign connections, and prefers to work for a commission (often about $5,000 per load) while local import-export license-holders are responsible for

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distributing goods.[34] Another returnee, Ḥassan, when he came to Ethiopia from northern Europe, managed to get an import-export license directly by talking to ʿAbdi and expressing his support for the president. He also built inroads with the administration by marrying the daughter of a high-level official. He now reports earning about $5,000 per day through import-export, but has diversified through investments in Hargeisa out of fear of Somali Region's instability.[35]

While trade opportunities exist, diaspora investments remain concentrated in more grounded sectors of urban real estate and industry. DDSI not only invited the diaspora back to benefit from unique opportunities in a controlled economy; the administration allegedly promised investors free urban land for productive investment. I watched diaspora returnees spend months chasing down their land grants through various bureaucrats and power-brokers. Repeated assertions of political support for the failing administration was an essential component in this process ("You know we were supporting your honorable administration even when others were supporting ONLF").

## Diaspora-state interactions

Whereas Somali-Ethiopia of the past was a place of predictable exclusion, today Somali-Ethiopia is a space of unpredictable inclusion, where property rights and belonging are in part dependent on the vagaries of a conjuncture of official personalities, clan relations, and opportunistic interactions. The conceptual frontier between politics and the economy is a boundary under negotiation, and the constant renegotiation of the uneasy diaspora-state alliance offers opportunities for wealth creation on both sides. Diaspora investors position themselves as capitalists with global connections and high mobility (especially those with Western passports), prepared to bring outside flows into Ethiopia given the proper assurances from the state. This means not only protection for property, but often also either government contracts or opportunities in controlled sectors, topics taken up in the following chapters. Officials' power over property and means of force (including threats to emigrants' family members in Ethiopia) give them potential for inroads into global wealth by brokering diaspora investments. They manage the ways in which flows come to be grounded in Jigjiga and the ends to which the economic power of the world outside are directed when they cross Ethiopia's borders.

Everyday interactions through which diaspora involvement is negotiated are diverse and also reflect

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[34] ʿAbdinur, audio-recorded interview, 1/17/2018
[35] Ḥassan, audio-recorded interview, 4/6/2018

the unpredictability of DDSI officials. Some diaspora returnees stay completely away from politicians after obtaining necessary business licenses and purchasing their properties, some seemingly hoping that officials might simply forget about their presence. Others take the opposite approach, seeking to ingratiate themselves with high-level officials—and ultimately, ꜤAbdi—in order to gain access to opportunity and to protect themselves from potential ousting. These investors sometimes seek invitations to officials' homes, chew chat with them, and consistently express their support for DDSI while quietly asking for exclusive opportunities.

The stakes of the diaspora-state alliance became clearer to me over series of interactions that took place in early 2018. In January, I was invited to accompany ꜤAbdinur to the home of a regional bureau head who was also one of ꜤAbdi's important advisors. Government-constructed homes for high-level officials are designed to impress diaspora returnees, set apart from the city in a gated neighborhood called *Dul-qabow*, where 3-meter walls surround California ranch-style houses and Land Cruisers parked under awnings. MTV flashed on a 60" TV screen in a lavishly furnished sitting room where I joined the informal chat-chewing session where the president's advisors mixed with returnees from the UK and Norway. The message is clear: there is money to be made here, and officials are looking for big-time investors who can keep up with this luxurious existence. Diaspora returnees echoed DDSI discourses, berating the ONLF and their connections to Somalia and praising ꜤAbdi's governance and the changes he has wrought in the country. I discussed these conversations one-on-one with some trusted high-level contacts who assured me that this was not simply a performance for the anthropologist in the room: people are scared to express their honest opinions about government, even in small-group settings, for fear of losing the opportunities that officials control. During hours spent sitting in the Diaspora Bureau and other government offices, I observed the same pattern of unrelenting praise for the administration.

In private, diaspora returnees express their awareness of the shortcomings of the regional administration and their inability to address them. As Yusuf says,

> There are a lot of issues now: the administration, the corruption, and that. ... they are attracting them; they like the diaspora to come, as far as you are not against them. .. If you tell them that they are wrong, they think you are against them. And some people, they are against telling the good things. ... So even if I have a reservation about many things, I don't tell them, or I don't

tell them against them, because sometimes it doesn't work.[36]

In private places amongst themselves, diaspora returnees were quietly debating democratization, criticizing officials' use of power for private gain and strategizing to use their leverage to address public interests. As DDSI began to unravel—a series of events detailed in the next chapter—reckoning between federal democratization and continuing regional autocracy was a worrying issue for investors. If ʿAbdi fell, would their property rights remain? Would the rights of Somalis in Ethiopia be protected? On the other hand, stalled construction across Jigjiga reflected that in the tense political environment, people were not sure that DDSI itself would protect diaspora investments. From 2015 onwards, as Oromo-led protests ripped across the country, Somali Region's economy came more and more to resemble a regime-centered oligopoly. Diaspora investors who resented this change slowed their investments and quietly began to push for regime change.

An alliance of local and diaspora opposition to the regime grew after the administration shut down the iconic City Crown Hotel in September 2017 and scared other investors out of the region—events related in the next chapter. The Somali Region diaspora also took encouragement from the growing strength of the Oromo diaspora in the US, which was a key group facilitating the overthrow of the Tigrayan military regime and bringing Dr. Abiy to office in 2018. Disaffected people displaced from the region—a combination of diaspora returnees, local notables, and businesspeople based in Addis Ababa—formed an alliance for the democratization of the region, calling themselves *dulmi-diid* ("reject oppression"). Diaspora investors who had nothing to do with politics held onto their investments in Jigjiga quietly, but refused to come near the town, preferring to remain safe in Addis Ababa or Dire Dawa, where they also voiced their concerns to federal authorities. Returnees were invested in constructing their home region, but their investments and support were also predicated partly on their capacity to influence what kind of place Jigjiga would be by affecting Jigjiga's connections with Ethiopia and with the outside world.

## A place in the world (third iteration)

Investor narratives—and the fact that so many people are invested in Jigjiga while Jigjiga is not, in their opinion, currently the best place to live or do business—suggest that many are investing less in present realities than in hope of future political change, which they are subtly engaged in making. Diaspora investors

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[36]Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017

who had significant regime connections sometimes expressed both their gratefulness for the profits afforded by the administration's favor towards them and their fear of being arrested or losing everything, revealing the incentives that pushed them to slowly change the system. When I began to record an interview with Ḥassan, the import-export trader who said he had directly acquired his license from ʿAbdi, he quickly shifted (with no encouragement from me) from Somali Region's profit opportunities to the issue of rights and governance. "Here, it's power—by force, something you don't want... there are no major rights. ... People's freedoms, normal ones that citizens have—they don't exist. ... Here, don't you see: there's one TV, one news, one telephone provider."[37] While benefiting from the system for now, he expressed support for political change that opened the region up in terms of rights and opportunities.

Indeed, by 2018, diaspora investors were seeing the rewards of getting their foot in the door early. Musa, whose views opened this chapter, describes his rationale for engaging foreign capitalists to pour money into a region which he fled just over a decade ago:

> Actually, in general, in Ethiopia right now, there is hope of change. As you know, a new prime minister has come. So, if I brought investors, which are my friends, to Jigjiga, I brought them in that hope, because I am expecting 100% there will be—a change will happen in Jigjiga, as happened in Addis Ababa right now.

He continued, staking his investment strategy on the anticipation of unfolding political change:

> So, in this hope, if I brought my friends here, even though I know there are now so many obstacles... but still I am encouraging my friends to come to Jigjiga and invest in Jigjiga. You know, and also they always contact me—I'm in contact with them, and they ask me, "Please let us know: when do we need to start the business in Jigjiga?" I have never told them to invest in Dire Dawa or Harar, which are more safe than Jigjiga. But I always tell them Jigjiga, because I see Jigjiga's opportunity is more than other regions. Yeah. So, if the changes we are seeing right now continues like this, you can encourage not only one friend; I can encourage all my friends to invest in Jigjiga, because the opportunities are there. And, you know, the hope or the expectation of change also is there.

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[37] Ḥassan, audio-recorded interview, 4/6/2018

His reason for return and his significant investment is summed up in two things: "firstly, the hope of change, and secondly, the opportunities which are already there."[38] Other diaspora investors were likewise courting business contacts abroad, recommending that they prepare their investments for a change in administration that was sure to come under Dr. Abiy's federal leadership.

## 4.5   State and market frontiers of the future

Many diaspora returnees take advantage of existing opportunities in order to make a living while also placing themselves in positions to usher in this anticipated political change. They utilize certain forms of freedom abroad to create other forms in the Horn, even under autocracy; freedom can be found in dependence on personalized and relatively centralized power structures, not only in independence (cf. Ferguson 2015; Phillips 2018). Somali-Ethiopia is one space in the world in which they might actually have a say, in which they may be able to participate in a state-building process in-the-making, one which is so far from complete and is in many ways just starting to take shape. The diversity of political projects in which diaspora are engaged align to varying degrees with support for 'Abdi's administration, and even when diaspora returnees express vocal support for the peace and security efforts in the region, in private investors often express their desires for changes in the modes of governance. Insofar as diaspora returnees often express support for projects such as democratization and the opening of markets, they could be viewed as neoliberalizers, the prybars of global capital logics trying to open up a frontier. Yet examining diaspora perspectives and strategies suggests that their efforts are more ambivalent. Democratization and marketization are projects that can be combined with forms of protectionism in ways that create a place for relatively small-scale Somali capital and enterprise in Jigjiga's developing frontier market. The making of this type of place-in-the-world is an ongoing and contested project. As I show in the next chapter, the small-scale border trader—pegged as a contrabandist by ʿAbdi's administration—is a hero figure among diaspora and locals alike, and a closer examination of the methods through which the geopolitical borders of Somali-Ethiopia are regulated is a key consideration in looking at the structure of opportunity and the stability of the regional political economy as contests continue over the balance of openness and protectionism.

The diaspora have proved, and will continue to be, a key locus of legitimacy in regional efforts at state-building. The past suggests that when deprived of a space in which to live and invest in Ethiopia,

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[38]Musa, audio-recorded interview, 6/25/2018

first-generation Ethiopian Somalis in diaspora have invested in opposition groups that seek to carve out that space. It was a major turning point for ʿAbdi to engage Somali-Ethiopia's diaspora in development and state-making efforts, and a critical one since the diaspora seems to hold the power to make or break regional state-building. However, regulating the boundaries between economic and political involvement proves to be a messy affair. Investors subtly opposing the administration occasionally brought up a spectral precedent: In Siyad Barre's waning years in Somalia, creating property rights for regime supporters was a crucial means of generating legitimacy, and prompted a land rush similar to that seen in Jigjiga. What followed in Mogadishu is history. Enriching supporters to uphold one's legitimacy to govern can be successful in the short term, but autocratic officials must be careful not to sow the seeds of their own demise by creating power-holders in "non-political" fields of activity or by provoking popular backlash to hyper-regulation. The ways in which the border between politics and the economy—and the geopolitical borders of the regional economy—are regulated, and the effects of these practical regulations generate resentment and protest, are the topics of the next chapter. As they invest in Jigjiga and envision alternative forms of politics from their new base in the city, many diaspora investors both benefit from state market controls and sympathize with overwhelming local protest to hyper-regulation.

# Interlude

# Chapter 5

# The Fraying State? Anticipating Ethiopia's Unraveling

The standard six passengers crammed into the three-wheeled, boxy taxi known as a Force (the Chinese brand name). The engine sputtered and we lurched into the vortex of traffic whirling around Jigjiga's main roundabout. The statue figure Sayyid Moḥamed's sword pointed listlessly southwards as always, but the city center was otherwise somewhat off from its daily rhythm. Fewer people waited for the large bus eastward to Jigjiga University. Fewer (primarily Oromo and Debub) day-laborers than usual sat in the shade of a corrugated fence southeast of the roundabout. Still, the traditional short stools in front of Somali tea shops, shaded by orange tarps draped over crooked wooden posts, were populated with the usual patrons. A few stalls selling the afternoon's crop of *chat* were just beginning to unlock their doors. I almost started to prod the driver for driving so slowly and looking at everyone on the side of the road; why look for additional passengers when the Force is full?

"*Islantaa weyn ma Oroomoo baa?*"—"Is that old lady Oromo?" The question shocked me out of my thoughts. Four young male passengers and the driver craned their necks to look at the side of the road as the Force slowed to a stop. The question referenced an elderly lady standing over a bag of charcoal that leaned against the curb. She was a *miskiin*, an impoverished manual laborer wearing a disheveled dress, apparently having brought the charcoal from a rural area to town. The question was repeated to another woman standing nearby on the side of the road. "No, she's Somali." The Force lurched back into gear and labored up the hill, again slowing by the *manahariat*, Jigjiga's bus rank—a major center of regional trade from which buses laden with people and bags of goods (mostly from the Somaliland border) ply the roads southwards into the Ogaden and westwards into Oromia. The four young men and the driver scanned faces, but apparently not finding what they were looking for, the driver pushed the Force back into gear.

By now I realized what was happening and my mind had kicked into high gear. The previous day—September 12—the *chat* coming from Awaday, Oromia's center of *chat* production, had stopped.[1] The town of Awaday

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[1] On *chat* production, culture, and trade in the Awaday area, see Gebissa 2004.

is part of what has become an urbanizing corridor stretching from Harar northwestward to Haramaya (Ale-maya) (Fig. 5.1). (The setting is further detailed below.) We had heard reports that on the evening of the first day of Meskerem—the Ethiopian new year which had just begun—two prominent Somali *chat* traders and their families were killed by a gang of youth in Awaday following several weeks of flared tensions on the Somali-Oromia border amidst regional border demarcation. These tensions included clashes that had, two weeks prior, temporarily shut down the main eastern highway connecting Addis Ababa to Jigjiga via Harar. A Jarso friend and I closed ourselves inside my compound and started making phone calls. Traffic along the main road through Jigjiga, one block away from the house, had all but halted, the eerie silence punctuated now and again by the sound of a siren. As we called friends, family members and colleagues, I listened to the rumor mill spring to life. Oromo families were being arrested in Jigjiga, some said. Others said no, they were being protected and evacuated westward to the Oromia border. Oromo-owned businesses in town were being shut down. Ten people had been killed in Jigjiga. No, twenty. No, seventy. No, actually no one had been killed in Jigjiga but up to ninety were killed in Awaday, Babile, and Harar. No, the violence was confined to Awaday. A siren blared and tires screeched on the main road as security forces sped towards town. "We knew this would come ever since the government instituted ethnic federalism in the '90s," one contact told me over the phone; "we just weren't sure of the exact timing." Another contact was irate about his family members' reported deportations. "People who are from Jigjiga—who grew up here and know nowhere else—are being deported to a place they don't even know. This is a shame. We are one country; we are all Ethiopian."[2]

The previous three chapters have argued for a view of the problematics of regional state formation in the Ethiopia-Somalia borderlands that takes into account geographies of authority stretching far beyond the immediate context. The following three chapters shift from a focus on regional state formation into the operations of the urban political economy as a site of articulation between Somali Region, "other Ethiopia," and the world beyond Ethiopia's borders. In a context of heightened diaspora involvement in both the region and in Ethiopia generally, tensions of a transnational political system intensely shape livelihoods and daily life in Jigjiga.

Tensions at the time of my fieldwork in 2017-2018 were higher than normal, however. The bulk of research for this manuscript was conducted as Ethiopia's eastern borderlands became the site where the

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[2]Field notes, 9/13/2017

federal political economy—as it had incubated under Meles Zenawi's premiership—began to unravel. In March 2018, P.M. Hailemariam Dessalegn resigned, the first executive to do so in Ethiopia's history. TPLF-connected elites were weeded out of the government over ensuing months. Though Jigjiga ran rife with rumors from September 2017 onwards that ʿAbdi Iley would flee or be forcibly removed, the DDSI government's death-throes lasted nearly a year until federal forces surrounded Jigjiga and ousted ʿAbdi on August 4, 2018. Amidst the daily uncertainty, many Somalis in Jigjiga saw three possible futures: (1) the gradual dissolution of an Ethiopia riven by ethnic conflict; (2) the democratization of Ethiopia by transfer of central power into the hands of Oromo politicians who had been leading mass protests across the country for the past two years; or (3) the re-centralization of power in the hands of the TPLF. "The Tigrayans," in Jigjigans' eyes, comprised a cabal of military leaders whose opaque decision-making was caught up in a spectral, inert, and culturally-laden power structure that resembles an imagined version of what is sometimes referred to as a "deep state"[3] To say that authority was unraveling is not to say that my analysis of the economy took place under exceptional or "crisis" circumstances—other than perhaps a crisis of legitimacy and authority.[4] In many ways, the gradual collapse of the structures of authority revealed both the fragility of power and the ways in which life goes on amidst political instability. People put their faith in things other than politics or "the state" to ensure their futures.

People in Jigjiga, observing the same events and official statements, disagreed substantially in private on the issues of what was happening, who was actually in charge, and what was likely to occur in the future. As the federal government lurched towards an authority crisis, people's understandings of the political-economic system and its meaning for their daily lives also frayed. As people debated possible futures, the multiple meanings of the Ethiopian federal state and Somali Region's place within it became clearer. The federal geography of authority, citizenship, and security of person came to be felt more strongly as Somalis feared entering Oromia (and Oromos feared entering SRS). Some people sought to re-make regional state structures to create new political futures for SRS, including diaspora political movements mentioned in the

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[3]e.g. Söyler (2013, 311): "In deep states, the military-industrial complex is either ruled by a too powerful executive branch or by military men in their multiple guises as 'an industrialist, a merchant, a financial investor, and a rentier'." In Ethiopia's case, imaginaries of the state from the eastern borderlands often mobilize a vision not only of TPLF-centered networks, but of an underlying culture of power, hidden decision-making, and military control over the economy that people trace back to Haile Selassie's rule.

[4]As Roitman (2014) argues, the declaration of "crisis" may be used to legitimate government intervention in events that have a longer genealogy and were never particularly stable to begin with. In Jigjiga, common sentiment indicated that the Awaday massacre was not perceived as a radical departure from a system that should have worked, but rather an inevitable and unsurprising outcome of tensions that many were aware of for years.

previous chapter. Most, however, turned to more trustworthy sources of stability—to Allah, to kinsfolk, and to their neighbors.

It bears repeating that Somali Region should not be conceptualized as a periphery of the Ethiopian state,[5] for I agree with Krupa and Nugent (2015, 5) that such claims about the extent and spatial relations of power within a national-territorial model "obscure our understanding of the multiplicity of ways in which assertions of legitimate rule are insinuated in the fabric of everyday life."[6] To understand the ways in which power is experienced and draws people into—or deflects them away from—its orbit, we must look at how the Ethiopian state and its relation with Somali Region take shape in public discourse and popular understandings (Gupta 1995), and the strategies that people use to engage with state power (Gupta 2012; Hoag 2010; Thompson 2017a).

## 5.1   Setting: Awaday and the September 12 massacre

Awaday town, evidently insignificant enough not be marked on Google Maps and Google Earth as of 2018, has more than quadrupled in terms of built-up area over the past 15 years. The Somali Region Trade and Transport Bureau Head estimated in late 2017 that the daily *chat* trade in Awaday is well into the millions of US dollars.[7] This is the core generator of cash for eastern Oromia Region, and also a key source of income for Jigjigan businesspeople and for the municipal government—in Jigjiga, *chat* tax accounts for nearly 70% of municipal revenues. Every morning, brokers from Jigjiga's prominent *chat* traders purchase top-quality *chat* from Awaday to bring to Jigjiga; cars full of *chat* leave Awaday in the early morning for Addis Ababa, flying westward at breakneck speed to deliver the product in the early afternoon. Top-quality chat is exported from Awaday to Djibouti daily, and second-tier chat goes via Jigjiga to Somaliland.

On September 12, Somali chat traders and their families were brutally hacked apart with machetes in Awaday, a total of at least 18 targeted killings. Addisu Arega, the Oromia Regional Government spokesperson, reported that 12 "Somalis" and 6 Jarso (which he claimed as Oromos) were killed. Edris Isma ʻil, the DDSI spokesperson, reported that 50 Somalis had been killed and accused Oromia regional leaders of "spearheading a genocide" against Somalis. In a context where Somalis and Oromos are intermarried and

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[5]cf. Barnes 2000; Hagmann 2014.

[6]See also Ramírez 2015.

[7]Personal communication, 17 Dec. 2017. In 2007 it was estimated that over 22,000,000 kg of *chat* worth US $84,376,315 was exported via Jigjiga alone ("Jigjiga City Structure Plan: Draft Report" 2010, 184).
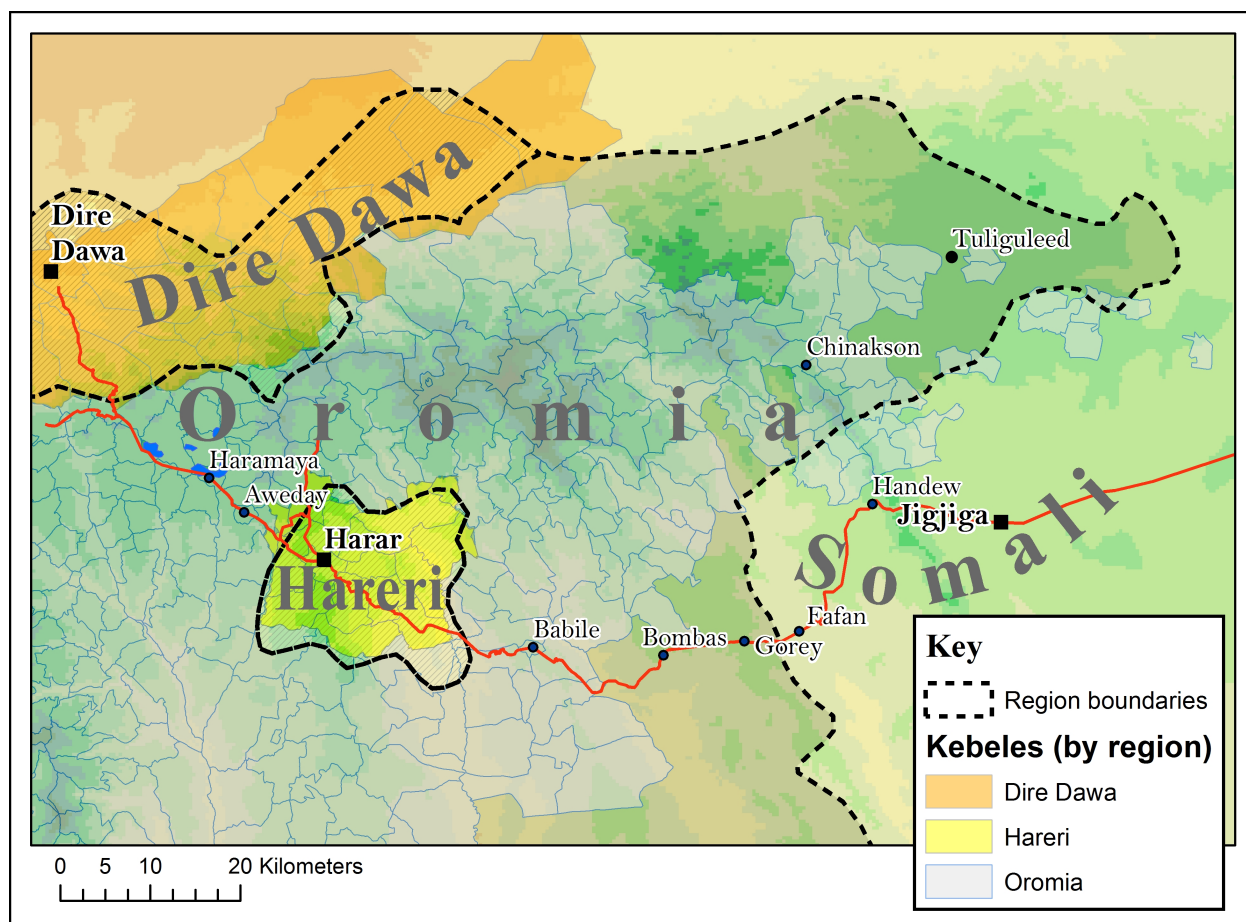
Figure 5.1: Urbanizing regional corridor from Dire Dawa to Jigjiga via Haramaya, Awaday, Harar, and Babile. The regional boundaries and kebele-level boundaries do not align in official shapefiles—as reflected in the map—in part because the borders have not been demarcated on the ground.

spatially interspersed—in which many people could operate as Somali and Oromo—regional border demarcations over previous months had heightened tensions. Some trace the Awaday violence to the alleged killing of four community leaders in the Gursum area by Liyu Police the previous week.[8] Others attributed the tensions to conflict along the Oromia-Somali border earlier in the year, hundreds of miles south in Borana (where the Liyu Police were accused of violence in the Negele area). As is typical in narratives of "ethnic violence," a BBC commentator sought the roots of conflict in historical territorial and resource competition between the Somali and the Oromo, politicized more recently by a 2004 referendum in which hundreds of *kebele*s along the Oromia-Somali regional border voted on which region they wished to be part of.[9] In the

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[8]Dan Joseph, "Ethiopia's regional tensions spill over, leaving at least 18 dead." VOA News online, 18 September, 2017. https://www.voanews.com/a/at-least-32-killed-in-ethiopia-oromia-somali-regions/4028238.html

[9]Kalkidan Yibeltal, "What is behind clashes in Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regions?" BBC News online, 18 Sep. 2017. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-41278618

Jigjiga area, 43 *kebele*s were transferred from Somali Region to Oromia following the referendum (Kefale 2010, 629).

The question of "root causes" for group conflicts can easily spiral into a recounting of events which either leads into the "mists of history" or to a more recent arbitrary cutoff point at which one side is said to have instigated the conflict (at which the other side will interject and point out that the instigation was in fact caused by an earlier event, and so on). This chapter's concern is not with determining what led to the violence, but in analyzing how interpretations of the causes of violence reflected and reinforced different views of state power in Ethiopia, with implications for how people mobilize allegiances and strategies for security, both individually and collectively.

In the days after the Awaday massacre, DDSI forces commenced the deportation of Oromos from Jigjiga and elsewhere in the region. Numerous sources in Jigjiga confirmed reports that Liyu Police soldiers were going door-to-door. Evidently some soldiers beat, harassed, and stole from Oromo civilians; others protected them and took them to sites from which they were evacuated (or "deported" as many people were saying) to Oromia. The Liyu Police, like any military or paramilitary force, is not a homogenous group that acted completely in unison. Trucks with Oromos standing in the bed filed through Jigjiga heading west towards Oromia. Within the week, at least 55,000 ethnic Oromos were evacuated from Somali Region;[10] Oromos were even evacuated from Tog Wajale, Hargeisa and other locations in Somaliland—especially after Oromos in Hargeisa were reportedly targeted in retaliation for Awaday.[11] Both Oromia and Somali regional governments denied that they were forcibly deporting members of the other ethnic group, while accusing the other regional government of deporting its citizens. Verbal reports suggest that in many locations, Somali women and children were sent to Somali Region, while men remained in Oromia—a signal of their willingness to fight for their place. Rumors of Somalis being targeted in Oromia continued to surface periodically for the following year. A number of IDP camps were established along the borders, including Qoloji Camp just east of Babile. On September 13, I talked on the phone to ⁽Abdi-Aziz, a diaspora returnee who had lived in Babile, and he told me that he was running to Somali Region in fear for his life. He and other Somalis later returned to Babile, but tensions persist.

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[10]"55,000 Ethnic Oromos Displaced—Oromia Regional Government." September 18, 2017. https://www.ezega.com/News/NewsDetails/4709/55-000-Ethnic-Oromos-Displaced-Oromia-Regional-Government

[11]Dan Joseph, "Ethiopia's regional tensions spill over," op. cit.

## 5.2 Ethnic conflict or state power play?

For many of Jigjiga's Somali residents, the Awaday massacre marked a shift in the imagined geopolitical landscape and future of Ethiopia. Comparisons to Rwanda began to circulate through town. Within days, Spokesman Edris posted images of bloody bodies in Oromia uniforms, ostensibly as a celebration of Somali forces' retaliation against Oromos. He followed with a cartoon of "Oromia ONAG"[12] eating a plate full of bloodied "Ethio Somali People."[13] In early October, a former Jigjiga mayor who was a regional bureau head in late 2017 wrote a Facebook post accusing Oromos of killing "more than 50 innocent Somali civilians" living in Oromia. He continued by asserting a cause of the conflict:

> Obviously the reason behind the border conflicts of the two regions is this: Ethiopian Somalis opposed Oromos' illegal uprising and [attempt at] re-establishing cruel Derg regime and also violating federal system and the supremacy of the constitution. The illegal uprising was aimed to collapse current federal government that created peace, justice, equality and development that exist in the country."[14]

The Oromo uprisings had already been a potent topic of debate prior to the Awaday killings, but the violence enabled agitators to stir up new fears, with repeated reference to "a new version of the Derg"[15] and "forcible land expansion" by which Oromia would ostensibly reach all the way to the borders of Somalia. On October 7 a map appeared on several widely-followed Facebook pages that was very obviously doctored to show the expansion of Oromia all the way to Somaliland and Djibouti (Fig. 5.2). "Where are the somali people," the post says, "wake up this is OROMO Future map of land expansion."[16]

A more prevalent perception over the following months, however, was that the massacre had been a bid by Tigrayan (TPLF) military elites to continue to divide and rule Ethiopia. "The whole issue of Oromo land expansion is a lie," one informant emphasized, expressing a widespread sentiment in Jigjiga. "The Tigrayans are behind it."[17] Whereas those pushing the Oromo land expansion narrative saw Ethiopia falling apart due to Oromo intransigence, others—even some close to the TPLF-backed regional government—thought that

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[12] The Amharized acronym for the Oromo Liberation Front
[13] Facebook posts, since deleted. Originals in author's possession.
[14] Facebook post, Oct. 7, 2017. Since deleted but copy of post and comments in author's possession.
[15] Edris Ismael Abdi, Facebook post, Oct. 4, 2017.
[16] Ayalu Kasa, Facebook post, October 7, 2017. Reposted on the DDSI community in Copenhagen Facebook page.
[17] Field notes, 1/6/2018. Others asserted the same thing. Some even insisted that Somalis and Oromos weren't fighting each other, but rather federal soldiers were fighting both sides in order to put them at odds—field notes, 10/5/2017.

Figure 5.2: Map posted by pundit on Facebook with caption, "Where are the somali people wake up this is OROMO Future map of land expansion... Be together otherwise wait what will be done" (posted October 7, 2017)

the Awaday killings might hail the Tigrayans themselves intentionally dismembering Ethiopia. "When the Tigrayans came to power over the Derg in 1991, the TPLF was allied with Eritrea," pointed out a middle-aged mid-level regional official. "They let Eritrea secede, and in the [Ethiopian] constitution they put Article 39—it is something they can invoke for themselves if the Amhara or Oromo come to power. They will secede and join Eritrea."[18]

The popular image that emerged is a Tigrayan deep state with a network of power relations that siphoned wealth from Ethiopia's other regions and employed it to establish regional dominance. I spent Christmas Day 2017 with Hashim (the elderly diaspora returnee from San Diego) and a young Gurage friend, Alemu. As we drank coffee, watched CNN, and browsed books for the afternoon, we also engaged in an intense debate about Ethiopian politics. Hashim and Alemu disagreed over whether Tigrayans were behind the Awaday massacre, but agreed that the Tigrayans have the power to rescue Uhuru Kenyatta from the International

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[18]Field notes, 12/29/2017

Criminal Court and to influence Omar al-Bashir in Sudan.[19]

Regardless of who was behind the Awaday killings, Jigjigans debated constantly in private how likely Ethiopia was to collapse. Perhaps ʿAbdi-Aziz tended towards anxiety around state collapse. He had fled Mogadishu, made it legally to Europe, been deported, fled Mogadishu again, nearly lost his life in South Africa, and returned to Ethiopia in 2013. After fleeing Babile in September, he stayed some time in Jigjiga and Qabridahar. He assured me that Ethiopia was "collapsing, like Somalia." He clarified his prognosis: "These Oromos won't stop until the Tigrayans leave power, and the Tigrayans are not going to leave power."[20] Other returnees and some officials invoked international power as a source of stability: "No, America and Europe are not going to let Ethiopia fall apart."[21]

Such anticipations have important implications for people's livelihood strategies and political engagement. Prominent regional leaders broke with ʿAbdi Iley over his response to the killings. Diaspora opposition groups—notably *Dulmi-Diid* mentioned in the previous chapter—gained followers as the regional administration faltered. Diaspora investment in Jigjiga, already stalled amidst the past years of Oromo protests, ground to a complete standstill after some properties were confiscated by DDSI, which used Oromia-Somali border conflict as pretext. People's understandings of the Ethiopian state and its interface with regional authority structures—including (discursive) clan mobilization and diaspora buy-in—are best understood by backing up a little and examining how people conceptualize not only the interest networks, but the promises and possibilities of "becoming Ethiopian" through federalism.

**Meles Zenawi's ghostly presence**

To articulate their views on the federal system, Jigjigans tend to contrast Hailmariam Dessalegn with his predecessor Meles Zenawi, the father of Ethiopia's current political system and renowned as one of the most clever (and brutal) statesmen to hold executive office in Africa ("the ablest political intellectual of his generation," in Alex de Waal's (2015, x) words). Meles oversaw the implementation of the federal system after 1991 and governed from 1995 until his death in 2012. In the Jigjiga City Administration's party office, a poster is taped to a wall on one side of the party representative's desk. Facing the room from the opposite side of the desk is a 5-foot-tall banner, backlit from a window overlooking downtown Jigjiga. From both the poster and the banner, Meles Zenawi's spectacled face presides; it is a presence that someone meeting with

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[19] Field notes, 12/25/2017
[20] Field notes, 12/14/2017
[21] Field notes, 12/29/2017

Figure 5.3: Meles Zenawi looks on from a poster inside the Jigjiga City Administration, 2018. Photo by author.

the party representative can hardly ignore (Fig. 5.3).

That Meles is a tangible presence in the room from which Hailemariam is notably absent is not mere oversight or coincidence. It reflects a standpoint on current Ethiopian leadership when viewed from SRS. The potency of Hailemariam in Jigjiga's daily discussion stems from sharp disagreement over whether he actually has power. "Hailemariam isn't ruling the country," Yakob tells me when I ask him about current national leadership in an informal discussion. "Meles is in the grave, and he's still ruling the country."[22] Yakob leans back in his chair, closing his eyes as if dead, and lifts his hands, zombie-like, as if reaching up from underground to manipulate things on the earth's surface. He laughs. "In Ethiopia," another young man tells me the following week, "most people perceive political power in terms of region: Hailemariam is from the Southern Region [Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region], but the power is still in the north, with the Tigrayans."[23] Hailemariam can do nothing on his own, but is guided by the EPRDF's central

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[22]Field notes, 5/15/2018

[23]Field notes, 12/25/2017. An OPride article observed, "Hailemariam is widely seen as a placeholder" (Opride, "Several dozens killed in fresh communal violence in Ethiopia's Oromia state," Opride online, 18 Dec. 2017. https://www.opride.com/2017/12/18/dozens-killed-fresh-communal-violence-ethiopia-oromia/) and another source observed that Hailemariam was "a compromise candidate" (Fisher and Gebrewahd 2018, 5).

committee, in this view. The state is the real actor even when localized groups or "rogue actors" appear as perpetrators of violence and purveyors of authority.

The TPLF cabal within the Ethiopian state, as understood in everyday life in Ethiopia's long-marginalized eastern regions, works with whatever trends predominate at the moment. Its goal: to shore up centralized power and retain the basic monarchical organization of authority that has dominated Ethiopia for millennia. Mahad raised his voice emphatically when I suggested that the system might open up.

> Who can open it? When is the system going to open up? Who knows? The system's been like
>
> this for hundreds of years! Hundreds of years. I mean, this system—the Ethiopian system—it's
>
> from the time of the kingdom. There were kingdoms in this country... Haile Selassie, or Mene-
>
> lik. So that system still stays to this day, even though we are in the 21st century and the world
>
> is changing—and they know they cannot sustain it.

Using whatever mechanisms they can, Jigjigans assert, the Tigrayan deep state will retain its power. "But the guys at the top," Mahad continued, "because they are kind of sucking up the wealth by themselves, they don't care what's going to happen tomorrow."[24] As Aden puts it in relation to the Awaday massacre, "Last time they tried force to suppress the uprisings. That didn't work. This time they used ethnicity."[25] Since Meles died in 2012, however, both local observers and scholars have debated the actual locus of power in Ethiopia's federal politics. Undoubtedly, Meles worked to centralize power after the EPRDF was threatened in the 2005 elections; what was constitutionally-speaking a de-centralized federation was, in practice, increasingly centralized in the hands of Meles (Fiseha 2006). Now Jigjigans were asking: did the EPRDF Politburo retain that centralized power, or was Meles the only one who really held power over potentially rogue regional officials like ʿAbdi Iley?

The very question itself speaks to experience of the Ethiopian state in popular life: not as a vertical and encompassing entity generated through mundane bureaucracy (cf. Ferguson and Gupta 2002)—though there are elements of this at lower levels—but as "an endless play of mirror images" (Aretxaga 2000, 53). Jigjigans are never quite sure what elements are "the state"—that is, ordered from "the top"—and which are rogue abuses of state power (including, massacres but also basic corruption). Whatever visions of state collapse emerged from the Awaday massacre, there was always a counter-argument: the fraying state was

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[24]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017
[25]Field notes, 1/6/2018

an intentional ploy to violently divide people and dissipate political power in order to uphold a network of extraction. This image of the mafia-state is crucial to understanding popular perspectives on ʿAbdi Iley's place in Ethiopian politics and the regional structure of power.

### Dividing-and-ruling: state and economy

Perceptions of the Awaday massacre as a divide-and-rule strategy pursued by TPLF elites are intimately connected with broader understandings of the purpose to which federalism is put: in a nutshell, enriching TPLF cadres while dividing political opposition. When I visited Addis Ababa, I frequently spent long afternoons with a group of young Oromo men from the Harar area. They lamented that ʿAbdi Iley had been essentially permitted to deport Oromos from Somali Region in the heat of conflict. "How can you deport someone within his own country?" a friend of mine from Dire Dawa asks. He answers his own question tangentially: the answer is ethnic federalism; "The biggest mistake was to divide this country by ethnicity."[26]

What this enables, according to many informants, is TPLF control over the economy and foreign investment, leveraged for transactional purposes rather than national interests. "The government is selling the nation to investors!" is how one young Oromo informant put it in the same conversation.[27] "The Tigrayans have concentrated development in Tigray Region for 26 years," one SRS official asserted. "They've built themselves up. They don't need Ethiopia."[28] This perception creates ambivalence about the federal system. In Mahad's words:

> Well, you know, we have this system of ethnic federalism—I mean, it's kind of just rubber-stamped clannism, right? Everyone knew this was coming, when you have a system that divides people and in which some people are benefiting a lot while others remain poor. The Tigrayans have accumulated wealth while other areas like Somali and Oromo regions remain poor.[29]

Popular perceptions of Tigrayan accumulation stretched down to the borderlands. In early January, while I sat together with several informants, Aden narrated his perspective on federal involvement in the borderlands economy, which I recorded in field notes:

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[26] Field notes, 10/05/2017

[27] Field notes, 10/05/2017

[28] Moḥamed, field notes, 12/29/2017; see also field notes from 12/25/2017: "Tigrayan dominance translates into infrastructural benefits perceived in Tigray. Mekele has a better hospital than any other in Ethiopia, asserts one young Jigjigan Gurage. Tigray was poor during Haile Selassie's rule, answers his elderly Somali friend, but now they are the richest."

[29] Field notes, 12/20/2017

Aden told a story about a double border-game being played by some Tigrayan military officials in the region. About 5 or 6 years ago, there was a Tigrayan border official who was paid by Somalilanders sending contraband to let it through. At that time the government had just implemented a new policy: if you catch contraband, you get to keep half of it. So the Tigrayan guy took the money to let the truck pass through, but then caught it after it passed, thinking he could make a quick million or two million birr. The Somaliland security forces crossed the border and hijacked the truck. Then the Liyu Police went and surrounded the area—it seems it was unclear exactly what was going on, and the federal government was in an uproar about it.[30]

Such visions mobilize a view of accumulation not only through controlling market exchanges, through regulation—but even more so through arbitrage: through using borders to separate markets only so that these markets can be bridged. Similarly, these accusations construct a view of the "corrupt" practice of diverting resources between political power and markets, a topic taken up more directly in Chapter 8. Whereas many have analyzed such dynamics in terms of patronage, this is something different.

## ꜤAbdi Iley: puppet or power-holder?

Up until this fragmentation, and even amidst it, many of Jigjiga's residents expressed general support for Ethiopia's multinational federal system. Federalism was a way to restructure the ostensible social contract between ethnic minorities and the state, and in this regard, it was a moderate success. Under ꜤAbdi's DDSI, Somalis had more power in Ethiopia than they had ever had before. The two-sided nature of the system, however, became evident in sharp disagreements among Jigjigans about ꜤAbdi's role in it. Everyone recognized that he had not been democratically elected, but rather put in place by the TPLF. Nevertheless, both diaspora returnees and locals sometimes assured me that ꜤAbdi was autonomous and had even "handled" Tigrayans through his regionally-based power: ꜤAbdi was playing along only enough to solidify his own bid for power, whether within or apart from Ethiopia. (Recall: the staff of leadership given to Ethiopia can supposedly be taken back!) This view can be subdivided into two strands. Some, like Nune (a middle-aged *chat* exporter from rural parts of the region), emphasized that his political acquiescence to Tigrayan interests gave him a free hand over the regional economy, enabling him to amass wealth and to direct the lines of opportunity:

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[30]Field notes, 1/6/2018

All the trade is in his hands!" Nune clenches his fist and leans forward, speaking quietly. "The chat, the food, the construction materials—everything! He controls it all. There is no more contraband, only LC now—it's in his hands, isn't it? And only a few people are getting rich, especially his family. They go from nobody to building a *fawq*. People used to have money in Jigjiga. They used to go around at night. They used to do business. Now he controls everything.[31]

Others, however, argued that ʿAbdi was the first regional president who had sufficient clout and independence to resist Tigrayan interests. "He has autonomy," insisted one diaspora investor. "Let him kill you; let him do what he wants to do—him." But he doesn't take orders from the federal level. "He's independent now. Before, it wasn't like that" (that is, with previous regional presidents).[32] Some recent analysts agree with this point, arguing that ʿAbdi's connections with the ENDF rather than federal politicians gave him relative political autonomy (Fisher and Gebrewahd 2018).

On the other hand, ʿAbdi was commonly painted as the client or even "puppet" of Tigrayan military patrons. An Oromo friend in Addis Ababa repeatedly expressed the sentiment that "ʿAbdi doesn't know the politics of federalism—he just does whatever the Tigrayans want him to do."[33] Somalis in Jigjiga constantly pointed out material signs in Jigjiga of a broader network of interests in which ʿAbdi was a player—especially buildings owned by Tigrayan *maalin-taajir*s, discussed in Chapter 3. The TPLF, says Nune, is "a mafia. You know the Italian mafia? They are just like that." He accused them of being brokers (*dilaal*) who are working with the Chinese to rob the country.[34] In the scheme, DDSI are simply "hired killers."

ʿAbdi's eviction of Oromos from SRS in September 2017 was, in the eyes of many Jigjigans, pandering unnecessarily to Tigrayan interests rather than holding his cards tight and waiting to see what unfolded. When the EPRDF leadership announced a meeting of the Executive Committee the week of December 10 and expected a major announcement regarding changes in the country, many Jigjigans speculated that the Committee would, among other things, announce ʿAbdi's removal. It did not. By late December, like many others, Warsame, from Australia, anticipated an Oromo rise to power at the federal level. He expressed

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[31]Field notes, 1/6/2018
[32]Audio-recorded interview, 5/24/2017
[33]Field notes, 10/5/2017
[34]Field notes, 2/20/2018

absolute certainty that Awaday had burned the bridge between the SRS administration and any Oromo leadership; "He's very replaceable," he said of ʿAbdi.[35]

Evidently ʿAbdi felt the threat.  He and other high-level officials backpedaled on their earlier claims of Oromo "war" and "genocide" against Ethiopian Somalis in early December.  A December 2 report by ʿAkaara News detailed a meeting with the Somali Regional officials and notables in Hailemariam's office regarding the return of Oromos to Somali Region. "In the end," the report says, "the Party [SPDP], administration and society of the region are announcing that the Oromo people who were evacuated from Somali Region, who were mostly business people, should return once again to their places (*inay dib ugu soo laabtaan goobahoodii*).  As they do, Somali people will welcome them warmly and with brotherhood."[36] Two days later, DDSI held a meeting in Jigjiga in which ʿAbdi again invited the Oromo back, promising that their property, houses, and businesses ("which had been kept safe by commissions appointed by the Jigjiga City Administration") would be returned to them. "On another side," says the news report,

> some of the Oromo civilians who were previously evacuated from SRS and who returned to the capital of Jigjiga spoke in the meeting, giving thanks to the SRS administration and civilians and describing the lovely way they were welcomed back to the region and at the same time handed back the property from which they fled (*loogu wareejiyay hantidii ay ka barakaceen*)."[37]

In private, some Jigjigans laughed at the difference between glowing regional media reports and the reality they perceived: "The Oromo are not coming back."

On Christmas Day, Hashim and Alemu debated whether the federal or regional government had more power, and which was likely to dictate terms to the other.  The discussion included whether the Tigrayans were seeking reconciliation with Oromos, or whether ʿAbdi himself had realized the need to appease the ascending Oromo leadership.  One of ʿAbdi's main sources to which he reached for legitimacy at this time was diaspora Somalis, many of whom—as shown in the previous chapter—had been draw into a complex web of dependency.  As it turned out, many diaspora returnees' interests stretched beyond effective govern-

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[35]Field notes, 12/23/2017

[36]Caakara News, "X.D.Sh.S.I iyo Xukuumada Deegaanka oo go'aamiyay fulinta go'aankii raisal-wasaaraha," 12/2/2017. http://cakaaranews.com/index.php/wararka-separator/wararka-degaanka/7150-x-d-sh-s-i-iyo-xukuumada-deegaanka-oo-go%25E2%2580%2599aamiyay-fulint%25E2%2580%25A6

[37]Caakara News, "MW CMC oo kulan soo dhawayn ah a qaatay shacabkii Oromada ahaa ee ku soo noqday deeganka" [President ʿAbdi hosted a welcome meeting for Oromo citizens who returned to the region], 12/4/2017. http://cakaaranews.com/index.php/wararka-separator/wararka-degaanka/7155-mw-cmc-oo-kulan-soo-dhawayn-ah-la-qaatay-shacabkii-oromada-ahaa-%25E2%2580%25A61/2

ment control and thus provided less leverage than ʕAbdi likely expected. Part of this was because returnees had alternate modes of legitimizing their investments beyond DDSI's reach, a point explored in subsequent chapters.

The contradictory perceptions about ʕAbdi's relationship with TPLF cadres raises a question for studies of patrimonial politics: How can the same people be both clients and patrons of each other? Understandings from economic-anthropological approaches are relevant: much as a borrower can gain power over a lender by taking a large loan, entrusting political stability to regional elites required constructing forms of mutual dependence across the federal system.[38] In order to secure Somali Region as a legitimate part of Ethiopia, the EPRDF had to entrust power to an ethnic Somali leadership. In the process, according to Jigjigans, federal elites essentially granted a significant degree of regional control to Somali political entrepreneurs in exchange for three returns. First, people point out that regional officials protect federal military elites' access to business niches, especially in black market currency and import-export businesses that provide goods to highland Ethiopia. Second, the EPRDF entrusted military activity to the Liyu Police—which some Jigjigans criticize as rescinding the federal military's exclusive control—in order to succeed in counterinsurgency against the ONLF. Third, the implementation of such "decentralization" and de-ethnicizing military tensions in the region is understood as calculated to improve Ethiopia's international image that had been increasingly tainted as Meles centralized power after 2005 and cracked down on political opposition. The first of these might be conceptualized as an "exchange," a relatively immediate material transaction. The other two are more time-dependent and require some ongoing cooperation that gives regional elites a degree of sway over federal decision-making regarding the region.

ʕAbdi's hold on regional power would in August 2018 result in a violent struggle to remove him. In the months after the Awaday killings, however, debates over what would happen, when it would happen, and what would result from ʕAbdi's removal ranged a gamut. While the EPRDF Executive Committee meetings continued in Addis Ababa in December 2017 and January 2018, many remained convinced that the Tigrayans would retain their hold on power—and if they did, it made little difference whether ʕAbdi stayed or went. "In America, they just passed a new gun law, right?" one Tigrayan man who used to carry out contracts with both SRS and federal governments asked me, referring to the passing of bump-stock legislation in the wake of the October 1 Las Vegas shootings. Without waiting for an answer, he continued:

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[38]The conceptualization draws on Maurer 2007 and Shipton 2007

"Some of the advocates of fewer gun controls say, 'It is not the gun that kills people; it is people who kill people.' Here, it is not ʿAbdi himself who kills people. It is the system.[39]

## 5.3  Scalar politics in the borderlands city

Diaspora-state interactions following the Awaday massacre revealed the diaspora not as a homogenous group of democratizers-in-the-wings, waiting for the opportunity to support reforms in Ethiopia, but as a fragmented, conflicted category of regional semi-citizens, with some rights (to investment, property owner-ship) but not others (formal political involvement), supporting a diversity of interests. The Awaday events deepened political divides between activist diaspora members who supported the administration and others who opposed it. Many investors in Jigjiga, who explicitly sought to remain as far from politics as possible, found themselves caught in the middle. Hundreds of diaspora activists put stakes on ʿAbdi's continuation as regional president, some evidently hoping that, as in the past, overt political support for the regime would translate into contracts, free land, and business licenses in the future.

The blurred boundaries between Somali and Oromo ethnicity came to haunt ʿAbdi's "Ogaden" admin-istration. Within two days after the conflict, DDSI shut down City Crown Hotel, accusing its owners—five Jarso brothers from Finland and the UK—of supporting expanded Oromo power over the regional political economy. Many interviewees saw the maneuver to close the hotel as a wrong-headed response to public claims that the Jarso were Oromo. The Hotel's owners and operators regarded themselves as Somalis and rejected suspicions of contacts with Oromos—let alone Oromo identity. City Crown was an urban landmark, a meeting space for Jigjiga's elites and one of the most common places that I visited when regional officials invited me to lunch, especially in 2015 and 2016 before several other high-end restaurants opened. The brothers reportedly spent 50 million birr (over the time of construction, around US \$2.5 million) for the ini-tial land and building costs. Additional funds were being spent on a parking lot and a wing with conference rooms and a gym (the gym equipment was stuck clearing customs in Tog Wajale) in 2017 before the hotel was shut down. The brothers who owned City Crown had not expressed unwavering support to ʿAbdi in the way that some returnees did. In 2016 and 2017, one of them described to me the corruption at the middle levels of regional government that they had to jump through to carry out their investment.

City Crown's closure was devastating to diaspora investors' trust in DDSI. Even people like Warsame

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[39]Field notes, 12/15/2017

who expressed support for ʿAbdi mentioned it with regard to their hesitation. As Warsame told me a few months after the event:

> There were two big businesses shut down—I don't know if you know. The Crown and another building in the city. Because of the sort of high state of security over here, I think a lot of people stay away from putting their eggs in one basket in Somali Regional State, because all it takes is for you to have some bad business contacts and for them to say something, and all your businesses can be shut down in a day. I mean, it doesn't happen to the extent that it used to, but a small rumor can... [ruin your business].[40]

Mahad was even more vehemently critical. City Crown's closure prompted him to reconsider his involvement in SRS, and he began to discuss divesting his assets.

> City Crown! You know what happened to him? The place is shut. So that's what happens. It's always temporary. Everything here is temporary. You could have a four-story building, business—and if something, for example, you don't have nothing, but somebody maybe of your clan had an argument with somebody in a higher rank—then that's it. You're done. It's very childish.[41]

In addition to signaling the untrustworthiness of the administration in relation to investment, the apparent clan-related motivation was worrying and typified the response of an increasingly belligerent administration.

As diaspora Ethiopian-Somalis spoke up abroad, power struggles to manage business and kinship connections and political activism intensified. Jidwaq in Minnesota met with Oromo leaders in late November 2017 and said that they were not going to just align themselves as Somalis against Ethiopia. Jidwaq in Jigjiga were then targeted because of their clan affiliation with protestors abroad. The clan name Jidwaq was used to mobilize meeting participants and to signal historical connections to Oromo and Oromized populations from which Ogaden were more geographically distant (though Ogaden and Jidwaq both fall within the Absame clan-subfamily). But this employment of clan-talk justified DDSI's suspicions and violent actions against Jidwaq in Jigjiga suspected to be sympathizers of the coalescing *Dulmi-Diid* opposition group (see above, Section 4.4). One commentator published the following news story in an online forum:

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[40]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017
[41]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017

In mid-December, Jidwaq community held an anti-Abdi Iley meeting in Minneapolis in which

they stated on Facebook live video that they are 'demanding justice', without elaborating.

Khadar Abdi, a local minister for Trade and Transportation among other officials are touring

in the United States of America to put down Jidwaq uprising against Abdi Iley.  Meanwhile,

the local regional administration stage-managed a pro-Abdi Iley Jidwaq people meeting in the

regional capital of Jigjiga, drastically escalating tensions between the local government and

Jidwaq clan. ...  The local government warned that their families back home would suffer se-

vere consequences if cooperating with Oromo people continued and have already forced Jidwaq

elders to defend President Abdi Iley against their sons in the diaspora on air.[42]

Numerous Jidwaq contacts in Jigjiga had family members arrested on suspicion of rebellion against DDSI.
According to participants, the stage-managed meeting of Jidwaq in Jigjiga was replete with protestations
against arresting people solely for clan ties to opposition leaders in diaspora, and expressions of support that
by necessity took on the hyperbole of DDSI discourse.[43]

Over the ensuing months, however, the dynamic was not simply one of diaspora opposition.  As it
became clear that Abiy Ahmed was the ascendant power at the federal level, DDSI regime supporters filed
into Jigjiga to publicly express their support for ꜥAbdi, and to repeat regime phrases about good governance
(*maamuulka suuban*).  A new pro-ꜥAbdi youth organization HEEGO printed thousands of shirts with Abiy
and ꜥAbdi on them.[44]  In June 2018, DDSI's media mouthpiece published a thank-you editorial to diaspora
DDSI supporters.

The HEEGO youth of the DDSI community outside of the country say, "DDSI's progress will

ever endure." (*Horumarka DDSI wuu waarayaa abid*)... The HEEGO youth of the DDSI com-

munity outside of the country held very high-level parties these weeks, in which they were

demonstrating support and defense of the SPDP and DDSI's civilian partisanship found in the

Justice Bureau and take pride in their region today, such as enduring development, peace and

good governance (*Maamulka Suuban*) that DDSI brought to the region and our leader born

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[42]"Tensions    rise    as    Somali    Region    as    Illey    dispatches    delegation    to    the    US,"    1/1/2018.
   https://www.somaliaonline.com/community/topic/81028-tensions-rise-as-somali-region-as-illey-dispatches-delegation-to-the-us/
[43]Field notes from talking to participants, December 2017.  Some of these participants were later arrested, evidently solely due to
   their clan affiliations and the actions of their relatives abroad.
[44]T-shirt, in author's possession

among Ethiopian-Somali population, the honorable President Abdi Mohamud Omar."[45]

A number of diaspora returnees I knew began to stay away from Jigjiga; I would see them in Hargeisa, Dire Dawa, and Addis Ababa, and they would tell me that they would be coming to Jigjiga soon—within a few weeks, ꜥAbdi would be removed. Expectations of his removal were voiced regularly from October 2017 onwards, with increasing regularity once Abiy Ahmed took the premiership in Addis Ababa.

The change at the federal level wrought a fascinating shift in diaspora-homeland relations: Somalis had been returning to Jigjiga from abroad for years; in May 2018 I began for the first time to meet Oromo diaspora returnees in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. Yet even as reforms at the center made it safe for Oromos and others to begin returning, it appeared perhaps more dangerous than ever for Somalis to come to Jigjiga unless they were shouting the praises of the regional dictator.[46]

For many, the eviction of Oromos prompted reflections more broadly about the structure of access to opportunity in a nationally- and racially-delimited world. DDSI's eviction of Oromos paralleled the massive eviction of Ethiopians from Saudi Arabia that was unfolding in 2017, prompting one investor to reflect:

> "Imagine: they removed all the Oromo from Somali Region within three days. Even when the Saudis sent back the Ethiopians, they gave them three months—and they gave an extension. Imagine if all the countries where Somalis stay kicked the Somalis out. What would become of this region?"[47]

Losing access to spaces beyond borders was indeed a haunting prospect for Jigjiga's businesspeople.

## 5.4 Life goes on amidst the fray

While regular disturbances have plagued the borders between Ethiopia's ethnic states for years, the Awaday massacre effected an immediate and dramatic reshaping of the spatio-temporal landscape. In a practical sense, the space-time of the northern part of SRS warped. Numerous people in Jigjiga reported to me their terror of traveling through Awaday. A result was that for them, Dire Dawa—administratively

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[45] Cakaara News, "Mahadcelin kusocota Jaaliyadka DDSI ee dalka dibadiisa" [Sending thanks to the DDSI communities in diaspora], 06/10/2018. http://www.cakaaranews.com/index.php/wararka-separator/wararka-degaanka/7777-mahadcelin-kusocota-jaaliyadka-ddsi-ee-dalka-dibadiisa.html. Note: ꜥAbdi's name is transcribed as anglicized in the original article.

[46] (See Bashir Farah, "Why I am not coming back home to Ethiopia after 14 years in exile," 7/11/2018. https://allafrica.com/stories/201807110536.html)

[47] Field notes, 9/17/2017

separate from Somali and Oromia, but with strong ties to both—suddenly became twice as far from Jigjiga as it had been previously. Prior to September, people would travel the 2.5-3 hour ride along the tarmac road through Harar, Awaday and Haramaya on a regular basis. There are SRS officials who work in Jigjiga but whose families live in Dire Dawa, and who commute for the week to work. The daily 25-minute flights from Jigjiga to Dire Dawa sold out; people complained of a price hike of nearly 50% on airline tickets from 600 to 900 birr (which was also influenced by the 15% hike in the birr-to-dollar exchange rate in October). Those who could not afford to fly, or could not afford to wait for a flight, took the buses now traveling the approximately 5-hour ride along the bumpy gravel road via Tuli Guled and Dambal. Even this was not without risk: Tuli Guled remains a contested region, and after the events at Awaday conflict between Gerri and Jarso flared. Through mid-2018, rumors circulated through Jigjiga about travelers between Jigjiga and Dire Dawa who were shot at or captured by Oromia security forces.

Yet amidst insecurity, in this newly warped space-time, and as many perceived collapsing government authority, life went on for most Jigjigans much as it had before. The chapters that follow document patterns of exchange and redistribution through which people construct stability amidst unpredictable circumstances in the borderlands capital. Part III of the dissertation weaves together three themes, one of which is foregrounded in each chapter.

## Theme 1: Border exchange and urban redistribution

For a few days after September 12, Jigjiga's business was eerily quiet. No lines of honking trucks and *bajaj*s stacked up at the central roundabout. Border trade came to a virtual standstill. Faisal, from Ohio, reported on September 17th that he had been to Tog Wajale and all of the businesspeople there were complaining about lack of trade. "Almost all of their customers are Oromos.... One guy told me that the customers used to be lined up every day, but for the past five days he didn't sell a single thing—not one single thing!" In his view, Somalilanders were holding ʿAbdi Iley more responsible for the crisis than they were the Oromos who had allegedly killed Somalis in Awaday: "The people in Wajale are not even mad at the Oromos; they're mad at the Somali Region government for taking away the Oromos."[48] I visited Wajale the following day, and a Jarso trader there told me that the trade had "cooled a lot." "One week ago about 100 cars per day came from Oromia; now not one is coming from there."[49]

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[48]Field notes, 9/17/2017
[49]Field notes, 9/18/2017

Yet trade with Jigjiga continued, particularly the small-scale "contraband" trade carried on primarily by women, the subject of the next chapter. When I visited Wajale on September 18th, women trading perfumes and clothing were passing out their goods for male passengers to carry, as usual (though the bus rank was far less busy than usual).[50] Over subsequent months I observed a tendency for Somali women to continue their high degrees of mobility, riding buses through eastern Oromia while many diaspora returnees and Somali men were terrified of being caught in Awaday. Neither DDSI nor any other government had ever been the centerpiece of their futures. In fact, all most governments had done is stop them from moving and extract tax that limited their profits.

**Theme 2: Ethnicity and class in the urban economy**

Second, the Oromo exodus from Jigjiga drew together local points of discontent with what many local political leaders perceived as a major economic mistake. In Jigjiga, Oromos provided the bulk of manual labor; nearly every household that could afford a permanent house worker kept an Oromo *shaqaleh* (maid). Construction and repair were largely the domains of Oromos, who worked any job and for low wages (one diaspora businessman estimated that the average price of daily labor in Jigjiga's hospitality industry rose from 140 to 170 birr after Awaday). Yet the Oromos' eviction was perceived to have much farther-reaching ramifications. One local business owner was allegedly jailed for saying in a semi-public setting that ʿAbdi Iley should have accepted *mag* rather than evict Oromos from Somali Region. In private, this man's voice of dissent is joined by many others. "And the mistake he made"—Kemal tells me in his lengthy narration of regional political history—"a big mistake, big mistake, big mistake"—here he wipes his hands repeatedly as if to cleanse them—"was to kick out the Oromo.... If he had just settled down and thought about it, maybe he would have chosen more wisely.... That is not what is needed in Ethiopia right now. It is not the way that Hailemariam needs. So you see him now, he is saying, 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry; come back, come back, come back.'" (Here Kemal makes a slight bowing, as if to a higher power.)[51]

The sudden enforcement of federalism's national-territorial divisions dredged up historical views that contrasted with the colonial and postcolonial narrative about a separate Somali nation. "Somali and Oromo in this area have been living together and mixing with each other for hundreds of years," some observed. "It's going to take more than one event to change that."[52] Among other things the eastern Oromo and Somalis

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[50]Field notes, 9/18/2017
[51]Field notes, 12/4/2017
[52]Field notes, 9/17/2017

shared Islam. At the border, a friend of mine asked whether Somaliland's imams had discussed the Oromo issue, and we were told that they had warned everyone not to harm their Oromo co-religionists. In Jigjiga, my friend said, the imam said nothing about Oromos and just talked about the end of time.[53]

Yet such views of Oromo-Somali mutuality, even while framed in terms of co-religion and ancient connections, are woven together with demand for labor and the cultural construction of class in the borderlands city. In Chapter 7, I revisit postcolonial history specifically through the lens of ethnicity, class, and power as manifest in Jigjiga's urban geography, analyzing the multiscalar dynamics that shape the city's urban fabric.

## Theme 3: Obligations, debts, and mutual futures

Even if Jigjiga's imam did not call Somalis to account for participating in ethnic discrimination, many humane merchants lamented the eviction and the violence in Jigjiga that accompanied it. Yakob told me that he saw things in front of his shop that made him feel ashamed. "It's like when we were kids and we saw a snake—everyone would grab a stone and run after the snake. So when people would see an Oromo, they would all join in chasing that man. If even one person stood up to them and said, 'Leave him,' that person would be granted paradise. But people just joined them."[54] The slowdown hammered home a broader point about the borderlands market: exchanges in Jigjiga and across the Tog Wajale border relied on broader forms of mutuality, especially responsibilities to fellow (eastern, Muslim) Ethiopians and to Allah. Theoretically, it raises a key point about the relationships that enable goods and finance to flow across borders—and about not only the material exchanges, but the debts and obligations that are elements of globalization as well.

The third theme is a focus on how people construct mutual dependence across kinship, state, and economic domains—how debts and other obligations are forged and negotiated. Amidst the state order's instability, people come to rely on other ways of configuring their responsibilities, of protecting body and property. In Jigjiga, the fallout as ꜤAbdi's regime crumbled between September 2017 and August 2018, revealed starkly how much people relied on networks of debt and kinship responsibilities to ensure their futures. As the regional state's legitimacy crumbled, some of the *maalin-taajir*s who had relied on it for their economic security fled. Diaspora investors were an important test case: those who had avoided reliance on DDSI and had forged their own social connections had little fear for their property.

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[53]Field notes, 9/18/2017
[54]Field notes, 9/17/2017

## 5.5 Uncertainty and unraveling authority

In focusing primarily on urban-scale dynamics, the remainder of this work puts aside some crucial ongoing contestations of space in the eastern borderlands that are matters of life and death for eastern Ethiopians. Ethnicity, politicized in a variety of ways over the past centuries, came back with a vengeance as rumors circulated of Oromo mass graves outside of Jigjiga and of massacres of Somalis inside Oromia Region. It was reported that Somalis who had lived in western Hararghe for over a century in peace and had adopted Oromo culture were newly targeted by Oromo nationalists as an Oromo Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, ascended to national power.[55] Oromo news outlets accused "armed groups from the Somali state" of "laying siege" to areas of western Oromia, and other reports accused federal forces of suspiciously withdrawing from areas in which violence had taken place, tacitly enabling cycles of reprisals.[56]

One public response posted below an article detailing these dynamics points to the interplay of these large-scale, nation-making and nation-breaking issues with their mundane enactments in Ethiopia's eastern borderlands (the mundane events on which I focus): "Just as the Wayaane [TPLF] planned," the commenter asserts,

> they isolated the Somali region with oppression and tyranny which the world have even seen. In 2017, no place in this earth was worse than Somali Zone. If a nursing mother brings a small can of powder milk and travels with a bus, the evil Wayaane-controlled Liyu police will open [it] and put their hands in the powder and the innocent mother will just throw away.[57]

The anecdote about the mother bringing powdered milk on a bus is not a random example of government abuses of power. More than any specific event, the issue of women's access to border trade for daily essentials is a topic of popular debate that brings into view the core tensions between government regulation of the economy and modes of social regulation.

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[55]Abdirizak Bindhe, "Mass Massacres of Somalis inside Oromia Region, yet justice has to be served." Jigjiga Herald online, 13 Jan. 2018. https://www.jigjigaherald.com/2018/01/13/mass-massacres-somalis-inside-oromia-region-yet-justice-served/

[56]Opride, "Several dozens killed in fresh communal violence in Ethiopia's Oromia state," Opride online, 18 Dec. 2017. https://www.opride.com/2017/12/18/dozens-killed-fresh-communal-violence-ethiopia-oromia/

[57]Comment response to "Tensions rise as Somali Region as Illey dispatches delegation to the US," 1/1/2018. https://www.somaliaonline.com/community/topic/81028-tensions-rise-as-somali-region-as-illey-dispatches-delegation-to-the-us/

# Part II

# The Borderlands City

# Part II Introduction

"A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants." (Anzaldúa 2012, 25)

"The bourgeoisie and the capitalist system thus experience great difficulty in mastering what is at once their product and the tool of their mastery, namely space. They find themselves unable to reduce practice (the practico-sensory realm, the body, social-spatial practice) to their abstract space, and hence new, spatial, contradictions arise and make themselves felt. Might not the spatial chaos engendered by capitalism, despite the power and rationality of the state, turn out to be the system's Achilles' heel?" (Lefebvre 1991, 63)

Narratives about globalization tend to agree that the world has become more interconnected. They often disagree sharply as to *what* exactly has become interconnected. Clearly, infrastructural, telecommunications, and trade and financial links connect places across the globe's surface more immediately than they did in the past. Amidst these interconnections, divergences have also deepened: people are increasingly aware of the vast inequalities in wealth and power across the globe. Waves of ultra-nationalist, racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric indicate a rejection of mutual responsibilities and more generally struggles over the boundaries of obligation and shared futures. How do these interconnections and exchanges coexist with such disavowals and disconnections? How do they influence each other in particular times and places? The answers have much to do with the social production of space and time.

As Westbrook argues, "an understanding of globalization based on motion across (formerly significant) political borders" is inadequate. Globalization is not only trade—it is not only material connection. Markets are interconnected even when they do not directly exchange things, through struggles to forge a global jurisdictional sphere for private property rights. "The ability to compete, as opposed to actual sales, disciplines prices and thereby creates a single market context, or what in other circumstances would be called a world" (Westbrook 2004, 10). Yet even in the context of supranational market culture underpinned by "faith in the

institutions of money and property" (Westbrook 2004, 12), numerous worlds coexist, interpenetrate, and reconfigure each other. As I have argued, the globalized world that Jigjigans inhabit is not the same world that Norway-passport-holding diaspora Somalis inhabit; their spheres of opportunity are vastly different.

Geopolitical borders are important elements articulating not only national-territorial space, but also the worlds of possibility that different people inhabit, structuring their interactions, their potentials for meeting and sharing, the definitions of comrade and stranger. They are not reflections of already-existing nations or cultures, but are sites at which human activities work to manage relationships, responsibilities, exchanges. Hillier and Hanson (1984, 9) posit "the most fundamental fact of space" to be "that through its ordering of space the man-made physical world is already a social behaviour. It constitutes (not merely represents) a form of order in itself: one which is created for social purposes, whether by design or accumulatively, and through which society is both constrained and recognisable." Space, in other words, is not an "external projection" of existing social and mental processes, but rather itself a pattern-forming dimension of society similar to, and interacting with, kinship systems, mythologies, and forms of exchange. "Space is, in short, everywhere a function of the forms of social solidarity." Borders, walls, roads, and buildings—the built environment—do not just constitute sets of objects, but are sites of the transformation of space—and thus transformations in solidarity (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 22; 1).

In accounts of contemporary global capitalism, cities and borders are often envisioned as working at odds. Cities are nodes of integration (Friedmann 1986; Massey 2007; Taylor 2004), even if their internal geographies are wrought with the "contradictions" of class polarization and social fragmentation (Caldeira 2000; Murray 2011). Borders, on the other hand, are commonly thought of as strictly divisions and containers. Yet analyses of border cities have increasingly challenged this binary and shown how border cities encompass social and economic processes that, in different contexts, work in diverse ways to break down or reinforce such separations (Arreola and Curtis 1993; Banerjee and Chen 2013; Joenniemi and Sergunin 2011; Nugent 2012; Yeh 2016).

The chapters that follow conceptualize the borderlands city—surrounded by geopolitical borders, transected by class and ethnic boundaries—beginning with processes and forms of solidarity that take shape in the space around it. The prohibited, the forbidden, the contraband, emerge from struggles over broader spatial belonging in the region. As they occupy the city in ways that officials perceive to be "chaotic," they open a horizon for a different politics of place, of possibility, and of responsibility.

# Chapter 6

# Contraband urbanity: border struggles, rural ethics and the organization of urban trade

> As urban democracy threatened the privileges of the new ruling class, that class prevented it from being born. How? By expelling from the urban centre and the city itself the proletariat, by destroying "urbanity."
> —Henri Lefebvre, *The Right to the City*

Three wiry middle-aged women drop plastic bags of cosmetics on the tile floor of a small supermarket in downtown Jigjiga, glad to be rid of the weight. The store owner, a diaspora returnee from London, hands over a wad of bills, the goods' cost plus a small standard commission for a half-day's work. The three disappear out the door into the late-morning heat of eastern Ethiopia's dusty plains. Though they do not have passports, the women have just brought the goods from across the Somaliland border 70 kilometers east. Up until now, the cosmetics have been "contraband," though at this point they will be subject to value-added tax (VAT) mark-up. Every day, thousands of women board minibus taxis to bring small bags of mainly Asian-manufactured consumer goods from the border at Tog Wajale to supply Jigjiga's urban market. "Eastern Ethiopia—I mean, it's fed by smuggling," says Mahad, the returnee from Scotland. "Piece by piece—a slow trickle." [1]

Before 2015, a number of Jigjiga's current business elites were themselves large-scale cross-border traders, as were their parents, some based in rural villages rather than in the regional capital. Contraband trade has long been a source of wealth in Jigjiga and surrounding areas. [2] Today's businesspeople and officials frequently reference with pride their roots in contraband trade: "The contraband traders raised us up," asserts Bashe, a former contraband trader. "We—you know, mostly Somalis did contraband," Aden reflects with reference to the imperial era but hints of continued sympathies. "Tax is like—they don't believe in tax." [3] Yet before 2015, the trade was not as gendered as it is today. To be sure, women traded across Ethiopia's eastern borders, but by all accounts it is only under the current administration that a business

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[1] Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017
[2] See Thompson (2018a, 2018b)
[3] Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017

operator, when asked by a foreign researcher, "Who supplies your goods?" would be likely to respond simply, "Women"—and to mean that supply comes through small-scale traders smuggling goods piece by piece from Tog Wajale.

Contraband's gendering is one facet of a broader transformation in the dynamics of social control over wealth creation—over work and accumulation—in the city of Jigjiga and the surrounding borderlands. At stake in the very definition of trade as contraband is the struggle to define who can control material flows that cross borders and intersect in the city. At first glance, the fact that people refer to untaxed cross-border trade goods as contraband (Somali: *kontarabaan*) seems to suggest that state efforts to regulate this sector are succeeding. Such a view makes women's work in Jigjiga appear precarious: small-scale trade that is currently carried on primarily by women lies at the boundaries of law. Starting from this point, I could analyze contrabandists' occupation of urban space as a mode of "life as politics" in which traders, though precarious individually, overwhelm state efforts at contraband regulation (Bayat 2012; Bhimji 2010). In Sassen's (2013, 68) words, the city becomes "a space where powerlessness becomes complex and in so doing enables the powerless to make a history and to make the political." The correlate of this view of the city as a space that can redefine broader power relations is that controlling economic flows across borders is not sufficient for successful regional economic regulation: whoever controls the urban market has some sway over demand for trade products and over the social acceptability of trade flows across borders in today's globalized market. Cities and borders are interconnected sites where struggles to control and benefit from trade and finance flows play out in daily activity.

Yet I argue that viewing Jigjiga's contraband-filled marketplace (Fig. 6.1) as a site in which the power of collective activity defines the boundaries of economic regulation suggests something with broader significance than urban ungovernability. In urban market interactions, there is a sense in which it is *not* women's work that becomes precarious and is defended only through practices of occupying space. Rather, women's work places the laws that govern the economy in a precarious social position by calling into question the legitimacy of government regulation generally. The reason why contraband has become nearly synonymous with "women" in Jigjiga is that while male border traders are frequently arrested, the work of the nation's grandmothers, mothers and sisters is *more socially acceptable than the law that bars people from border trade* (or makes them jump through administrative hoops to obtain expensive licensing, which for an illiterate and largely cash-poor population is the same thing). The moral valuation of contraband trade above the

law is a hotly contested locus of state-building efforts and a site of contention over rights to the accumulation of wealth and power through trade.

What is at stake here, more than gendered patterns of opportunity, is the urban economy's very constitution through processes that Simone (2004a, 2) calls "scalar recomposition." It is a question of how people fix certain social meanings (including understandings of law as well as race, ethnicity and nation) in space in ways that empower some trans-spatial connections while containing others (Cox 2013; Maurer 2007; Smith 1992). For goods and investments to flow into Ethiopia, there must be some protection of certain people's property rights to incentivize and even to enable exchange. Property rights in turn are a foundation of value: property with insecure tenure is not likely to be valued highly either in terms of people's desire to possess it or in terms of desire's correlation in monetary valuation. Property rights are one set of social relations defining the boundaries of market exchange, both in terms of items included in exchange (in virtually all cultures, some sacred goods are excluded from markets) and in terms of the spatial extent of different property regimes. Jigjiga, like any borderland trade city, is a site of economic connection between Ethiopia and the world "outside," a transition zone between "outside" and "inside" modes of defining property rights and of regulating markets. At geographical borders between regimes of value, it is perhaps clearer than at other sites that the economy is not a pre-existing, unitary sphere of activity, but a multiplicity of markets with distinct organizational patterns, undergirded by a variety of cultural and state underpinnings for exchange and monetization of certain goods and services (Abolafia 1998; Callon 1998; Mitchell 2002). Semi-distinct but interlocking markets differentially include people and empower them to make their own space.

In Jigjiga, social relations premised on what merchants frame as a "rural" egalitarian tradition tied to nomadism constitute a framework for recognizing ownership rights that do not directly align with officials' efforts to construct markets that they can control. While combined dynamics of merchant capital and efforts at trade regulation shaped urbanization in the region (as argued in Chapter 2), a practical outcome of urbanism within such a cultural context is something repeatedly observed in my study: the spatial concentration of people who can demand a share of relatives' and friends' profits, voicing cultural claims to collective wealth. This in turn reveals that resisting government efforts to control surplus value is not merely a strategy of individual profit-maximization; paying less tax and retaining more profit is essential to redistributive practices that maintain social bonds (Simone 2004b). The assertion that Somalis "don't believe in tax" is not only a cultural stereotype, but rather an expression of resistance to government claims to a share of ex-

Figure 6.1: Vendors sell "contraband" goods at illegal stalls in Jigjiga's central market, June 2018. Photo by author.

change value in return for protecting property rights and providing other social services. In eastern Ethiopia, new efforts to impose trade taxes and more effectively govern the economy are seen as tied up with the new state-capital alliance that has emerged since 2010, a system under which taxation only appears to benefit the wealthy while closing down the poor's capacity to engage in mobility and trade beyond the city.

In the city, the contrabandist has joined the rural nomad as a culture icon Jigjigans mobilize discursively against the inequalities of power and wealth created by heavy-handed regulation. This chapter focuses on the structure of border trade flows and their relation to opportunity in the urban economy, but a thread of national significance runs through this discussion of wealth distributions. Even as Somalis dominate the city, when contesting regulation, Somali merchants often frame their rights in terms of a simplified binary between what "Somali" stands for—open markets, the rural, egalitarianism—and what "Ethiopian" suggests—controlled economies, the urban, hierarchical society. The glorification of contraband imbues the confrontation between regulators and traders with additional ideological facets: ("true") Somali versus Ethiopian, rural versus urban, egalitarian versus hierarchical. While such assertions about "rural" or "nomadic" ethics elide historical ties between rural and urban space, they are a means by which people seek to enact egalitarian values in urban space in ways that suggest possibilities for future democratic control over the mechanisms of trans-spatial connection and wealth redistribution. At present, however, these practices of collective wealth regulation appear merely to exacerbate inequalities because the poor redistribute wealth while the rich accumulate it.

In what follows, I explore struggles over regulating trade and mobility at border checkpoints and in the urban market. Understanding how the practices of border trade and its regulation produce distributions of wealth and opportunity entails focusing on the physical sites where struggles over the control of wealth-creating circulations play out day after day. The border and the urban marketplace are intensely interconnected sites where these struggles continuously remake the landscape of opportunity. The types and degrees of regulation and freedom that structure Jigjiga's relational position in the Ethiopian political economy and circuits of global trade and finance are made in everyday interactions at these sites.

## 6.1 From state space to urban opportunity

Ever since its permanent establishment as an Ethiopian garrison town in the 1890s, Jigjiga has functioned as a node from which people engage in both ("contraband") cross-border trade and in regulating this trade.

Trade flows were partially shielded from Ethiopian taxation by British Somaliland administrators during the early 20th century as part of their efforts to protect the "traditional" cross-border livestock economy (Thompson 2018b). Though there were Somalis involved not only in border trade itself, but also in efforts to regulate it (working with highland Habesha officials in Jigjiga), as early as 1920 the division between "Somali" trade and "Ethiopian" regulation and taxation was taking on ethnic dimensions (Thompson 2018a). By the middle of the century it appears that material flows of goods across the borders underpinned a sense of Somaliness as agents of trade shaped the emergence of pan-Somali nationalism (Geshekter 1985). As late as the mid-2000s the "open border" between Ethiopia and Somaliland resulted in interconnections facilitating "building activity, extensive development of information technologies and vibrant cross-border trade" (Ciabarri 2010, 81). Up until the 1990s the open border and the ethnic overtones of cross-border trade that supplied the city shaped urban segregation: Somali Market (*Suuq Soomaali*) in the south stood for the economy, mobility and trade; Habesha Market in the north, according to Somali residents, stood for politics and administration.

Both nomadic pastoralism and fluctuating border trade, though articulating in Jigjiga's market, have consistently proven difficult to regulate, and government attempts to control them tended to reinforce ethnic divisions. Trade could shift away from the town into alternate circuits when pressured. The history told by locals is one of Ethiopian state agents versus Somali pastoralists and contraband traders, state power as distinct from economic power. Attempts to impose government regulation were complicated by the fact that in lieu of sufficient transportation routes and government presence in the Ogaden region to Jigjiga's southeast, unlicensed trade was and remains periodically—especially during droughts or wet-season flooding—the only means of supply for rural pastoralists. The general failure to construct state authority in the region is not simply attributable to entrenched ethnic animosities; rather, the realm of politics is delegitimized relative to the economy through a discourse of indigeneity that pits Ethiopian highlanders against local Somalis.

Jigjiga's urban space appears an estuary where a contraband cross-border economy and projects of regulatory state-building mix. Traders argue that once goods enters the town, they are safe. Until recently, Jigjiga's merchant class held their wealth in dollars and Somali shillings as well as Ethiopian birr, reflecting functional market integration with Somaliland. Jigjiga's specific forms of capital accumulation were tied to cross-border clan networks and to middleman positions between rural producers and outside worlds—including the Ethiopian highlands as well as global markets. While taxes were seen as a mechanism

to divert profits away from Somalis into "Ethiopian" coffers, evading government controls was a socially legitimate path to wealth accumulation.

ʿAbdi Iley's ascent to the regional presidency in 2010 initiated a re-drawing of boundaries between politics and the economy, between the Ethiopian state and Somali society. As ʿAbdi negotiated with the federal government to remove federal figures from the region and Somalize political control, state power and economic power began to intertwine. The shift was felt most directly in new forms of regulation at geopolitical borders. It is also observable in the landscape of accumulation in Jigjiga's urban space. In 2015 ʿAbdi's administration established an all-Somali militia to patrol the border from Dawale (Djibouti) to Hartisheikh (Southeast of Wajale) and began paying informants along the borders to tell officials when large contraband loads passed through. Federal currency laws were implemented, and people arrested for possessing non-Ethiopian currency. When the main border control agents were federal military officers, the social (ethnic, legal) boundary between Somali border trader and Ethiopian law enforcement was relatively clear, while the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland was blurred. Somalis could go to Hargeisa and back with minimal checks (or simply travel through the bush), and Somalis in the security forces would even help them, as former contraband traders recount. When regional officers and Liyu Police (paramilitary) took over border control functions, the border suddenly became a hard division between Ethiopian Somalis and their co-ethnics across the line. Jigjiga's wealth, formerly controlled in part by contraband traders, diverted into the hands of government-allied elites.

Though the former regional administrations from 1995-2009 were Somali-led, there had been some distinction between Ethiopian interests and the regional interests represented by the Somali leadership. Under ʿAbdi Iley's tenure since 2010, border trade became a realm of state activity that tied together the interests of Somali and Habesha (Tigrayan and Amhara) elites connected to the federal security apparatus. Tales about a much-resented stereotypical figure, the Tigrayan elite contrabandist, reveal the extent to which Jigjiga's residents feel that the regional economy has been effectively colonized by highland interests. Narratives abound of Tigrayan military elites carrying contraband in government pickup trucks from Wajale to Addis Ababa, passing Liyu Police and Federal Military checkpoints without being stopped.

One constant amidst these shifts (at least for those without government connections) is taxation: the Customs and Revenue Authority remains in federal hands, and businesspeople describe import tax as prohibitively high. "It's brutal, man," is how Mahad describes the process of importing. The import duty is as

high or higher than the value of the machinery he is trying to import, "And that's only the duty—the tax. But of course, you'd have to ship it to Berbera, transport from there to Tog Wajale, come back and forth, and documents, and this and that and the other thing. You're talking about a good few hundred thousand birr."[4] Simply crossing the border from Somaliland, cars at least double in price. High taxes were always a factor driving traders into illicit circuits, but with a Somali state apparatus controlling the borders, government-connected importers can now control the market by obtaining either licenses to become the sole provider of a product or licenses to import select foodstuffs and consumer goods tax-free to specific locations in Ethiopia. The first is an avenue for exclusion: Says Warsame, "even if I wanted to pay all my taxes, anything that the government wants, I could still not bring in a Samsung TV through the border without doing it illegally."[5] One of ʿAbdi's relatives has a monopoly on that market (and brings LG TVs, not Samsung). The second offers inroads for capitalists, as explored below and in the following chapter. Licenses for tax-free goods are frequently given to regime clients, including both large-scale licenses for importing to highland Ethiopia and small-scale cross-border trade licenses issued in accordance with Ministry of Trade & Industry Directive No. 1/2002. [6] The capacity to bring goods tax-free with a license gives traders a clear market advantage, and enables people who have them to attract investors when they do not have capital themselves.

At the core of these shifts, new patterns of spatial-social (dis)connection both reflect new strategies of rule and emerge from the changing intersection between ethnic and political-economic divisions. Lefebvre famously conceptualizes the city as time inscribed in space, "a projection of society on the ground" embodying the rhythms of the times in which it is constructed. From this viewpoint, it is not surprising that replacing Habesha border agents with Somali militiamen has paralleled a breakdown in urban segregation: the borders that are observable in the urban landscape and felt by Jigjiga's traders are not strictly the Habesha-Somali separation that was felt in the city's previous north-south division. While remnants of ethnic divisions persist, class boundaries, the distinction between government elites and people without political connections are increasingly relevant.

Struggles over access to border trade and struggles over opportunities to accumulate wealth in urban space are deeply intertwined. It is not only the Somaliland border, however, that has relevance to the organization of urban opportunity. Other factors to consider include the other borders that demarcate Somali-

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[4]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017
[5]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017
[6]2002 Ethiopian Calendar is 2009/2010 on the Gregorian Calendar

Ethiopia from the highland markets with which Jigjiga trades (most notably, Harar and Addis Ababa), and the urban development boundary itself—the official demarcation between urban and rural space, though this boundary will be treated more directly in the next chapter. In order to understand their impact on markets, ethics, and identities in Jigjiga, we must visit the borders themselves and analyze their patterns of differentiating flows of goods and people that circulate through the borderlands city.

## 6.2   The borders of Somali-Ethiopia

As former distinctions between ethnicized spheres of activity have become blurred and replaced by a political-class takeover of the economy, it has become more clear that—to paraphrase Balibar (2009, 204)—the working of the border (especially at security checkpoints where the border is policed) constitutes or "produces" the Ethiopian-Somali as a social type, and Somali-Ethiopia as a socio-political space. The theory and practice of border enforcement today determine the condition of being Somali in Ethiopia: virtually, the category of Somali is dissolved; there are no longer generic Somalis, because there are Ethiopian-Somalis who are supposed to be less "Somali" (that is, anarchic, democratic, entrepreneurial, forthright, etc.) than Somalilanders and Somalian Somalis.[7] Border controls regulating the inflows of contraband goods and non-Ethiopian Somalis are legitimated as protecting locals' place in the economy against the threat of non-Ethiopian Somali encroachment, but the borders' effects as felt by Jigjiga's urban traders reveal how controls on mobility work to marginalize them and limit opportunity. To be Ethiopian-Somali, in other words, is not to have the freedom of being Somali or the political status of being fully Ethiopian.

In this section, I develop an ethnography of transit across borderlands space. The approach, following Mezzadra and Neilson's (2013) "border as method" framework, is not simply to compare instances of bordering, but to highlight the mutual implications and consonances as well as differences and dissonances between techniques of bordering encountered as one transits from the international frontier with Somaliland into the heart of Ethiopia. I first identify the physical spaces at which borders are enforced, demonstrating the abundance of border sites in the region. Second, I examine modes of interaction between travelers and officials at these checkpoints, demonstrating how geographies, identities, and social networks become intertwined at borders. Third, I examine observed reactions of travelers to checkpoint interactions. Viewing

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[7]This difference in behavior was frequently observed by people coming from Somaliland. In Somaliland, people talk as loudly as they want, about whatever they want. In one informant's words, as soon as one crosses into Ethiopia at Wajale, "it's as if a soldier gets in the car with you."

the relationship between space, people, and goods as a relational space comprising a *borderscape*, I highlight the subjectivities and struggles that take shape around the lines between inclusion and exclusion in the Ethiopian political economy.

**Locating the borders of Somali-Ethiopia**

While a number of current theorists tout the proliferation of borders and their shift away from geopolitical borderlines (Ferme 2004; Menjívar 2014; Tazzioli 2018), relatively few studies have attempted to physically map and document the operations of borders across space in a systematic way. While in Jigjiga I frequently traveled by bus and carefully documented the locations of checkpoints and observed dynamics along the main transport routes from the Somaliland border to Harar (and thence, less frequently, on to Addis Ababa) and Dire Dawa (and thence, once, to Djibouti and back). These transits entail crossing multiple types of borders that surround Jigjiga: international geopolitical borders (at Tog Wajale and Dawale), subnational geopolitical divisions (checkpoints near the Somali-Oromia regional boundary at Babile, Kara Marda, outside Dire Dawa and Asaba Tafari), and trade checkpoints that correspond not to geopolitical divisions but only to regulation along major trade arteries (Magalo Qaran, Awash). Figure 6.2 shows the border sites at which I conducted participant-observation and recorded extensive notes. Due to intensive checks at borders and soldiers' suspicions about conducting research activities, I rely on field notes recorded discreetly during or immediately after transit.

**Transit 1: to Wajale and back.** A typical bus transit from Jigjiga to Tog Wajale takes a little less than one hour. At one, or sometimes two checkpoints, the bus stops for a moment as a soldier steps on board and looks at the passengers, specifically checking for young men attempting to migrate overseas via Somaliland. Only occasionally will the soldier check documents. At the border itself, a stream of people travel back and forth across the bridge over the muddy streambed (*tog*) that marks the border (see Figures 6.3-6.4). In the dry season, they simply walk across the trash-filled streambed. People—other than foreigners (such as me)—show no documents (even I have rarely had my passport stamped unless traveling on to Hargeisa). Ethiopian nationals purchase goods on the Somaliland side, where a larger market has sprouted in response to Ethiopian-based demand. Somalis are Somalis at the border—not Somalilanders or Ethiopians. Heading eastward, the ease of transit continues all the way to Hargeisa. I have traveled with Ethiopian Somalis who receive no passport stamp and even show no documents at checkpoints, simply telling officials their origins
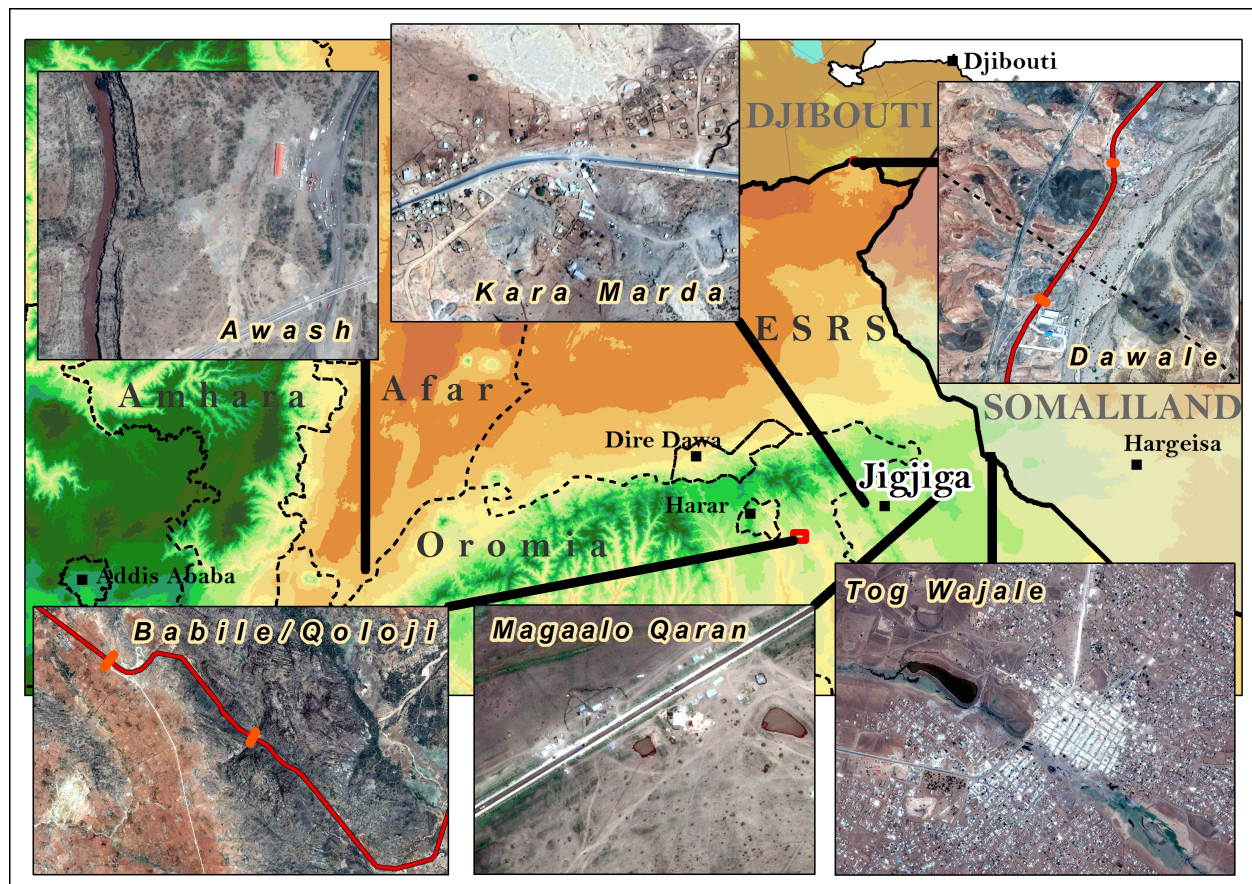
Figure 6.2: Map of main contraband checkpoints on main roads in eastern Ethiopia during fieldwork, all of which were observed at least once in the course of study. During research, there were no major checkpoints west of Awash, which is where the large-scale import-export route via Djibouti joins the main "contraband" route from Harar on the main highway westward to Addis Ababa.

and clan affiliations. Once when I transited with Yakob, who did get his passport stamped, he shared a laugh with officials at every checkpoint from Wajale to Hargeisa over his having done everything so "officially."

Transit in the opposite direction is a harsh jolt of the border's reality when compared to the eastward journey. The symbolism distinguishing Ethiopia from Somaliland begins at the west end of Tog Wajale, where a prominent Orthodox church next to the highway visibly marks the territory's connection to millennia of highland Christian civilization. Within sight of the church, the first checkpoint west of Wajale focuses on passport and nationality documents as well as foreign currency, but as long as guards are in a good mood, there is not thorough checking for contraband goods. Field notes from a trip to Wajale in 2016 detail procedures at this checkpoint:

At the first border checkpoint, just leaving Tog Wajale, we all got out of the minibus and stood

Figure 6.3: Tog Wajale from above. Imagery from Google Earth.

in line to be checked. The soldiers just patted us down and took a look in our bags, and then

we climbed back aboard and continued the journey towards Jigjiga. There was one minor

checkpoint after that first one [passengers did not disembark], and at one point a police truck

stopped us just to take a look inside.

Despite assuring me that the officials know him, the driver during this particular journey, clothed as a sheikh,

breathed with relief—" *bism-Illah al-Raḥman, al-Raḥim*"—every time we cleared a checkpoint without

incident.

   The first checkpoint is easily passed compared to the infamous site where Somali-Ethiopia's border is

felt. My notes from 2016 continue by detailing my first experience with the infamous Magalo Qaran, "Town

of the Nation" (see Figure 6.5).

   The next checkpoint was the major one. Downwind to the northeast, there are hundreds of

thousands of plastic bags strewn across the landscape. I see why. We all got down from the

minibus and immediately a young [Liyu Police] soldier patted us down and looked thoroughly

Figure 6.4: Looking southeast along the borderline from the Tog Wajale bridge, 2017. Somaliland is on the left and Ethiopia on the right. People can be seen crossing makeshift bridges through the mud in the distance. Photo by author.

inside the bags. The Oromo man whom I had sat next to on the way to the border had a bunch of jeans packed into his backpack, all wrapped in plastic. Another man, apparently his friend or business partner, had the same sets of jeans in his bag. The soldier dumped them out on the ground and sifted through them. Plastic bags blew away in the wind. In my backpack, the soldier pulled out my book and roughly removed the clothes, though I managed to keep him from throwing them on the ground as he was doing to materials in other people's bags. After lining up to be thoroughly searched, we walked about 50 meters to the west, past the rope-across-the-road checkpoint, and sat in the shade to await the searching of the taxi. People on this side of the checkpoint were hastily putting things back into and on top of the vans, repacking their bags, and crowding into the taxis.[8]

Traders who frequently make the journey to and from Wajale say that the Magalo Qaran command post is directly under the president, informing him of anything significant coming or going. The main thing the

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[8]Field notes, 6/12/2016

Liyu Police soldiers are searching for is not the contraband goods, but rather weapons. As long as people are simply transporting goods they can carry in their hands, they are unlikely to have the goods confiscated, though goods are often (intentionally) damaged during the search. To minimize risk, when leaving Wajale, women often distribute bags of clothes, shoes, perfumes, and soaps to passengers who are not carrying anything (see Figs. 6.6-6.7).

On the roadside, private vehicles form one line and vehicles being imported to the country form another, both lines undergoing penetrating searches. Dashboards are lifted and seats removed in a panoptic display of state monitoring. I should note that similar checks, though less intense than the Magalo Qaran checkpoint, are made when transiting from Djibouti to Dire Dawa via Dawale (Fig. 6.8). The volume of small-scale trade on the Djibouti route is much lower than that in Wajale, famous across Ethiopia for its free market.



Figure 6.5: Schematic map of Magalo Qaran checkpoint, between Jigjiga and Tog Wajale. Imagery from Google Earth.

**Transit 2: From Jigjiga into the highlands.**  Though the physical border is far behind by the time one passes westward through Jigjiga, enforcement continues to the west of town. The strictest checkpoint on the route from Jigjiga to Harar is immediately above Jigjiga at the pass of Kara Marda, a symbolic site

Figure 6.6: Passengers walk past minibuses undergoing contraband search, June 2018. Photo by author.

that marks a division between highland Ethiopia and the semi-arid plains of Somali-Ethiopia, though both sides of the mountain pass are Somali Region territory. Generally, passengers traveling in both directions disembark for a document and bag check, though the search is not as intense as that of Magalo Qaran. Several times I have passed this checkpoint westward-bound at odd hours—early morning or late afternoon, without even disembarking from the bus. Checkpoints between Kara Marda and Harar are minimal but occasionally enforced, and often not predictable in their location. The most consistent sites of checking during fieldwork were west of Babile on the road to Harar, over 10 kilometers west of the Somali-Oromia regional border (though here I have exited buses for checking here probably less than 50% of the time) and at the border of Harari Region, where it is also common to remain on the bus while the driver simply speaks to police.

The few times I have traveled between Harar and Addis Ababa by bus or minibus, there has been perhaps one minor stop within the eastern highlands, where soldiers occasionally confiscate a bit of "contraband" cooking oil or clothes, and one major stop at Awash (Fig. 6.9). The Awash River and the chasm it has carved

Figure 6.7: Minibuses undergoing contraband search at Magalo Qaran, June 2018. Photo by author.

into the Ethiopian Rift Valley divide Ethiopia's western highlands (which stretch from well south of Addis Ababa northwards to Eritrea) from the eastern highlands of Harar and Chercher. It also marks a division between predominantly Muslim eastern Ethiopia and the country's largely Christian west. Though a half-day's journey west of Jigjiga, Awash is close to an arm of Somali Region that stretches up the Rift Valley to Mieso. Furthermore, Awash is the site where a stream of passengers and small-scale untaxed goods from Wajale meets the main stream of Ethiopian imports, carried by trucks from Djibouti through Somali and Afar regions to Addis Ababa, a gentler slope up the rift valley than the mountainous transit via Dire Dawa. From Awash west, checkpoints have been nonexistent during my journeys. There is the feeling that one has passed into the heart of Oromia and the Ethiopian state's core.

**The feel of the border**

Several groups enforce these borders and work to fix their authority in space by regulating certain forms of mobility. Federal authorities check identity documents at Wajale and at Awash, as well as occasionally at

Figure 6.8: Isuzu bus at checkpoint between Djibouti and Dire Dawa, November 2017. Photo by Author.

locations along the road through eastern Oromia. The unpredictability of border enforcement outside of set stations is part of a cat-and-mouse game: after transiting predictable checkpoints like the one just outside of Wajale, buses sometimes pick up passengers who have walked through the bush to avoid authorities. Camouflage-uniformed Liyu Police staff Magaalo Qaran and blue-uniformed Somali Regional police check vehicles at Kara Marda. From there westward to Awash, it is Oromia and Harar regional police who enforce the borders. Keeping in mind these different groups, three primary modes of interaction can be discerned between border-crossers and border officials.

The first mode is the relatively aloof document-checking of federal authorities at the Wajale checkpoint. One symbol distinguishing Ethiopia from Somaliland is Habesha ethnic authority. During the times I have transited this post it has been commanded by Tigrayans, generalized by ethnicity to be connected to the Ethiopian military and what many Somalis perceive as a "deep state" structure guiding Ethiopia and stretching its hands into every region. People perceive regulators' main concern to be documents and currency, ensuring that the dollars commonly used in Somaliland do not enter Ethiopia. Ethiopian citizens without import-export licenses (colloquially called "LCs"—the pre-1991 Somalian designation for Letter of Credit)
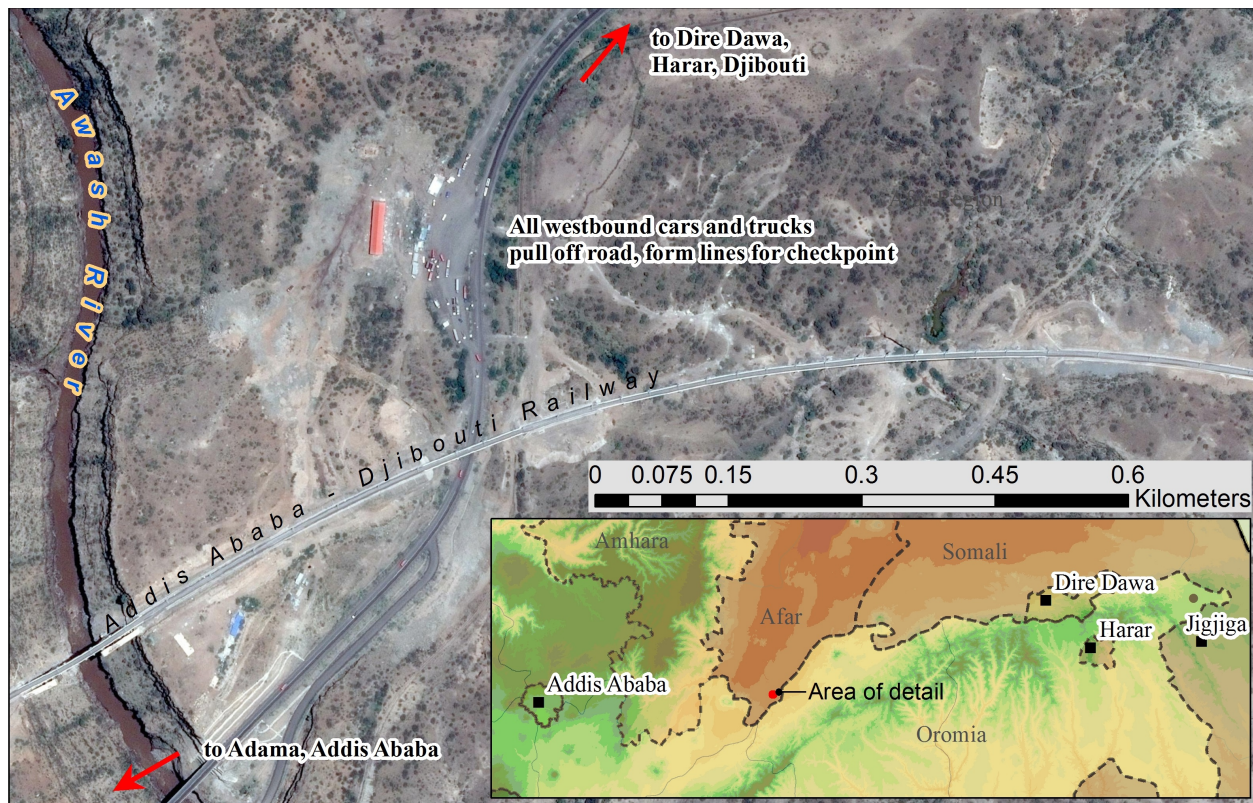
Figure 6.9: Awash checkpoint from above. Imagery from Google Earth.

are forbidden from possessing dollars within the country. In popular perception, this is not guarding the national economy, but rather protecting a racket in which Tigrayan military leaders and bankers make immense profits by commanding the black market.

The second mode of interaction, exemplified by Magalo Qaran, is an intense, violating "feel-up" in which people experience the state's hand literally touching their bodies, patting them down so thoroughly that small change and Somaliland sim cards (potential markers of disloyalty) are sometimes found in unfortunate travelers' pockets. Again, it is here where small-scale trade goods are allowed to pass in small quantities but often damaged as soldiers slice open bags and dump goods in the dirt. In a conversation, two friends reflected on the meaning of this enforcement, arguing that the whole point was *performance* of the border. "They check hard," one said—they check you over and over again—"but look, if someone were a terrorist or bringing a bomb or something like that, they wouldn't pass on the main road anyways." His friend chimed in: "It's just a show. It's an act, to make you think they are controlling [the border] strongly."[9]

A third mode of interaction struck me forcefully in Aysha‿a, on the Djibouti-Dire Dawa road, but infor-

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[9]Field notes, 8/27/2017

mants attest to its common occurrence at Magalo Qaran as well. Here officials check IDs and make sure that people are only carrying small amounts of untaxed goods, but also investigate networks and knowledge displaying border-crossers' true belonging in Ethiopia. Having a valid ID is not enough; it matters, if it comes to a soldier asking, that a traveler knows his or her geography and is connected to (the right) social networks in the region. The feeling of the state here combines two elements: one, the intense border control that represents Ethiopian state spatialization, and two, Somali clan and patronage networks grounded in eastern Ethiopia (Ethiopian-Somali relationships rather than ties to Somaliland, Somalia or Djibouti). Again, an excerpt from field notes:

> I realize more forcefully on the way into Ethiopia that crossing these borders—even proving your identity—is much less about ID cards or official documents and much more about who you know and who you are in relation to the social system of the borderlands. At the first checkpoint from the border, one elderly man gets accosted by a young official dressed in a yellow shirt and maʿawis for not having papers. "I didn't cross; you saw me come by yesterday," the elderly man smiles winsomely and grabs the boy by the chin [a touch of convincing affection]. He is allowed back on the bus.

> By 10 am we are in Ayshaʿa, disembarking for the second time to have the bus checked and show our papers. A man in his 20s standing in front of me in line, wearing a blue polo shirt, faces an officer lounging in a chair in the shade of a building. "You're from Bombas, you say?" the officer asks, pulling a long draw from his cigarette.

> "Yes." "Tell me, which side of the street is the house where you live?" "It's on the left side." "The left side from which direction? Is it close to the main road?" "If you are going to Jigjiga, it's on the left. Yes, near the main road." "What is across the road from it?"

> The young man seems confused and fumbles. The officer presses. "Do you know the name of the tall, dark man who is [an official] in Bombas?" Again the young man fumbles. "I think you aren't from Bombas," the officer informs him. "Are you just trying to get in from Djibouti? Are you coming from Arabia?" Our line disintegrates as the rest of us sit down for tea ten feet away to wait out the ordeal. The tea is sweet but I can't hear very well the continued questioning.

> An official in a navy button-down shirt and sunglasses asks to see my passport; I hand it to him.

"You have a work visa. Who do you work for?"

"Jigjiga University," I tell him.

"What is the University president's name?" he asks me. I see the logic of social networks being applied to me now. I tell him [the name], and he informs me that he also is a lecturer in the university, in the accounting department. [As I write this, I am still surprised that an accounting lecturer was manning a checkpoint in Aysha'a; perhaps it stems from an alleged practice of high-level officials placing relatives in multiple positions to draw multiple salaries?]

The passenger in the blue polo is locked in a room in the checkpoint building. When I hand my passport to the official, the man with the sunglasses vouches for me. "He works in Jigjiga University," he tells the officer.

"You know him?" the officer asks?

"Yes."

Yet we had only met the minute before.[10]

This mode of enforcement raises a threat of being Somali without being able to prove *Ethiopian-Somaliness*. In fact, Somali men coming from the borders (back) into Ethiopia, unless known by soldiers, identifiable by their western Somali accents, or able to name and prove their connections, are vulnerable to unpredictable border enforcement within Ethiopia. The threat of exclusion always looms.

More modes of enforcement and interaction are discernible at these borders, yet these three are the most frequently discussed—and complained about—among Jigjiga's businesspeople. Beyond officials' view, these modes of interaction frequently generate similar responses among border-crossers.

**Understandings of opportunity**

Corresponding with the first mode of enforcement and perceptions of Tigrayan economic dominance, women trading small-scale goods between Tog Wajale and Jigjiga collectively complain during bus rides that opportunity has been reduced to what they can fit in two black plastic bags. In September 2017, at the first border checkpoint outside of Wajale, I alighted from the minibus alongside other passengers and stood in line for document check, watching the rain advance from the north across the fertile plains. Men

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[10]Field notes, 11/13/2017

and women each formed a line on the road for a brief bag check and pat-down. The women on the bus had passed out goods among the male passengers to spread risk. A woman who had handed me a bag to carry, on hearing that I was writing a book about Jigjiga's economy, held up a box of cologne: "Look, *hooyo*,[11] in our country there is no work for us—only contraband."

Passenger reactions to the next checkpoint, Magalo Qaran, are much more vociferous. Passengers sometimes refer to the checkpoint as "*Magaalo Qiyaamo*"—"Judgment-Day Town," where the fates of thousands of small-scale contraband traders pass through the Liyu Police's hands. Yet the most violent outburst occurred when I transited the Wajale-Jigjiga route in a private car with some trusted contacts in early 2018. "This is colonization. Look, this is black people colonizing other black people!" Qadir, a former high-level official in his 40s, spouted vehemently from the back seat. He continued: "Somalis can't work with this Ethiopian system. You'll see; if they keep treating people like this, one day this region will not be part of Ethiopia." The outburst surprised me, coming from a former regional official.[12]

Qadir's vehemence capped off a crescendo that had begun as soon as we crossed the border from Somaliland. First, he had observed cynically that the contrast between the potholed roads in Somaliland (built in the 1970s) and the new tarmac road from Wajale to Jigjiga were nothing; "development is nothing if the people are not free, if they are not treated as people." In an ironic twist, within five minutes of this reflection, we were standing in mud beside the clean Ethiopian tarmac, a fresh rain dumping on our heads, while a Tigrayan border patrol agent had our car searched extra-thoroughly at the first checkpoint. The agent seemed to have been on the verge of letting us pass with the normal document-check when a comment from someone in the car set him off. "He is Tigrayan; he is mad that his people lost control of the government," someone reflected as we finally drove away from the checkpoint, our clothes now sopping wet. Abiy Ahmed's recent election as Ethiopia's prime minister was, in popular perception, a severe blow to Tigrayan interests that had controlled the country, but such large-scale change had yet to trickle down to interactions with border agents.

It was Magalo Qaran, however, that sent Qadir on his diatribe. Minibuses and 40-seater Isuzus lined the road while soldiers piled blankets and clothes on the wet gravel shoulder, emptying the vehicles completely before slowly piling items back in. Border securitization does effectively differentiate Ethiopia from other Somali-inhabited territories, marking Somali-Ethiopia off as a space apart. Yet Qadir's remarks suggest

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[11]*Hooyo*, "mother," means "son" when spoken by a woman to a younger man.
[12]Field notes, 4/30/2018

how as they do so, they also taint Somali-Ethiopia as a space of colonization; not simply by Ethiopian Highlanders, but by the Somali-led regional government. Perceptions of the Awash checkpoint suggest how this "colonization" of Somalis by Somalis intersects with a broader network of dominance in the country. The perception is common that at Awash, the busiest checkpoint, Tigrayan military police check every car carefully except those driven by Tigrayans with military connections, who are simply waved through.[13]

Since these modes of border enforcement tend to pit regular citizens against the state as suspected contrabandists, subject to suspicion, hyper-vigilance, and the violating touch of border enforcement, it is small wonder that the figure of the smuggler emanates Robin-Hood-esque resonances. Low-level officials express their sympathy for the small-scale contrabandists carrying their livelihoods in two plastic bags through the checkpoints. In private among trusted people, stories of smuggling are told with braggadocio. Former "contraband" traders—those operating before heavy market controls took effect—are greeted on Jigjiga's streets with the sympathy due their fall from the wealth of years past. People tell stories about their relatives' smuggling exploits in the days of Haile Selassie. On bus rides from Wajale back to Jigjiga, one hears gentle expressions of support for the person spotted running with bags of goods through the bush to avoid checkpoints, and in one case bus passengers quietly cheered a Somali boy chased by a Habesha agent as he tried to dodge a checkpoint, sprinting with his black plastic bags in hand. Jigjiga's traders laud the humble person (*miskiin*) who forges her own connections across the borderlands.

## 6.3   Contraband in the city

Sympathy towards the *miskiin*—the humble fellow standing in opposition to regulatory power—reflects not only resistance to Ethiopian border controls, but also Jigjiga's particular urbanization patterns. Even as ethnic federalism began to symbolically refigure Jigjiga's urban space as Somali space rather than a zone of Habesha dominance in the 1990s, Jigjiga's rapid urban growth was driven largely by displacement rather than economic development. Hundreds of Gerri households moved to the city as Oromia-Somali border conflict erupted between Chinakson and Tuli-Guled before the new constitution was drafted (cf. Kefale 2010). By the late 1990s, and more dramatically in the 2000s, civilians fleeing insurgency and counterinsurgency in the Ogaden arrived. This expansion created opportunity for Jigjiga's residents, schooled in the arts of border trade. Many grew rich bringing consumer goods from Somaliland through back roads and

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[13]Field notes, 28 May 2018

customs corruption. The federal subsidy to the regional government, disbursed almost exclusively in Jigjiga due to security concerns outside the town, fueled urban consumption. "The contraband traders raised us up," I quoted Bashe, a long-time contraband trader, as saying (in the introduction above). He continued: "The way people reached development (*horumar*) was... Jigjiga town was made up of traders, contraband. The people living in this area all use to work contraband." [14] If contraband trade is understood as a mechanism of economic development, its regulation appears to be restricting development. Patterns observable in Jigjiga's urban economy show how current border regulation channels accumulation opportunities into state-controlled networks. Contraband's social legitimacy in the city suggests that efforts to render the work of state-regulated markets common sense in urban society—to legitimize growing inequalities visible in the city—have not (yet) succeeded.

### Economic trends: formalization and "development"

While the view from the ground suggests that contraband remains the lifeblood of Jigjiga's consumer markets, official data from regional offices point to the urban economy's increasing formalization, indicating limited successes in efforts to harness trade and investment to fund government-led development efforts. Jigjiga's place as the intersection of trade and economic governance is highlighted by the fact that in regional business registries, all currently operating businesses that were registered prior to 2004 are located inside Jigjiga. Formalization of businesses elsewhere in the region only appears to have really begun during the administration of ʿAbdi's predecessor Daʿud in 2009. Registered capital investment remains heavily concentrated in Jigjiga, spurred by the rise of parastatals such as Liyu Enterprises and diaspora investment channeled through government offices. The data show that the vast majority of businesses operating as of 2018 were registered from 2010 onwards. Increasing formalization appears to be boosted by rising business registration among Somalis, who comprise a majority of business owners registered since 2011(6.10). (Note that these reflect only businesses that continue operating at present; past records were not made available.) From this perspective, decentralized economic controls under the region's revamped federalism appear to have paid off by drawing Somali businesspeople into formal circuits.

The dominance of construction, trade, finance and hospitality in the urban economy is revealing of an intersection in which fiscal decentralization drives government-funded construction, diaspora return brings demand for hotels and restaurants, and people and goods circulate rapidly. According to official registries,

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[14]Bashe, audio-recorded interview, 7/1/2018
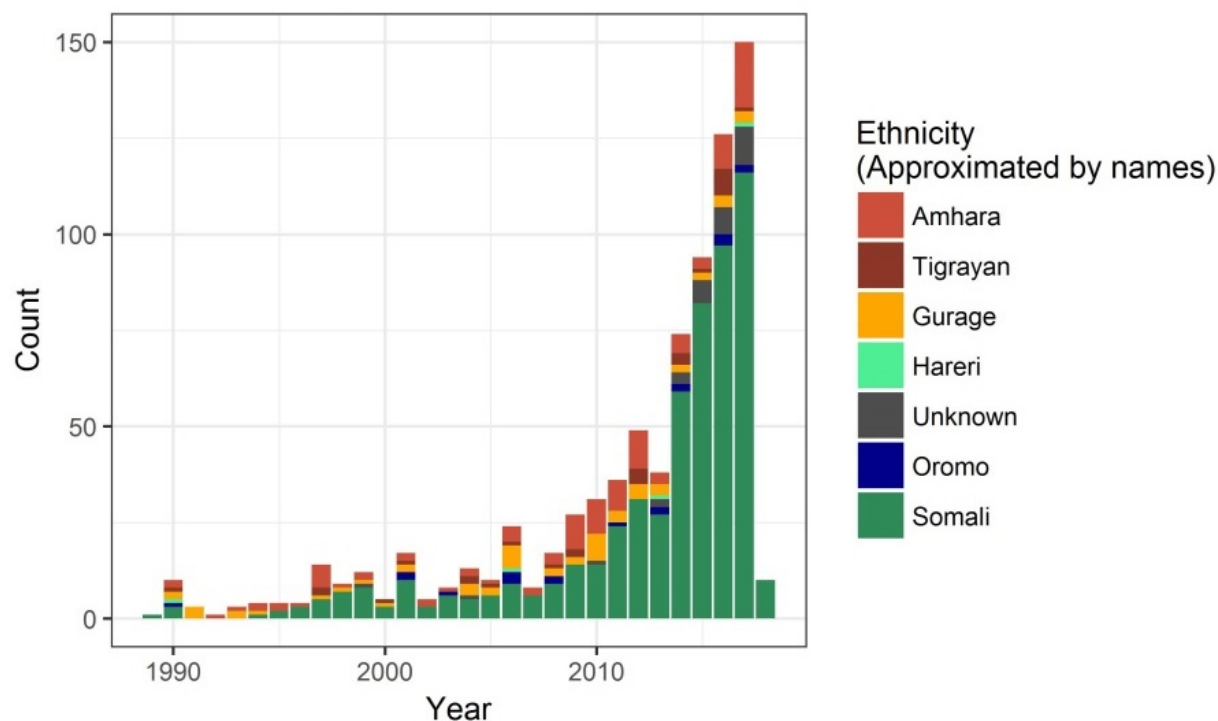
Figure 6.10: Number of businesses registered by year of registration and ethnicity of business operator, for businesses currently registered in Jigjiga. Data from SRS Trade and Transport Bureau, 2018, with ethnic identities approximated by names and firsthand knowledge of vendors.

the construction sector boasts by far the largest capitalization. Several large companies dominate this sector, and whereas the majority of businesses in the registry are registered by the owner's name, large construction and finance companies are registered with generic business names—a fact which fuels local suspicions of military connections behind such enterprises. "Behind each major trader," local sentiment says, "is a Tigrayan general." Whatever the truth to this, it is clear that government connections and contracts are a driving force in this sector. One construction company officer showed me a list of assets and the projects he had carried out: contracts to build NGO-funded berkads (rainfed reservoirs), schools, and government offices ensured tens of millions of dollars in annual turnover. Chapter 8 explores the role of contracts in the economy; suffice it to say here that whether through covert ownership or through providing contracts for goods and services, funds provided by the regional administration are a force behind business formalization.

Despite these trends towards formalization, however, Ethiopian census data show unregistered businesses providing employment for the bulk of Jigjiga's population: while the Bureau of Trade and Transport lists around 1,000 currently registered businesses, the 2007 census estimated that over 40,000 people in Fafan Zone alone were self-employed, dwarfing other categories of employment. This includes thousands

of small-scale businesses in Jigjiga such as neighborhood shops and larger market traders, as well as contraband specialists. So while official statistics can point to rapid growth of the urban and regional economy, it is virtually impossible to ascertain the extent to which market capitalization has actually increased, as compared to existing market participation merely being more effectively captured by registration. The view from the borders suggests that increasing regulations have directed capital in the massive cross-border trade sector into licensed channels, but that the number of contrabandists remains high. The true degree of expansion in the financial sector is likewise questionable: until the mid-2000s, US dollars and Somaliland shillings circulated through non-bank networks in this space, and the controls over currency implemented at borders have directed financial flows into Ethiopian currency and into formal banks at the same time as fiscal decentralization poured cash into the economy. In sum, whatever economic development has taken place, the one fact beyond doubt is that the regional government in place since 2010 exercises far more control over its direction than did previous administrations. Looking "beneath" the trends captured in official data at the daily operations of the market, however, shows how formal and informal operations blur in urban space. Registered diaspora businesses rely on contraband provision, and contractors building government offices sometimes obtain supply through illicit circuits as well.

**The texture of economic articulation: contraband and formal channels**

Contraband continues to flow despite increasingly stringent border controls and government efforts at economic regulation, though I have shown that illicit trade is now mainly the domain of women whom regulators are unwilling to stop for fear of popular backlash. Connections between Jigjiga and the world beyond Ethiopia's borders have thus bifurcated into two spheres: small-scale informal trade and large-scale licensed import-export businesses carried on by government-connected elites. Survey data and ethnographic interviews with traders provide an opportunity to examine how border regulation affects patterns of wealth distribution in the city. Strategies of border regulation since 2010 have multiplied labor in the urban informal sector, fragmenting opportunities for accumulation among less wealthy and less well-connected groups. A small class of government-connected import-exporters—diaspora returnees among them—meanwhile accumulate immense profits.

The prevalence of small-scale contraband as a supply source and the gendered nature of the trade were highlighted when I and a research assistant conducted a survey of 105 businesses in Jigjiga's central business

district (since I draw on data from two surveys, I call this Survey 1). Survey 1 included 17 distributors (wholesalers and brokers) and 87 retail businesses, mainly consumer goods but also a few chat sellers. Ten of the businesses, when asked who supplied their goods, simply replied, "Women." In the form of these streams of small-scale traders arriving from Wajale carrying sacks of goods, the Somaliland border inhabits Jigjiga. While I have emphasized that borders are not exclusively dividing lines, the border's work of division is felt in the inhibitions of urban traders and the distribution of profits across the urban economy. Ḥawa, a young woman selling cosmetics, tells me when I ask where the goods come from: "Women bring them." "You don't go to Wajale yourself?" I ask. "No! I'm scared to go myself!" Especially scared, she says, of Magalo Qaran.[15] While Ḥawa was quite open with me about her contraband supply, a young man her age is reticent to discuss contraband. He points to the fans and electronics stacked against his shop wall, telling me they come from Addis. In the midst of our interview, a truck pulls up in front of the store, piled high with apparently contraband goods, and a raggedly-dressed Habesha man starts unloading pasta boxes into the store, hiding them off the street until their owner—a woman working nearby—comes to take them. The pasta boxes are battered and creased: they came from Wajale jammed under a bus, between the chassis and the exhaust pipes and axles. As I talk to the woman about her business, a guilty look comes over the store owner's face. He rectifies his information: "Almost everything I sell comes from Tog Wajale. I buy only a few things from Addis. ... Mostly, you write a list and a woman brings the stuff." He used to go to Hargeisa himself for electronics, but the border is much harder than it used to be, with the result that he must either risk exposure to accusations of being al-Shabaab or pay a slightly higher price for the goods brought by women. Understandably, he opts for the second.[16]

This calculus provides employment for the new class of female contrabandists, but also splits profits from the border trade that previously accrued to urban traders. Merchants who used to ply the border for their goods no longer risk the long lines and suspicious soldiers at checkpoints. While this provides life-sustaining employment for contrabandists, it means that the accumulation that used to stem from integrating border trade with urban wholesale and retail now accrues primarily to those with government connections. Survey 1 data on supply locations confirmed informant accounts of the division between border trade and urban retail: 75 business operators (71%) said they obtain their supply within Jigjiga (including up to the Kara Marda checkpoint, where some chat retailers collect supply from Oromia). 11 (10.5%) report traveling

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[15]Ḥawa, interview notes, 6/30/2018
[16]Interview notes, 5/11/2018

to Addis Ababa, 10 (9.5%) to Wajale, and one to Dire Dawa. Short-response questions on business histories suggest that many traders previously traveled to Tog Wajale themselves but now rely on LC suppliers.

The first survey was followed up by researchers from Jigjiga University who collected data from 350 urban retail and wholesale businesses (Survey 2, which I analyze separately because in lieu of identifying information from respondents the samples may overlap). In this broader sample taken from five market areas across the city, only 70 respondents reported where they physically obtain their supply. The most prevalent location was Tog Wajale, which 29 business operators reported visiting (or having an employee or family member visit) to obtain supplies. The second most common supply location was Jigjiga (26 businesses), followed by Addis Ababa (17). Only two reported physically traveling abroad to purchase materials—one to China and one to Dubai. Few operators reported the type of supplier they engaged; most of those who did named LC suppliers based in Jigjiga.

Businesses frequently obtain supplies from multiple sources; supplementing formal supply with contraband purchases is especially common. "I don't buy from Tog Wajale," Yakob tells me. "But I sometimes buy from people who take the risk. Because it's smuggling—contraband, see?" He mainly travels to Addis Ababa to purchase his own supplies. About 10% of his goods come through contraband specialists from Wajale. "People go and get it. They ask me, 'What can we bring you?' I say, 'Bring me glue, nails, a hammer.'" The contrabandist "will take the risk... he'll pass through the rural area, or he'll hide it under the car, or he'll pay bribes." He continues: "But if I go [to Wajale], I don't buy stuff. Most of the shops are like that. The biggest traders in Jigjiga are like that. Women work for you (*Waxaa kaa ka shaqeystaa dumar.*)."[17]

Jigjiga's reliance on Asian-manufactured consumer goods indicates the extent of the opportunities entailed by access to the border. Jigjiga is fundamentally a trade city; if industrial capitalism drives urbanization, Jigjiga's urbanism is inextricably tied up in linking Asian production with consumption in the wealthier highland Ethiopian markets. Local consumption is fueled by remittance flows from Somali wage labor in the global North. Data collectors for Survey 2 listed up to three materials from each business and recorded the location in which these materials were made (according to labels, or according to the business operator's knowledge). Of 661 materials for which origins were reported, well over 200 originated in eastern and southern Asia: 105 in China, 85 in India, 24 in Japan, 22 in Thailand (Fig. 6.11). The UAE was another prevalent source of goods, with patrons reporting 63 goods sourced in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Ethiopia's

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[17]Yakob, audio-recorded interview, 12/3/2017

domestic industry also has significant inroads in Jigjiga's market, especially in terms of construction ma-

terials manufactured in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, and textiles as well as various other goods that pass

through official channels via Addis Ababa's Merkato, the largest market in the region. Livestock products,

which generate 70% of Somali Region's GDP, are mainly traded outside of Jigjiga but do provide incomes

that fund urban consumption.
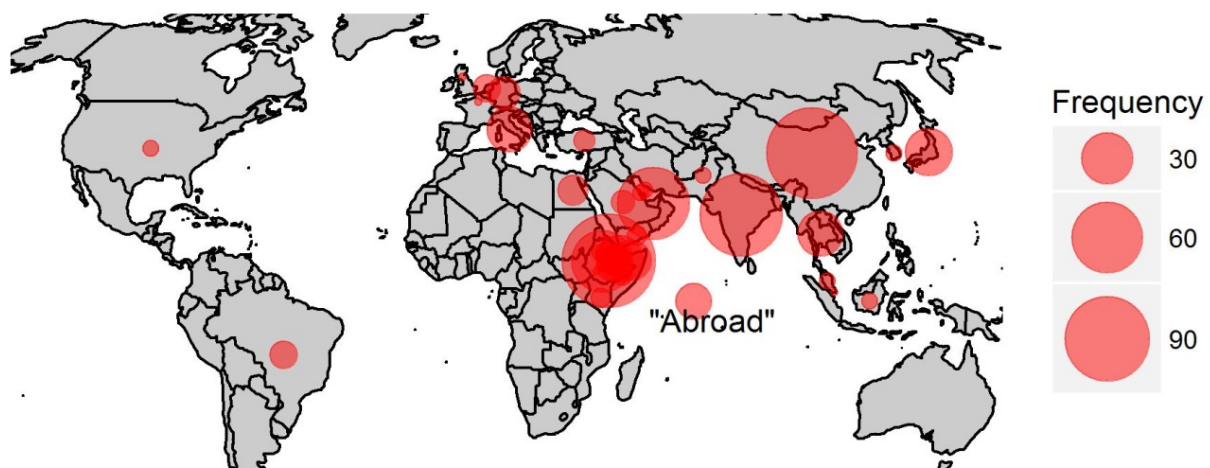


Figure 6.11: Sources of goods sold by vendors in Jigjiga by frequency mentioned. Data from own market
survey (Survey 2), 2018.

In focusing on the "slow trickle" of small-scale contraband, I have explored only the most visible side of

the import business, and the side with the most social legitimacy in part because of the open and vulnerable

nature of the trade. There is no hiding for "the women" at Magalo Qaran or other checkpoints around Jigjiga.

In contrast, the elite class of licensed import-exporters are difficult to identify and even more difficult to

access. This fact renders them more suspicious in the eyes of many residents: if they are not known,

they may well be Tigrayans or ʿAbdi's family members. The veracity of this supposition is difficult for a

researcher either to prove or disprove. However, I did spend significant time with several licensed import-

export traders and several others directly involved in material import-export businesses, whether as drivers,

Figure 6.12: Sources of goods sold by vendors in Jigjiga by frequency mentioned: selection showing the Horn of Africa. Data from own market survey (Survey 2), 2018.

transitors, or business partners supplying capital to licensed traders.

Both diaspora returnees and locals can be found in this group, but diaspora returnees have an advantage in the import-export sector for two reasons. First, their foreign passports ease travel abroad to purchase supplies from South and East Asia. Diaspora returnees involved in this sector had frequently been to source goods personally from countries including Turkey, Dubai, Oman, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. Second, where Ethiopian nationals are restricted to possessing Ethiopian birr and must apply for dollars at the official exchange rate through government-controlled banks—a process that can take up to 6 months—registered diaspora returnees are permitted to purchase in dollars through an external account. Mahad described the system for locals to obtain currency:

> The toughest thing is they have what they call LC here. Normally—in normal circumstances—you
>
> know LC, that permits you to import something. That's what we know as LC back home, in
>
> Somalia. But here... when you go, you pay the cash to one of the Ethiopian banks. That bank

transfers that money to—I think CitiBank or something, in the United States. It goes round and

round and round. Only when that money comes back are you able to bring the stuff in. [18]

Diaspora investors with foreign accounts, however, have developed a trade-off with Ethiopia's highly regu-

lated banks to enable them to purchase materials abroad while also not draining the banks' foreign currency

reserves.

In contrast to "the women," diaspora investors and other wealthy import-export traders with government

connections often work their trade remotely from houses or from the inaccessible offices of the Customs

Authority station in Jigjiga (known as the *Jibri*), keeping close connections to high-level officials while

relying on truck drivers and a network of clients to carry on the day-to-day trade. With a limited number

of licenses and competition only from the "slow trickle" of small-scale contraband, this is a realm of easy

money. "Africa is good for business," says Ḥassan, a returnee from northern Europe who imports cars and

consumer goods, and exports vegetables and coffee. "I've made a ton of money... Everything you bring,

you can sell. When you bring stuff, no one says 'it's good quality,' no one says, 'it's poor quality,' no

one says 'quality control.' There's nothing." I point through the wall of my house where we are sitting,

towards the Ethiopian-Somali Regional State Quality Control Office, 100 feet away. Before I can get my

question out, Ḥassan responds, "He's just taking money. I work with him! It's not hard to export something.

I export coffee; he doesn't even look at the coffee I export." Ḥassan recently went to China and India to

purchase shoes for import. During two weeks in Mumbai, he says he visited about 70 shoe factories with

Somali brokers who connected him to Indian manufacturers. Finally, he bought two 40-foot containers and

imported them to Berbera and then on to Wajale.[19]

It is not only control of the Somaliland border, but also the spatial regulatory system within Ethiopia that

creates opportunities for those who have the licenses or connections to transit goods across these numerous

borders into locations with limited competition. Even once goods cross the Somaliland or Djibouti border

into Ethiopia, the locations in which they can be sold are tightly regulated. While Jigjiga is a (relatively) free

market for *chat*, for example, other zones in Somali Region have quotas for *chat*—as well as for essential

goods like cooking oil, rice, and sugar—that are given to selected traders to fulfil.

ᶜAbdisamat is a "local boy" who had never left the Horn of Africa managed over the past five years

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[18]Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2017
[19]Ḥassan, audio-recorded interview, 4/6/2018

to accumulate about $3.5 million in savings through intra-Ethiopia trade, using the spatial regulation of commodities to his advantage. Sugar refined from sugarcane at government-owned facilities in central Ethiopia has a controlled market in the highlands; sugar made abroad (in India, primarily) from Sweet Potatoes and imported via Somaliland and Djibouti is significantly cheaper but is not permitted into Oromia. Amidst the government's foreign currency shortage in recent years, sugar quotas were imposed in Addis Ababa as the federal government sought to export more of its locally-produced sugar. Soaring demand in the highlands created a risky opportunity to send some of Jigjiga's cheap sugar imports to new markets. The trader obtained a license to provide sugar to certain parts of Somali Region that were accessible only by lengthy dirt roads, or by the tarmac road through the highlands. He knew the sugar would be stopped at Awash, so he conferred with a judge and showed him his license, making sure that the judge would enable the sugar to pass since it was intra-Ethiopia trade. Checkpoint officials could not prove that the sugar was *not* going back to Somali Region via this shorter route. Once the sugar was released to continue along the road, he was the sole provider of cheap sugar for markets in central Ethiopia, and managed to accumulate millions before others caught on and started to compete. Personal management was mainly required when a truck was apprehended and impounded, which happened several times while I was present. Phone calls to high-level personalities usually secured its release.[20]

Such hints that even licensed large-scale traders may operate on the margins of the law support local perception that current laws governing the economy serve merely as a mask for the consolidation of elite power. Stories told in back rooms say even licensed traders take advantage of connections to bring goods through back channels. Mahad asserts:

> And there are some big guys, as well, who bring like a full truck of stuff. But these guys, they would have to have connections with the top guys of customs, and they will bribe them, and they will clear the road, and they will direct them by telephone. I'm talking about—I'm talking about big guys. [21]

The most lucrative sector for the state-capital alliance, however, appears to be illicit foreign exchange that is linked to these material import-export sectors. During 2018, the exchange rate in Ethiopian Banks hovered around 27.2 birr to the dollar; in Wajale, it ranged from 31-35. Anyone who could obtain dollars at the

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[20] ʿAbdisamat, audio-recorded interview, 5/22/2018
[21] Mahad, audio-recorded interview, 12/21/2018

bank rate could within one day make a 17% return by exchanging the dollars in Somaliland. Based on information from people tangentially involved in these financial transactions, I put together this example of how it works:

> A Somalilander who imports chat from Ethiopia must deposit $5.00 per kilo of chat he expects
> to import during the month in a bank account in Tog Wajale at the exchange rate of 27.2 ETB
> to the dollar. Yet, because bank managers receive incentives from central banks for bringing in
> dollars, Wajale's bank managers compete for money from Somaliland, paying an off-the-books
> commission for deposits (the actual exchange rate might be, say, 28.5 ETB to the dollar). One
> Somaliland chat importer, for example, deposits US $100,000 per month, officially receiving
> a credit of 2.72 million ETB (plus the off-the book commission of 130,000 ETB or about US
> $4,800). Meanwhile, this dollar amount is worth 3.3 million birr in Wajale's street exchange.
> If bank managers in Addis Ababa export the dollars once again illegally to Wajale, as many
> informants allege, they stand to make 450,000 ETB or about $16,500 profit by re-exchanging
> the US $100,000 deposit from the chat exporter (slightly less after deducting transport costs for
> one day of travel from Addis Ababa to the border and back). [22]

Estimates in this example are conservative. Somaliland *chat* importers frequently deposit upwards of US $200,000 in Wajale's banks, and the exchange rate in early 2018 at times climbed to 36 ETB to the dollar. When Somali-Oromia border conflict erupted in September 2017, a truck was reportedly caught carrying US $1.7 million in cash between Harar and Jigjiga, en route to Wajale. There it would be exchanged for Ethiopian birr brought by the thousands of small-scale contraband traders risking their daily bread to make a profit on two small bags of contraband.

**Border struggles in the city**

Profits from licensed trade and the more nefarious circulations connected to this state-controlled sector have built Jigjiga over the past decade. The diaspora returnee reporting thousands in daily profits from import-export is constructing a multi-level business center that will join prominent buildings in Jigjiga's urban instantiation of borderlands accumulation. Three of the city's existing multi-level hotels or business

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[22]Sources: Field notes, interviews Aden, Nune, two chat transitors, deposit confirmations and export quota documents from *chat* exporters, in author's possession

centers are owned by chat exporters, another two or three by materials importers with government connections, and at least three others by Tigrayans reputed by Jigjiga's street traders to be connected to illicit financial dealings. As I showed in Chapter 3, the *Maalin Taajir*—the overnight millionaire—is a popular designation for government-connected elites who have made quick profits through questionable means and often invested in urban real estate. This chapter has shown that border controls enable high profits from import-export trade specifically. Borders then come to inhabit Jigjiga not only through the presence of the ubiquitous contraband-trading women, but through their juxtaposition against the beneficiaries of border controls, the government-made elites.

The juxtaposition between these two classes of border trader is fundamental to the construction of economic legitimacy in Jigjiga and throughout Somali Region. What I mean is this: the widespread social legitimacy of the survivalist contraband-trading women, victims of state regulation, undermines public acceptance of the wealth accumulated through government connections. The very property on which the *Maalin Taajir*s have built their hotels and business centers is frequently regarded as only questionably theirs. Neither border controls nor the new urban wealth inequalities associated with them have been successfully legitimized; they remain problematic for Jigjiga's inhabitants. This is why contraband remains not only a fact of life, but a potent symbol of opposition to the perceived injustices of government economic controls. Local resistance to government control over markets and favoritism towards diaspora, expressed in the glorification of the smuggler, is not about resisting Ethiopia or resisting the law, but about pursuing equality of opportunity. This egalitarian ethic is expressed in terms of both regional identity and in specific reference to urban market access. Bashe explains his perspective:

> What I desire for the region, what would be good for us, is for the contraband to be opened. The contraband—I want it freed. Or at least for a man, whatever his position, to be taxed by the government [i.e. to have access to a license].... Look, this is the problem now: someone is rich [or a capitalist—*maalqabeyn*] and someone is poor. The poor one comes to a bad state because he can't move. But what does the rich guy do? Whatever the *miskiin* finds, the rich man gets it easily [through confiscation]. That one person may benefit, they destroy the goods of everyone else. A man should bring whatever is in his power. So, contraband is this: in it, everyone can find something. The small person and the big person both get something. But as long as there

is the LC, only one can get it. One man alone partitions the town, and the poor can't sell.[23]

While struggles over access to opportunity take the shape of occupying Jigjiga's market space, as I suggested in the chapter's opening, these struggles are not simply about resisting governance and taxation, but about the constitution of the urban economy as a site of interconnection with other spaces. Though contraband is "free" in the city, the administration has already been rendered less legitimate through people's experiences at the borders. This is a distinct problem for efforts at urban market regulation, where not only does the sheer mass of informal traders overwhelm officials, but also people openly resist efforts to govern the *miskiin* through an understanding of officials as agents of inequality.

A simple example of this dynamic emerged one day at breakfast when I was joined by a young municipal official. "Can I get a job in America?" He asks me. "I'm tired of this. I'm tired of working here. There's no system, and when there's no system, it's tiring—it wears you out." The immediate issue that he was upset about was attempting to enforce litter laws in the city. "People here just throw things anywhere. And nobody tells them not to! If you try to stop them from doing it, someone else will intervene to stop you and say, 'Look, why are you bothering this *miskiin*? Leave him alone!'"

"Is this urbanization?" the official begins to expand his rant. "Urbanization is people moving to cities; here, the urban comes to the rural.... Ten years ago, Jigjiga was six qebeles. Look at it now!" (Jigjiga has 24 qebeles). "About twenty years ago, Jigjiga became capital of the region. When it became capital, it got infrastructure, and people started coming. But it's not the same as people moving to cities. People who go to the West, to America—they have to adapt and acculturate. There is acculturation; that is part of urbanization. But here, the urban is coming from somewhere"—he motions to the air—"urbanization comes, but the people are rural, and they behave as rural people." He concludes with a proverb: "*Dhar magaalo waa la xidhaa dhal magaalo lama noqdo.*" Putting on city clothes does not make one a child of the city. [24]

Does being urbanized mean submitting to the law and pursuing livelihood through the market, rather than combatting the very constitution of the market itself if it is constructed in ways that lack social legitimacy? As Lefebvre and other critical urbanists have argued, displacing urban democracy tends to be a matter of conjoining law with "market" forces in ways that often subvert opposition by rendering the forces operating

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[23]Bashe, audio-recorded interview, 7/1/2018
[24]Field notes, 5/10/2018

commonsense, by legitimizing inequality through a variety of means. In Jigjiga, the morality of contraband constantly raises the question of what a socially just distribution of opportunity in a trade city might look like. When viewed through the lens of low-level officials who work at the interface between "the state" and "society," it can be seen that the market's legitimacy is not a settled affair. During the days leading up to Eid in June 2018, Jigjiga's market was crammed with wheelbarrow stalls and desperate shoppers. I snapped a photo (Fig. 6.1) which I later showed to Ḥersi, the municipal official in charge of urban trade licensing. "Agga!" he laughed, using a colloquial expression of surprise. "All these traders with the carts in the road are illegal!" He continued to chuckle as he scrolled through photos on my phone. "The Mayor's Office is always telling us to take care of this issue, but look—how can we do it ourselves? I tell them that we need the police to coordinate with us; we can't do it ourselves. Then they leave the issue alone." [25] I point out to Ḥersi that the police were securing the entire area full of contraband and its illegal vendors, and he laughs again. Contraband, it appears, is more lawful than the law.

## 6.4 On the legitimacy of markets

People's questions about the legitimacy of economic governance do not stop with the regulation of trade flows, but extend through diverse property markets in the urban economy. Looking up at a new building owned by a regime-connected import-export trader, one of Jigjiga's young local businessmen jokes about illegitimacy of property obtained through government connections: "The building is beautiful! It's only missing one thing: wheels to take it to Qabridahar." The implication: the ground underneath Jigjiga's landscape belongs to the people, but ʿAbdi's administration has possessed it for regime clients. This sentiment is quite the opposite of local feelings about development through displacement observed by Filip de Boeck in Kinshasa, where the aesthetic of development appeared to trump local concerns about their own place in it (De Boeck 2011). People love Jigjiga and admire the beautiful buildings under construction, but resent the cost of unequal opportunity that funds them.

"Cultural" resistance to state-led commodification of property and trade in Jigjiga is not *simply* a matter of resisting what Smith and other urban theorists understand as embedding logics, threads, and assumptions of capital accumulation in society through urban reconstruction. Framing it as such suggests an implicit distinction between logics of accumulation and those of redistribution, with financial capitalism as ultimately

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[25]Field notes, 6/15/2018

the monetization of social relationships. The "rural" ethics of resistance and wealth redistribution that inhabit Jigjiga in the form of "contraband urbanity"—the socially legitimate but illegal ways of being in the city as a site of articulation with globalized trade—do not oppose accumulation in itself, but rather raise the question of who gets to determine what sorts of flows are included and excluded in market relations—in "the economy"—and who gets to access these markets. Struggles over trade in Jigjiga and at the borders around the city are about the power to regulate access to opportunity in a world where "deterritorialized" flows of global trade and finance are harnessed by a variety of actors to fix their projects of power and control in space. Self-proclaimed contrabandists by and large do not want pure market openness that would enable foreign capital flows to enter Jigjiga. The question is how to enforce the border *enough* to protect local interests from foreign competition while opening it enough to facilitate opportunities.

Distributions of wealth and opportunity in the city are intimately tied to border regulation, and I have shown how strategies of border regulation shape these distributions in the urban economy. In the following chapter, I look even more specifically at market relations in Jigjiga's central business areas to show how the scalar resituating of the city within diaspora investment flows and East Asian industrial circuits have affected local patterns of production and exchange.

# Chapter 7  Urban borderlands: scalar transformations

Looking up at the growing skyline, many Jigjigans wonder at the rapid growth of the town from a village into a city. "The city... was small, and my trade and livelihood were small," says a middle-aged woman named Hani, speaking of the 1980s. I sit with her and some of her younger children and grandchildren in a dimly-lit room in a peri-urban neighborhood known as *Waraabe-Salaan*, "Hyena-Greeting." "But now the city is so wide," she continues, "and business is good! In the past, when the city was small, everything was just the same work; only small stuff. Can you say that a village and a capital [*ʿaasimad*] are the same thing? The city was a village, and now it's a capital."[1] Hani's children are a mix of small-scale contraband traders, chat transitors, and regional civil servants. She herself grinds meat in Jigjiga's market, selling the ground product to hotels and restaurants as well as families.

There is an interesting contradiction in Hani's spatial engagement with the broader region amidst Jigjiga's growth. When Jigjiga was "a village," her business operated across a wider geographical scale. She used to trade agricultural produce in Somaliland for imported consumer goods that came via Ḥamar (Mogadishu), her fondly-remembered childhood home after the 1977 War. Up until recently, access to the border was relatively open. Now the trans-spatial connections have densified. Hani might have continued exporting vegetables without taxation through the 1990s had her husband, himself an Isaq *chat* exporter, not been killed by a landmine early in that decade. His death meant that responsibility for the family was more directly hers, and she had to both work and care for the children on a day-to-day basis. As shown by examining spatial market fragmentation in the previous chapter, however, the shift from cross-border to denser, more urban-scale commerce and social relationships is a broader trend. Under a new organization of borders brought about by the federal system, Jigjiga's "internal" geography has transformed along with its

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[1] Hani, audio-recorded interview, 6/22/2018

"external." Diaspora investment and the rise of government-connected wealth have dialectically driven new patterns of segregation, transforming intersections between ethnicity and class, and reshaping the nature of multi-scalar connections that articulate in the city. This chapter zooms in on the city and re-engages with some 20th century historical patterns as it seeks to discern how Ethiopia's federalism and Somali forms of transnational capitalism articulate in urban social organization.

The previous chapter's focus on borders and contraband traders gives way here to a detailed examination of spatial, social and economic changes in the city as connected to broader processes. Broadly stated, the question here is this: how has the empowering of some trans-spatial connections over others amidst what the previous chapter termed "scalar recomposition"[2] affected Jigjiga's urban socio-spatial organization? And how, in turn, might social interactions and processes taking place within the city themselves shape the social production of scale:[3] the production of boundaries that demarcate and define social groups and degrees of geographical distance and relatedness? If, as Hillier and Hanson (1984) argue, space is a function of forms of social solidarity, then underlying questions about densifying relationships, about the meanings of new transnational connections, and about new modes of border enforcement is a timeless moral question: to whom is a person obligated? And what of herself or her possessions does she owe? Assertions about the morality of contraband constitute one mode of formatting and specifying claims to rights which are both broader and more specific.

Assertions of rights involve broader claims stretching beyond the ethic of "contraband" in at least two ways. First, people's moral claims are not only "political" assertions about the legitimacy of economic governance, but also involve claims on market relationships including partnerships, credit and debt. In fact, perhaps a better framing of this suggestion is that localized practices of borrowing and lending are fundamental to the urban economy but are by and large not conceptualized as credit and debt, but rather enacted more as rights to recognition and relationship in the form of delayed payment. Second, assertions of rights stretch across geopolitical boundaries, and form alternative rationalities and moralities that are commonly elided by narratives about diaspora return migration as driven by markets or affective desires for home. Co-presence of American, British, Norwegian, or Finnish citizens (and so on) in the globalizing city makes it easier for claimants to assert their rights to redistribution from the global North to Ethiopia. The

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[2]Following the previous chapter, scalar recomposition here refers to the differential fixing of social meanings including law, race, ethnicity, and other concepts in space to guide human behavior.

[3]On the social production of scale, see Marston 2000; Massey 1993; Smith 1992.

relocation of diaspora into Jigjiga does not eliminate the fundamental assertion that the relatively worse-off have rights to shares of wealth, wherever the wealth may be—not only in "their own country." At the same time, what can be observed is not "socialist" demand for equality, but appears more as demands for enough while recognizing that what constitutes "enough" differs by place ("We know America is expensive," I have been told numerous times).

Moral assertions about distributions of wealth and opportunity are also more specific, because assertions of rights to sharing in wealth and opportunity are generally directed towards kin and friends, whether in Jigjiga or abroad. Claims and their fulfillment through material exchange tend to reproduce understandings and enactments of clan and ethnicity as they intersect variably with relationships configured around sharing, possession, and work. On the spectrum of economically-formatted relationships, Western concepts of capital and labor fall towards a relatively hierarchical end of such a spectrum. The question of who has rights to participate in trade, to share in economic growth, takes on ethno-cultural dimensions and subsumes tensions between diaspora investors and locals as it translates into modes of establishing and valuing relationships. Spatial organization plays a dialectical role in these processes as people establish and regulate the boundaries of belonging and of ownership. The city, as both site and stake of struggles over solidarity, rights, and practices of ownership, plays multiple roles as it configures people's interactions as well as the broader symbolic meaning of these interactions.

Before specifying the argument to Jigjiga's context, let me frame the concerns within some specific local debates.

## 7.1   The Somalization and Somali-Ethiopianization of urban space

Contradictions underlying Ethiopian-Somali nationalism came to rest quite literally in the center of Jigjiga in 2013, provoking debates that reveal ongoing ethnic tensions. A question continues to haunt the town: how does Somali identity—with is resonances of rebellion and secessionist sympathies—come to intersect in dense urban relation with the coloniality of Ethiopian governance? The specific event was this: DDSI installed a statue of Sayyid Moḥamed ꜤAbdullah Ḥassan in the town's central roundabout. The statue is not the first urban monument memorializing the anticolonial freedom fighter, but that rendered it even more problematic. The other statue was erected in Mogadishu in 1960, a symbol of Somali anticolonialism but a particular jab to Ethiopian sovereignty over the Ogaden. Was Jigjiga a Somali capital, a new Mogadishu

(after all, it appeared to substitute for Mogadishu in some diaspora narratives)?

Online discussions immediately erupted over the meaning and implications of the "rebel" statue, with some arguing that the "tribal warlord statue" "insults all Ethiopians," and calling the Sayyid a terrorist who inspired Osama Bin Laden.[4] In January 2014 an opinion piece was published with the headline, "Wrong statue in Jijiga town," in which a critic considered "whether [the Sayyid] was an Ethiopian and deserve[s] a multi-million dollar statue in the centre of the regional capital."[5] The author particularly criticized the use of tax dollars to construct a statue for someone "who preached hatred, religious, cultural and clan intolerance among Somali people and wider Ethiopia."

Yakob operates his business near the roundabout—known generally as the Sayyid (*Sayidka*). When I ask him about the statue, he jokes apocryphally not only about the statue, but even its orientation, in terms of its meaning for Jigjiga's relative geographical position and social groups:

> They had the statue suspended from a crane, and they couldn't decide which way the Sayyid should face. When he faced east, people thought it meant he was fighting Somalia and Somaliland, and the Isaq cried, "No, no!" When he faced west, the Ethiopians thought it meant he was fighting against Ethiopia, and they wouldn't allow it. When he faced north, the Sheikhs thought it looked like he was fighting against Mecca, and they objected. When he faced south, the Bartirre cried out that he was attacking them. But they're a small group, so the statue remained facing south.[6]

The narrative, even if invented, places Jigjiga's local spatial layout and architecture in relational geographies which are more broadly relevant to understanding the spatial organization of social life. Jigjiga is not an Ethiopian city; it cannot stand in direct opposition to Somalia and Somaliland. At the same time, it is not a purely Somali city; it cannot stand in opposition to Ethiopia. It serves as a node of integration between the highlands and Somali space. It is a religious city, populated predominantly by Muslims who orient their daily lives towards Mecca. It is also a city characterized by numerous more localized ethnic and clan divisions, including that symbolically represented in the statue's southward orientation: Ogadenis (the Sayyid among them) overrunning local Jidwaq clans.

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[4]Mereja Forum: "Jigjiga gets tribal warlord statue that insults all Ethiopians." 13 July 2013. https://mereja.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=57041
[5]H. Hersi, "Wrong Statue in Jijiga Town," January 4, 2014, Ethiomedia.com
[6]Field notes, 9/24/2017

Figure 7.1: "The Sayyid" statue in Jigjiga's central roundabout, 2015. Photo by author.

This is not to say that Jigjigans resent the statue. During university graduations and other symbolic events, people line up to take their photograph with the Sayyid. He has become part of Jigjiga perhaps mainly because the roundabout simply cannot be avoided. Yet when conversations turn to deeper reflection, the symbolism is not lost on merchants or civil servants, and it is contradictory. As political and economic power have conjoined under ʿAbdi Iley's DDSI administration and explicit "Ethiopianization" efforts have come to dominate public affairs, questions about the meanings and future relationships between Somalis and Ethiopians have arisen. What is the relationship between ethnic dominance in the region and broader belonging in Ethiopia? Will Somali-Ethiopia last, or will it be absorbed into one ethno-political project or another? Much like the Kali imagery, the rebel statue raises not only a specter of Ogaden dominance over other groups, but also the implicit threat of secession. The prospect of temporariness is inscribed in durable stone and metal. Yet around it, diaspora-owned hotels and the business parks of *maalin-taajir*s continue to rise. Amidst the uncertainties, two processes related to economic opportunity and wealth distribution are of particular concern for many Jigjigans. " The first process: the borderlands city has seen new articulations of ethnicity and class, in which class-based segregation among Somalis has replaced yesterday's ethnic segregation. The borderlands political economy was characterized over the past century by a bifurcation

between *Habesha* domination of politics and Somali access to wealth via livestock and trans-border trade economies. As Hani points out, "If they were Somalis, they were connected! ... At the time, Addis Ababa people, Dire Dawa people, Harar people—they didn't go to the border." The forging of an Ethiopian-Somali regional politics under DDSI welded these two together such that wealth came much more directly under political control. As a pivotal site in which both federalism and regional variants of capitalism take shape in daily life, Jigjiga's social organization has much to say about the mutual shaping of markets, ethnicity, and government authority in the Horn.

Focusing on the spatio-temporalities of urban investments and the juncture between *belonging to* Jigjiga and *exchanging things within* Jigjiga, I draw on scholarly approaches to cities as sites in which modes of indigeneity, belonging, and market access intersect with the construction (and undermining) of broader ethnonational political-economic orders (Bou Akar 2012; Holston 2008; Isin 2007; Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003). Yiftachel and Yacobi's (2003) urban ethnocracy model seeks to discern the construction of power in the urban setting, suggesting avenues for analyzing ethnic domination in cities that are formally "mixed." Three primary axes of social differentiation are commonly voiced in Jigjiga. The first is ethnic, Somalis and "other Ethiopians" (though both categories are themselves fragmented). The second, within the Somali group, is between "local" and "diaspora" Somalis. Both of these categories are often employed in claims about rights to space and market access, and each involve their own constructions of indigeneity and the formatting of relationships through ethnicity. The third, which cuts across both Ethiopian and Somali ethnic categories, is the distinction between individuals and groups closely connected to the current government and those not connected to the current government (though they may have been connected to previous administrations). I employ this model as a schematic, a model whose general boundaries assist in accounting for the most potent social divisions discernible in the production of urban space.

Yiftachel and Yacobi's model works across one general administrative dynamic—the Judaization of the Israeli state. Applying it to Jigjiga requires accounting for shifts in ethnic dominance within the multi-level federal structure. Such shifts and conflicts associated with them have shaped Jigjiga's socio-spatial development, and struggles in Jigjiga and the surrounding area also played a critical role in larger-scale political change in Ethiopia, particularly in 2017-2018. To understand these multi-scalar dynamics, the chapter takes up Iossifova's (2013) call for alternative readings of contemporary urbanisms, shifting from focus on social boundaries and spatial segregation to discern localized processes that characterize and govern

the city's in-between (social) spaces. As with classic approaches to borderlands, discerning how these boundaries take shape in daily life has much to say about the organization of the larger worlds that they demarcate—rich and poor; capital and labor; Somali, Habesha and other ethnicities; market, government, and residential land use. Tracing the parallel shifts in Ethiopia and those in Jigjiga shows how boundaries within the city are connected with those beyond through logics and practices regulating social interactions in terms of ethnicity.

Shifts towards class-based segregation and the internationalization of Jigjiga's urban economy shape the second process: debates and negotiations around social controls over wealth distribution amidst what some understand as increased transactionality of exchange or "marketization." The analysis reveals tensions in this regard, but also shows that the extension of the supposed "global market" into this space has *not* solely been a story of monetized relationships and increasing transactionality as opposed to embedded ethnic trust and mutual reliance. Jigjiga's market looks much less like the depersonalized cash-transaction city of Simmel and Wirth,[7] and much more like a web of mutual dependencies—yet these are also formatted by modes of valuing people that are in part shaped by claims of relatedness and mutual interest often framed in terms of ethnicity and indigeneity.

## 7.2   From ethnic to class segregation

For the majority of its existence, Jigjiga's urban geography was defined by a relatively clear division between colonizers and colonized. It was from the beginning a settler city, expanding from a garrison fort to a small town under the leadership of Abdullah Taha, the Yemeni Arab sub-governor from Harar. In his careful history of Jigjiga town, Tibebe Eshete argues, "The Arabs, who formed a closely-knit group based on ethnic solidarity, dominated commercial life" (Eshete 2014, 16). Arabs settled mainly to the south of the main road in a concentrated residential and market neighborhood with its signature stone houses, leaving

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[7]Simmel (2002, 12): "What is essential here as regards the economic-psychological aspect of the problem is that in less advanced cultures production was for the customer who ordered the product so that the producer and the purchaser knew one another. The modern city, however, is supplied almost exclusively by production for the market, that is, for entirely unknown purchasers who never appear in the actual field of vision of the producers themselves." Wirth (1938, 12): "Characteristically, urbanites meet one another in highly segmental roles. They are, to be sure, dependent upon more people for the satisfactions of their life-needs than are rural people and thus are associated with a greater number of organized groups, but they are less dependent upon particular persons, and their dependence upon others is confined to a highly fractionalized aspect of the other's round of activity. This is essentially what is meant by saying that the city is characterized by secondary rather than primary contacts. The contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental. The reserve, the indifference, and the blase outlook which urbanites manifest in their relationships may thus be regarded as devices for immunizing themselves against the personal claims and expectations of others."

the area north of the main road for the army and the southwest part of the city to Somalis. In ethnic terms, Abdullah Taha's Arab-Ethiopian administration gave way by 1915 to an increasingly Amhara administration connected to Harar and Addis Ababa, while commercial power rested significantly in the hands of Somali *abbans* who served as commercial agents for trade between Jigjiga and the coast (Eshete 2014, 29–30; cf. Cassanelli 2010; Ciabarri 2010).

The first attempts at urban planning came between 1917 and 1920 under the governorship of Tekle Hawaryat, who implemented a basic structural organization delimiting urban land, allotting residential quarters, establishing a new market site, and reserving an area for the military. By the 1920s Jigjiga was growing as Amharic-speaking settlers, Arabs and Indians, and more Somalis arrived. Further growth occurred in the late 1920s when a new governor, Gadla Giyorgis, established a larger garrison for soldiers known as *Lugo Safar* in the northern part of town. He also constructed a new government headquarters or *gibbi* in the northwestern part of town. Jigjiga's expansion from the 1940s to the 1960s occurred largely in the northern part of the town and can be associated with the security of Amhara (and other *Habesha*) settlement under state protection.

## Somalis and other groups before 1977

Local spatial organization was shaped by these connections to "elsewheres" that ethnic networks of administrative and commercial power entailed: mainly Amhara or Amharized Ethiopian administrators and soldiers were shaping urban development on the north side of the town, while Somali and Arab commercial interests shaped the southern half. When Italians occupied Ethiopia in 1935, they evidently incorporated these distinctions into their urban planning. The first cartographic data that I have located on Jigjiga is an Italian-drawn urban plan from 1938, which is reprinted in Tibebe Eshete's (1988) M.A. thesis. Without context, it is unclear whether the 1938 Italian plan reflected a pre-existing spatial organization or sought to create the layout from whatever existed prior to the Italian occupation. Figure 7.2 overlays this Italian plan with a 1941 British military map, demonstrating that by and large, the structure of the plan was realized before the British occupation. In Jigjigans' experiences, the town exhibits a layered coloniality shaped around this north-south structure, which continues to influence the geography of settlement and land markets to this day.

The division between a National District (*quartiere nazionale*) to the north and an Indigenous District
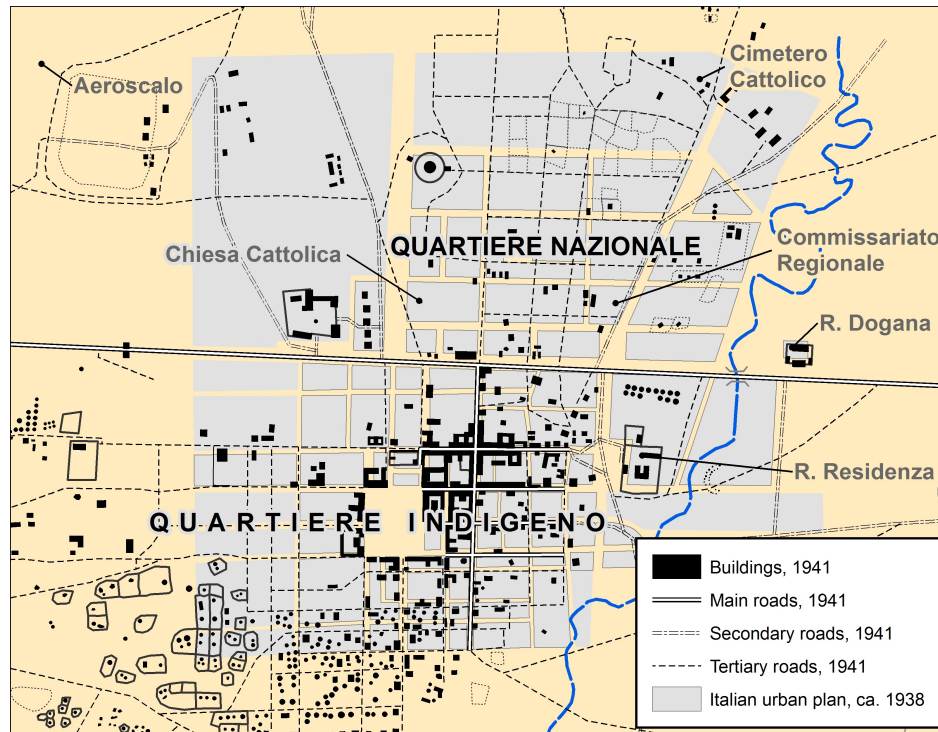
Figure 7.2: Spatial layout of Jigjiga, 1930s-1940s. The Grey background and map text represents a 1930s Italian urban plan reprinted by Eshete (1988). Features from 1941 are based on map EAF 357 in the Royal Geographical Society Archives, London.

(*quartiere indigeno*) follows a familiar theme of colonial racial segregation. Yet whereas the Italian plan developed for Addis Ababa included an explicit "Italian district" (Tufa 2008, 37–39), Jigjiga's National District designation appears to reference Amhara dominance in the District while also blurring it with Italian development in this sector. For example, the Italian plan designates the location of a Catholic church (*Chiesa Cattolica*) and cemetery (*Cimeterio Cattolica*). The 1941 British military map indicates no permanent structure at the location of the Catholic church; however, the main Orthodox church (St. Michael) was standing by this time, even though it is not designated on the Italian plan. The *gibbi* built by Gadla-Giyorgis, along with what might be residential or office blocks attached to the regional administration, is clearly visible in the 1941 map just north of the main road to the west of the town center.

By the 1930s, then, the town's geography had inscribed a basic division between government functions tied to Christian and Amhara identities to the north of the main road and Muslim and Somali commercial functions to the south. The maps from the 1930s-1940s suggest several other important observations: (1) the majority of permanent structures appear in the south of the town around the market site; (2) the walled compound-style residences in the southwest of the town indicate substantial Somali settlement on the edges

of planned and gridded sections of development; and (3) customs functions (marked on the map by the Italian term *dogana*) were carried out to the east of town, with the muddy Tog Jerer functioning as something of a natural obstacle directing traffic over the main bridge into central Jigjiga. Though this building would later become a school, the placement of customs functions on the east side of town has consistently marked off the town itself as a functional border between Somali and Ethiopian markets. Until very recently, circulations of Somalian currency and commodities stretched right up to the town, which functioned as more of an economic border than did the territorial border at Tog Wajale.

The extent to which Jigjiga grew and changed before the Haud and Reserved Areas were transferred finally to Ethiopia in 1954 is unclear; what is evident from the next available geospatial data, an aerial photograph from 1965, is that permanent construction in the town had expanded to the west and north and densified especially in the northern sector (Fig. 3). Turning to oral accounts of Somalis who grew up in Jigjiga during this time provides evidence of the lived effects and perceptions of segregation patterns and power disparities in the town and the broader spatial configurations which it conjoined.
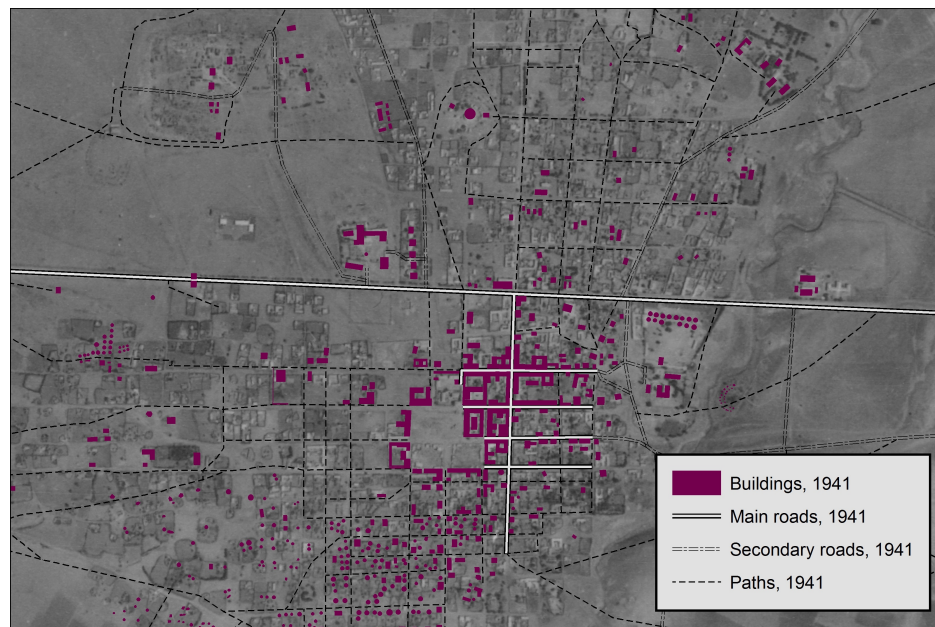


Figure 7.3: 1965 aerial photograph overlaid with 1941 buildings and roads to show urban growth. Aerial photograph courtesy of Ethiopian Mapping Agency, Addis Ababa.

Somalis who grew up in Jigjiga during the 1960s-1970s recall the town as highly segregated; sketch-map interviewees universally differentiated the town into the northern "Ethiopian" section (*Jaraqato*); an Arab and Harari section to the southeast, near the old Masjid Jama; and a *Suq Somali* to the southwest, where

all of my native Jigjigan informants grew up. Somalis living in Jigjiga at this time came primarily from three clan groups: the Jidwaq (specifically, Bartirre and Yebarre) comprised the bulk of farmers cultivating on the town's outskirts, but were also involved in commercial activities; Isaq inhabitants including traders well-positioned as brokers for Somaliland trade; and individuals from other groups who settled in Jigjiga for commercial, religious, or political roles. As an example of this last group, a Gadabursi Sheikh narrated to me how his father settled in Jigjiga and made an alliance by formally joining a Bartirre *jilib* (meaning agreeing to pay *mag* with a Bartirre lineage). Suq Somali was loosely demarcated into lineage areas, notably *Ḥaffadda Ablele*—Ablele District—named for a large Bartirre section settled in town.

While some Somalis reportedly joined the military and lived with the troops in the northern section of the town, all of my Somali informants grew up in the southwest section, Suq Somali. As Aden described the setting while drawing on the 1965 map, "this is the '*Mel ʿArab*' [Arab place]—the Yemeni arrived here with opportunity to immigrate there, so there are Arab homes here. This is the Somali side here [gesturing to the southwest]. And here," he says, waving across the south side of town, "is the Muslim side altogether." The Muslim side contains Jigjiga's early mosque, Masjid Jama, as well as shrines and graveyards dedicated to several local sheikhs. Aden and others recognized the north side's central feature as the Orthodox church: "That's where Ethiopians, you know, they buried—their cemetery for them, church for them." The north side of town, Jaraqato area, was "where all the Ethiopian workers—none Somali—lived."

The ethno-religious segregation shaped daily spatial practice of the town's inhabitants. "Mostly people here, they never crossed to that side," Aden asserts. "Unless you have something to do with the government or anything, because everything here is..." he trails off, but what follows suggests that he means everything here is "Ethiopian." "The theater—Ethiopian theater is here.... That's where when bands would come from Ethiopia they would play there. And the people who speak Amharic go on this street." He clarifies the separation in terms of a moral geography: "We'd never go there. ... Anybody who goes there, they'd be like prostitutes, drunks, and all those things at that time. And so the mentality was, 'Oh, don't go there'; it's—you know, bad people go there."[8] Other Somalis report surreptitiously playing pool and ping-pong with "Ethiopians" or entering the Ethiopian theater as children, but in general people reported adhering largely to the ethnic segregation. What is evident in these testimonies is that the feeling that Ethiopia was a different place from Jigjiga was reflected and reinforced by patterns and experiences of urban segregation.

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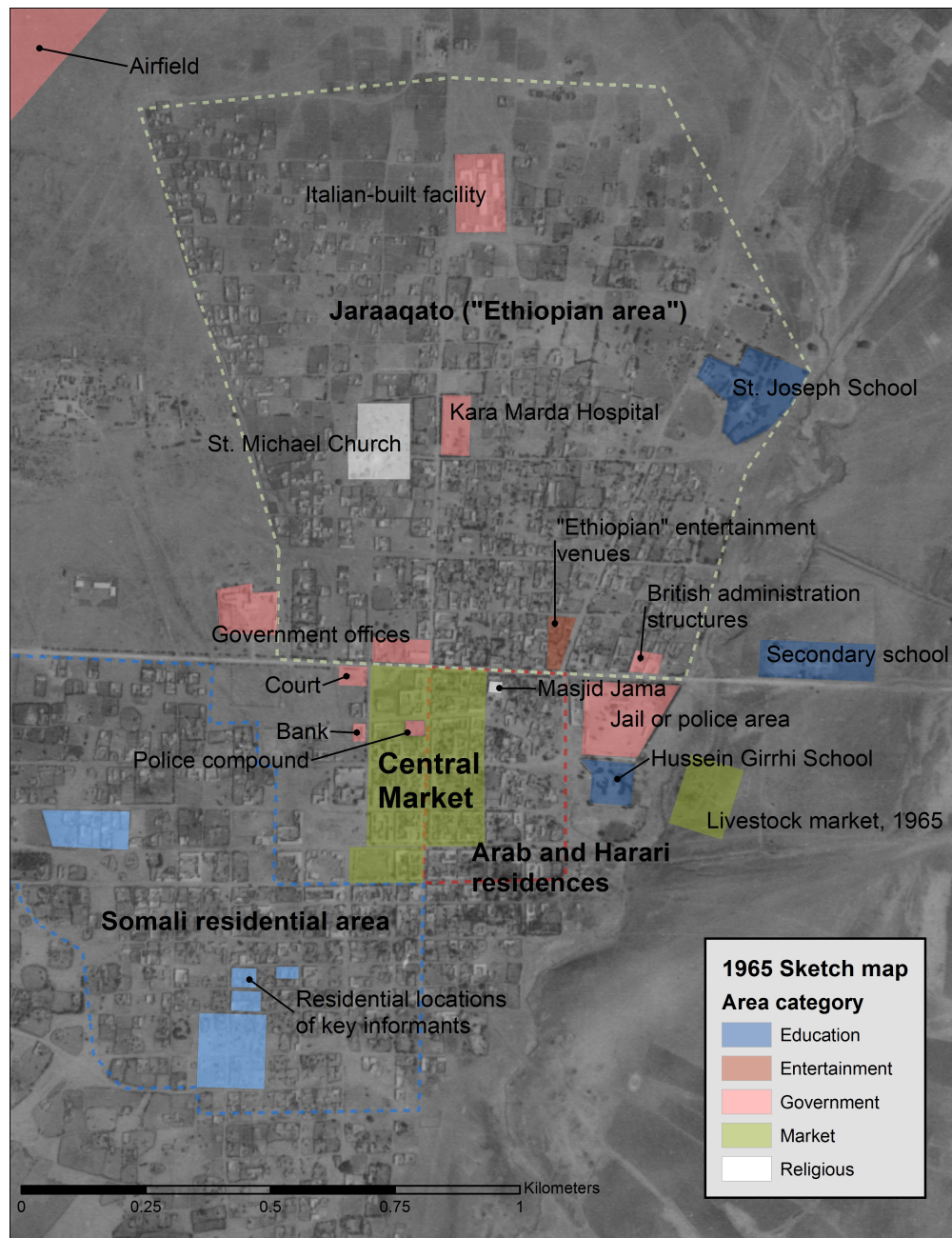[8]Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017

Figure 7.4: 1965 aerial photograph overlaid by areas marked by residents during sketch-mapping interviews. Aerial photograph courtesy of Ethiopian Mapping Agency, Addis Ababa.

The three ethnically-defined areas loosely conjoined in Jigjiga's central market, where traders of diverse ethnicities brokered borderlands trade.  Bartirre merchants opened restaurants and tea shops, and Somali women sold agricultural produce much as they do today. Informants named several street-level designations within Jigjiga's central market, including the milk market (*suqa ʿanaha*) and grain market (*hadhudhley*), where Aden's mother sold their family's farm produce.  The economy exhibited a diversity of functions among extended family households, much as it does today: Aden's mother sold grain apparently grown by family members on the outskirts of town.  His father was a borderlands broker, sometime smuggler, and established connections to the highlands by marrying a Harari woman, which cemented his position trading a type of cut *chat* known as *tajaro*.

Somalis who grew up in Jigjiga widely reported fleeing the town during the 1977 war, as detailed in Chapter 4.  As Somalia began to crumble in the 1980s and into 1990, they began to trickle back to Jigjiga and take up residence once again in old family homes.

## Becoming a regional capital: Jigjiga in the 1990s

Urban growth throughout Ethiopia slowed under the Derg administration in the 1980s; Jigjiga barely grew between 1977 and the transitional period from 1991-1995 during which federal rule was forged. Layering buildings shown in the 1941 British map and compounds in the 1965 aerial photograph over the next available aerial imagery—from 1996—shows that the town maintained its general shape (Fig. 7.5). Building was concentrated to the west of the Tog Jerer with the exception of NGO facilities associated with the Southeast Rangelands Project built to the east and an expansion of Bartirre farming and settlement to the southeast.  Sketch-mapping carried out with several informants who resided in Jigjiga during the 1990s pointed to substantial carryovers from dynamics of colonial-era ethnic segregation, but also hints of initial transformations into a more Somali town.

Perceptions of an Ethiopian- or Habesha-dominated area on the north side of town remained strong. "Jigjiga was like the Amhara areas and the Somali areas," said one informant.  "Only the market was a shared place. No one could cross this area." A significant mechanism upholding ethnic segregation was not simply the division of political and economic power or a moral geography of Christian versus Muslim space; by the 1990s, informants recounted localized gangs known as "China groups" controlling neighborhood access. "There were 'China groups,' or youngsters; they don't allow you to come to the Amhara area—no
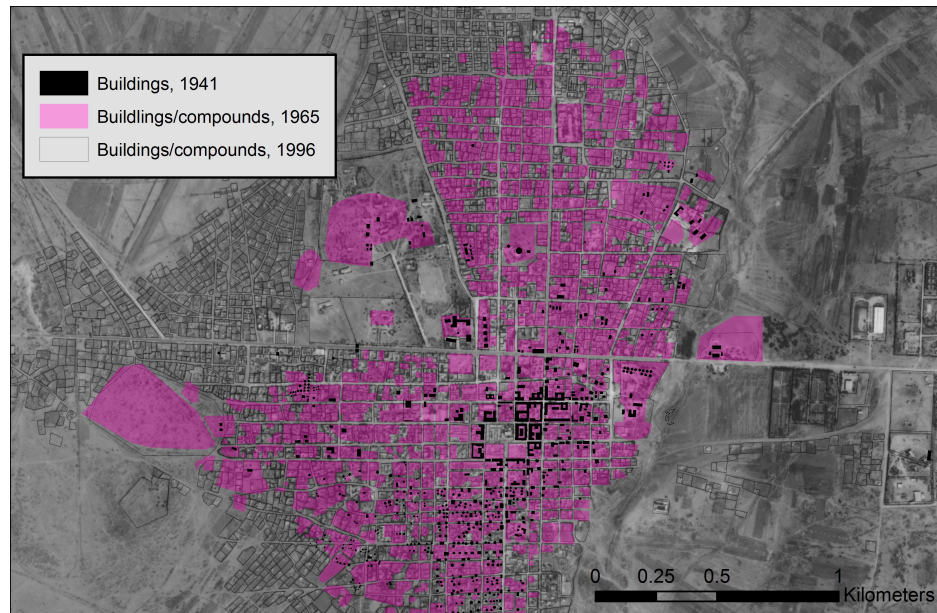
Figure 7.5: Historical aggregation of Jigjiga: 1941 structures and 1965 compounds layered over the extent of development in 1996. Aerial photograph courtesy of Ethiopian Mapping Agency, Addis Ababa.

Somalis can come to Amhara areas in the city... No Amhara can go to Suq-Yare, you know?" Jigjiga was "a divided town."[9] It was not ethnicity in general terms that constructed these divisions, but neighborhood-based configurations shaped by the broader histories of ethnic relations.

Divisions between Somali and Habesha areas, still evident in sketch-maps of the 1990s (Fig. 7.6), are complicated by resident's descriptions of divisions between certain Somali groups. While informants describing the town in the 1960s described Suq-Yare to a limited extent, several current businesspeople who grew up in Jigjiga during the 1990s were sharply aware of the predominance of Gaboye settlement in Suq-Yare, in contrast to the settlement of Bartirre to the southwest and a more mixed Somali settlement to the west. Gaboye are among what observers have termed "outcast" Somali clans, essentially a caste group of Somalis associated with a culture of handcrafts and labor rather than pastoral livelihoods. Suq-Yare remains a "ghetto" today, under-resourced relative to the rest of the city. Another spatial distinction voiced by several informants was the presence of an IDP settlement of predominantly Gerri Somalis who fled from fighting surrounding the demarcation of the border between Oromia and Somali regions in the early 1990s.[10] Informants interviewed for this map included people hailing from Isaq, Gadabursi, Jarso and Yebarre. All grew up in Jigjiga's southwest quadrant, though in most cases relatively close to the main roads and market

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[9]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017
[10]See Kefale 2010

areas rather than deeper into the lineage-designated areas of Ablele and Bah-Sudi, which today have become the mixed neighborhood of *Waraabe-Salaan*.

As was the case in the 1960s, the central market served as an area of intersection and overlap between these diverse groups. On the south side of the main road was Jigjiga's bus depot or *manahariat*, facilitating connections to the border, to Harar via Babile, and to other nearby towns like Chinakson and Dhagaḥbur. This transportation hub was located close to Jigjiga's CBD, somewhat more differentiated than it had been in the 1960s. Informants identified the grain market (*hadhudhley*), meat market, Taiwan Market, *Fawq Dhere* ("Tall Building")—perhaps Jigjiga's most famous store—and densified areas of hotels, restaurants, trade and entertainment.

Regional political shifts and conflicts in the 1990s accelerated Jigjiga's growth, according to one of the city's former mayors. The forced transfer of the regional capital from Gode to Jigjiga was implicated in broader dynamics of regional conflict. After the ONLF was ousted from regional politics, "the regional government got really established in Jigjiga, after 1997." This brought new dynamics of urban growth which are unique to Jigjiga. Kemal—the former high-level official whose narrative featured prominently in Chapter 3 of this work—argues: a unique aspect of Jigjiga is that "every town of our region—of Somali—every town, if you want to live there, you have to join with that clan. But here, that doesn't work." He emphasizes the market drawing diverse groups into Jigjiga historically, and the capacity of non-Jigjigan clans to construct their places through purchasing land on the market. Yet this was layered with federal political shifts that brought other groups flocking to the city: "there were some times Ogaden clan were president, then all of the people of that clan were coming here. Some other times Isaq became the president, then those people were coming and adding up here."[11] Yet it was not only political and clan attachments that brought people to Jigjiga. Like waves of Gerri from the Chinakson and Tuli-Guled areas joining the city in the early 1990s, displaced Ogadenis fled from counterinsurgency campaigns in the Ogaden during the early 2000s. Trade, political power, and displacement conjoined in shaping the city's rapid growth.

A few years later, the advent of "real" federalism under Daʕud and his successor ʕAbdi gave Ogadenis the administration, "the source of income, the source of power—the source of economic power." Many Jigjigans narrate the rise of what might be termed a Rer ʕAbdille "clanocracy." Ogaden supremacy is often understood as extractive, especially since many "local" Jigjigans perceive Ogadenis as likely to invest in

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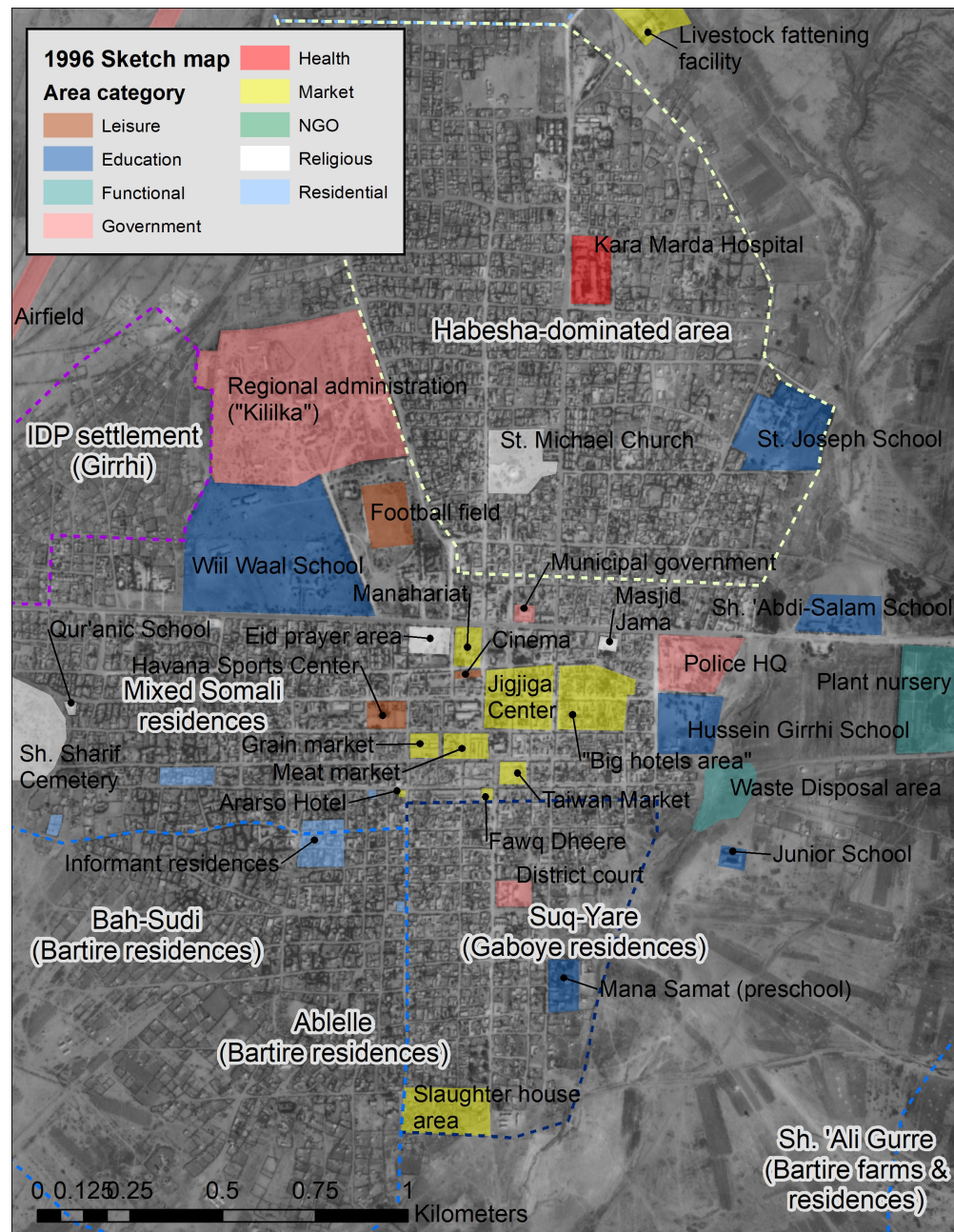[11]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017

Figure 7.6: 1996 aerial photograph overlaid by areas marked by residents during sketch-mapping interviews. Aerial photograph courtesy of Ethiopian Mapping Agency, Addis Ababa.

their own clan-homeland towns such as Dhagaḥbur or Qabridahar. "Per day, there are millions and millions in revenue that the government collects from Jigjiga town," Kemal says. "They don't put it back into this city. They eat it." He recognizes, however, that wealth distributions under DDSI are not purely extractive: the Bartirre, Yebarre, and Gerri "were all dominated in one way, and again benefitted in another way. They benefitted! They were using their land as *qoodi* (land subdivisions for construction)—a plot of land became hundreds of thousands—millions!"[12] The administration facilitated and rode the urban expansion, but this was not a zero-sum game in which local groups were displaced and marginalized. Rapid urban growth created numerous opportunities, and political power concentrated among Ogadenis did not preclude market benefits for Jidwaq and others.

Though the city was increasingly Somalized along with the region, ethnic diversity remained a key facet of Jigjiga's identity. "When the economy grows, it attracts people," one former low-level municipal official says. "It attracts people to buy real property and assets, including—it's a border town between Oromia and Somali. So we can consider the population of Oromos or other peoples in the town, how they contribute. In other areas, you can't find these kinds of diversities because they are more occupied only by a single subclan or tribe." Facilitating ethnic diversity is the market: "there is no tribal control on the land market. Every tribe member is free to sell or to exchange or to give his land."[13] This description is in tension with formal state ownership of Ethiopia's land.

To say there is not strict clan regulation does not mean the absence of kinship command over land resources: the chains of legitimation that provide the land market with legitimacy still intersect with recognition of localized authority as part of constructing urban belonging in the borderlands capital. As the capital Somalized, some residents sold their land and then complained about the resulting uneven distributions of wealth in terms of Ogadeni takeover. Even if Jigjiga's land is marketized, private property is not necessarily permanent. The future always opens the possibility of claims to rights: the place of material objects in mediating people's relationships may change as the relationships change.

**Expansion to the present day**

Jigjiga's location on an open plain means that land scarcities are determined less by geophysical features than by government and clan-based modes of land tenure that impact its marketability for investment or

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[12]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017
[13]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017

appropriation. The creation of an urban planning boundary set the geographical limits of real estate markets; land beyond the boundary belongs to the community and in theory cannot be legally bought or sold. In 1998 a new urban plan was drawn up, and in the early 2000s the city began to expand eastward beyond the Tog Jerer and to occupy what had been farmland, first on the south and then the north side of the main road. Northwestward expansion likewise proceeded into an area of firmer, rocky soil now known as Sheikh Nur-ʿIse. With DDSI's rise in 2010, a set of new dynamics opened up. The administration immediately moved to spatially rearrange urban markets. Merchants—allegedly, particularly Gurage and Amhara merchants—were shifted from the central Taiwan market to a site called "New Taiwan" on the north side of the city. Kemal says, "Actually, it was moved there because there was plenty of land, and everybody can get room—issues like that. So the people said..." He trails off, but the sentence, in context, alluded to widespread accusations of ethnic discrimination in the market that displaced non-Somalis from the central Taiwan area: "...it was not like that."[14]

Elements of force shaped the market transformation, though interventions were often less obvious than forcibly relocating merchants. Jigjiga's spatial and market expansion has been paralleled by a rapid transformation in people's experiences and perceptions of the city, echoing Hani's vision of the transformation from village to capital (quoted in the introduction). Faisal, the investor from Ohio, reflected on urban progress even since 2013:

> My first experience when I came was like, 'Holy shit, the place has got so much... I mean, it's like a little hamlet with no buildings.' It was like, back in 2013... I mean, a lot of buildings have just risen up. ... I said, 'Where are all the buildings?' It was just nothing. It was just like a little—I mean, a way-, way-behind little town. You know? With no buildings, literally. I mean, no big buildings at all that I could say. So I was like—but again, that's one thing I was surprised about, that it was so ugly—the city. You know, to sum it up. And the other thing was the high security, everywhere. There was so much security, so many checkpoints within the city. Yeah, like, you can get out from your house and go to the other corner of the road, and you can have two or three checkpoints.[15]

Between 2009 and 2013, as the Liyu Police put down regional insurgency, they also eliminated the "China

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[14]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017
[15]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017

groups" from Jigjiga and established a highly securitized urban order.  Security forces and municipal administration were dominated by ethnic Somalis; yet the new urban order raised questions about who was "behind" urban politics and who ultimately benefited from urban restructuring.  Certain buildings and certain areas of the city became marked as the realm of government-connected *maalin-taajir*s, or of diaspora, while other spaces seem to have seen little development over federalism's course.

In the course of market develpment, new symbolisms raised questions about the security of investment on a broader level.  The central Taiwan market was demolished by 2012 to make room for a new structure, the government-funded Kali Mall named in honor of the alleged Kali Conference of 1948 (see Chapter 3).  For several years the lot sat empty, a site where cars were washed and water-bearing donkey-carts (*biyoleh*s) rested between delivering water to Jigjiga's southern neighborhoods.  Kali Mall's construction only began in 2018 amidst deepening government crisis that prevented ꜤAbdi's administration from finishing the work (Fig. 7.7).  Kali Mall, as a symbol of the city's future, is as ambivalent as the Sayyid's statue: How can elites build a massive mall in Ethiopia that mobilizes symbols of potentially "taking back the staff of leadership," seceding from Ethiopia?  More generally, if the symbols of such ambivalence are ingrained in the urban fabric, how do people continue to have such confidence in the region's stability?

The ambivalence did have effects more recently as investment stalled in 2015-2018, but by then the transformations had several years' momentum.  Diaspora returnees from Jigjiga started buying up plots on the outskirts of town by the mid-2000s, often through family intermediaries.  The area in the northeast quadrant of the city, today called *Badda ꜤAs* (Red Sea), was a favorite site and the land was controlled by Bartirre.  A former Jigjiga mayor recounts: "A plot of land sometime in 2004 in Badda ꜤAs area was exactly 40,000 birr, for four houses.  Yeah, *qoodi*—forty by forty [meters] was 40,000 (US $4,800) birr in 2004... 1600 meters square, 40,000 birr.  After 13 years..." At this, a colleague chimes in: "And before 2004—in 1999 or 2000, it was 9,000 birr [about US $1,100].  In 2000, it was 9,000.  I bought Mom her place in 94, 95 by the main road." The former mayor nods and continues: "And now, in 2017, after 13 years, it's like 2 million birr.  A small plot for one villa house which is 20 by 20 meters square—400 meters squared—is 500 or 600,000 birr [about US $20,000].  In this area—in Badda ꜤAs, the most expensive land area."[16] Jidwaq diaspora returnees like Aden often did not have to purchase land outside the urban development boundary for productive use in agriculture, but still bought urban plots and reflected on the money that local owners

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[16]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017.  Other investors also confirmed similar trends.  Musa spent US $17,000 for his residential plot, and Aden US $10,000 a few years earlier for one of his.

Figure 7.7: In Old Taiwan Market, a sign envisions plans for a future Kaali Mall. The sign hung for two years over an empty lot before construction started in 2018. Photo by author, June 2016.

of the land had earned through urban expansion. Past Badda ʿAs is Garab ʿAse, a hill on which the regional administration's headquarters sits. "All this land is real estate land now, sold by Bartirre," says Aden. "Yeah, they made a lot of money. They sell individual land for like 200,000 birr, 500 square meter... Every 500 square meters they make 10,000 dollars."[17] These prices are higher than those down the hill "in town," but across the city, real estate prices increased sharply from 2010 on (Fig. 7.8).

New residential frontiers opened up for diaspora money in Badda ʿAs and in Jigjiga's old airport on the northwest side of town. While both diaspora returnees and government-connected locals own houses in both of these neighborhoods that one young local termed the areas of "royal people,"[18] the prevalence of

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[17] Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017
[18] Field notes, 6/10/2015
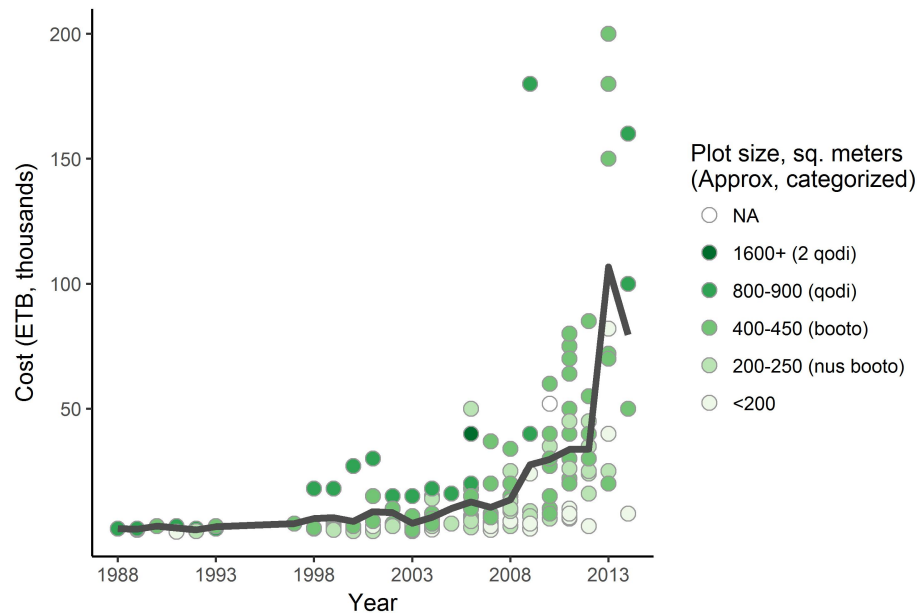
Figure 7.8: Reported cost of land in Jigjiga's Qebeles 5 and 7, by year of purchase and size of plot. Line shows mean plot cost per unit (*booto*). Data from Jemal Mahamed Yusuf, 2014.

government elite settlement in the old airport gave rise to the derogatory nickname Marsin, referring to ʿAbdi Iley's clan homeland in the northeastern Ogaden. Even if real estate transactions took place in a market, it was one heavily influenced by administrative kickbacks that arbitraged political control over urban planning to create market incentives for supporters. The reliance of such investments on government legitimacy meant that there was not a transactional *exchange* of urban land for political loyalty, but a leveraging of both simultaneously to construct dependency: investors could not take the land and then flout the administration. Land mediated dependence on DDSI. Rumors abounded of political opponents who found buildings on their property suddenly bulldozed.[19]

As investors flocked to Jigjiga (despite the threats of losing their investments), portions of the CBD underwent redevelopment. Hotels and several-story office parks popped up along central thoroughfares. Yet local businesspeople do not describe this process in terms of pure marketization of land and abdication of social responsibility. Even as DDSI allegedly sought to sever markets from social relations and

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[19]Informants in both individual and group discussions agreed that ʿAbdi had used urban property and planning in Jigjiga as political weapons. "A story is that one day he got in a fight with someone in Dire Dawa, and subsequently bulldozed his property in the center of Jigjiga (just northwest of the Sayyid). He wanted to build a new structure there, but the federal government told him not to" (Field notes, 12/26/2017). A former urban official affirms, "It's absolutely true. If you say something against him, he will call the city administration, and they will bring up the location of your plots of land, and within one minute the bulldozers will be there! They will just tell you, 'This is supposed to be a road,' and they will bulldoze the house. He has done that to people who opposed him" (Field notes, 12/27/2017).

increase their reliance on state property controls including titling, investors often pursued other means of legitimizing investment.  Urban planning protocols requiring new buildings in designated central areas to be multi-level structures ran up against both shortages of local capital and the power of non-state modes of property legitimation, as Yakob describes.

> If you didn't built a *fawq*—ground plus four—you wouldn't get permission, *wallaahi*.  Permission would be given to you if you brought plans for at least a ground plus four....  It was obligatory that you build a *fawq*.  But the people who were there on the main roads, they were local people, nationals.  They don't have the capital to build a *fawq*.  [City officials would say,] "OK, you don't have capital?  Then you leave.  Someone else who has capital will come."

The City Administration's efforts at redevelopment, however, were problematic for at least some more conscientious investors:

> But most Somalis are religious (*dad diin weeyaan*).  They don't like to take something from others, because there is a *hadith* that says, "Do not take land from people—even one hand-length."  It's forbidden.  Otherwise, in the hereafter...  Allah will put that land on your head (*Madaxaa ayuu ku saarayaa*).  It's very heavy; it can't be carried.  So the people believe that *hadith* and they don't touch the land.[20]

As the city administration, in coordination with DDSI, sought to leverage land grants as a means of garnering elite buy-in to state-building, according to many accounts it proved difficult to loosen the holds of religion and egalitarian orientations on Jigjiga's urban land—to "disembed" a market from other moral concerns.  Formerly government-owned land offered one opportunity: Diaspora returnees and *maalin-taajir*s constructed several major buildings along the main roads, some on privately-purchased plots and others on former government holdings.  (The old bus rank or *manahariat*, for example, was replaced by a business park owned by the family operating the Kaah *ḥawala*.)  Among prominent investors were some of the region's prominent businesswomen, including women who had made fortunes in the *chat* business.  Yet the urban landscape does not in all cases evoke a clear line between the fast money of government-connected *maalin-taajir*s and more locally legitimate ownership.  Several of the women who have made their money

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[20]Yakob, audio-recorded interview, 12/3/2017

in controlled markets have some legitimacy in Jigjiga because they are known and some pre-existed the DDSI administration. When discussing Zuhura's wealth, for example, people commonly reference stories that she used to be a street vendor in Jigjiga—she is not some anonymous capitalist, but rather a known one. Questions about legitimate ownership and the acceptability of inequality are connected to ethnicity and government alliances, but also hinge on understandings of the morality of the wealthy and their personal responsibility to those who depend on them.

## Everyday egalitarianisms

On a map, and in the experience of some Jigjigans, DDSI's rise resulted in increasing class segregation. Badda ⁽As and Qomada are sites of large villas surrounded by razor-wire-topped walls, of expensive land available only to Jigjiga's most wealthy. Monthly rent for a house in these areas in 2017-2018 could top 15,000 ETB (US $500), three times the salary of a mid-level civil servant. If one supposed the properties to be exclusive holdings characteristic of Western cities, the scene was bleak. Yet social relationships and sharing of resources cross-cut the emerging spatial differentiation and the rise of high-class residential areas. Local families took care of their diaspora relatives' villas, occupying them without paying rent and sometimes resisting owners' efforts to remove them when prospective renters came along.[21] Even when returnees and wealthy businesspeople were present, relatives' access to their homes spoke to the enduring importance of social obligations. In Badda ⁽As, relatives from rural areas knock on doors and demand that their wealthy diaspora kin pay for the hospital visit for which they have trekked to Jigjiga. Cousins show up at officials' dwellings and are given a place to stay while they attend school or look for work. On one hand, class identities that cross-cut clanship and ethnicity were important, especially among government-connected elites. On the other hand, the wealthy could not evade their obligations to claimants without suffering serious damage to their reputation. Even if residential locations were segregated, when the wealthy constructed houses, claimants knew exactly where they might be found.

Some of Jigjiga's wealthiest businesspeople operate by carefully managing kinship relationships, business partnerships, and government connections—at times blending these categories and at others trying to maintain social separation between them (and building distinct relationships in different parts of town). ⁽Abdisamat got rich quickly, but not through DDSI connections (at least initially). He was a good broker

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[21]In my own efforts to secure a house in 2017, I experienced this dynamic several times. I would be told that a house would be for rent and the owner only needed a couple of weeks to let his sister or cousin move out. A few days later I would be informed that the house would likely not be available, because circumstances were preventing the sister or cousin from leaving immediately.

for a flour factory and quickly gained a significant market share before parting ways with the owner, at least temporarily. He then began trading sugar using a creative strategy that bypassed restrictions on importing foreign-produced sugar into highland markets. By 2015, he bought a nice car, built a house in Qomada, and began networking carefully with DDSI figures to obtain lucrative government contracts but without getting caught up in political tensions. ʿAbdisamat and I would frequently go to the houses of diaspora returnees or other business elites, sometimes with kinship connections but often with none. Here he undertook networking in lavish living rooms with big-screen TVs and other symbols of class.

Several of ʿAbdisamat's cousins from rural parts of SRS live with him, in a room next to the quarters of the Oromo maid (*shaqaleh*). Some are in Jigjiga for education. Others work with JIG011 on menial tasks or just around the house. I regularly broke the 2018 Ramadan fast at the table with them: the wealthy capitalist and his dependent kin. A knock would come on the gate in the middle of the evening "breakfast," and another relative would join. ʿAbdisamat's wife and their family's *shaqaleh* cooked massive amounts of food every evening to prepare for the unpredictable crowd that might gather.

In everyday socialities, wealthy Jigjigans often attempt to control the times and spaces in which such claims occur. Their claimants are often famously frustrated by elites' frequent disappearance to other parts of the city and switching off their phones. Yet ʿAbdisamat and others remain committed to sharing with those who can claim a legitimate share of their wealth. And while forms of sharing often mobilize labor, claimants can by no means be subjected to alienated labor under their capitalist cousins. Wealthy businesspeople have sometimes suggested to me that as long as Oromo and Debub are present, Somalis will not work. Capital and labor, as in many other settings, are not just economic distinctions but also racial ones.

## 7.3   Ethnicity in the marketplace

The creation of SRS as an ethnicized "homeland" for Ethiopian-Somalis (including diaspora returnees) established social limits to land and capital markets, placing non-Somalis generally in a precarious position. Ethiopia was no longer a homeland for Ethiopians but rather a patchwork of ethnic homelands in which relatively distinct markets operated. If, as Yakob says, one works outside of one's homeland but invests in the homeland, non-Somalis' ownership of assets in Jigjiga was suddenly rendered at least somewhat more precarious. Non-Somalis' feelings of precarity were confirmed with the eviction of Oromos from the city in 2017. The intersection of political belonging and property ownership is, of course, a far-reaching

theme, stretching back to the definition of citizens in ancient city-states, and foregrounding issues of race and property in the Americas after slavery ended. There is a blurring here between discrimination based on assumed origins (as "foreign" to the space) and people's understandable feeling that political participation should involve some sort of material interest or "buy-in" to broader social stability.

## A schematic transection of the city

The texture of Jigjiga's social fabric can perhaps best be described through a schematic transection of the city, starting from Hani's house in Warabe-Salan. Like a number of their neighbors, Hani's family resided closer to the central market area in "District 1" during the 1990s, and moved to Warabe-Salan as the city expanded in the early 2000s. Pasture and planted fields stretch down from the slopes of the Gureis Range, meeting the city at Warabe-Salan. Jidka-soddonka, the 30-meter-wide road envisoned as Jigjiga's future beltway, cuts through the neighborhood, its dust-and-gravel surface awaiting paving. As one walks northeast towards the CBD—or, alternatively, takes the Force route-taxi—the town densifies. Warabe-Salan's residential structures are interspersed with frequent neighborhood corner-shops carved out of a house's wall. Every few streets there is a neighborhood mosque, and about halfway to the marketplace a mechanic's shop with rusted chasses baking outside in the dry-season heat. Sometimes a sputtering *bajaj* taxi breaks the afternoon's stillness. Nearly everyone is in the market during the day, though some of the men return home to chew *chat* by mid-afternoon.

Jigjiga's central market bustles throughout daylight hours, though the types of shoppers and types of goods change throughout the day. Early-rising Somalis joke that at dawn, "Jigjiga is Hawassa," its streets populated with Debub and Oromo laborers rather than Somalis. Debub day-laborers from SNNP lean on shovels, waiting for the next construction job. Others run to their wage work, preparing to clean restaurants and cook for the breakfast rush. In the vegetable market (*khudarley*), restaurant owners and managers barter for their daily supplies at dawn, followed by Debub or Oromo *ḥamaal*s (porters) who load their purchases on wheelbarrows, then take them to waiting *bajaj* taxis or cars for transport to the kitchens.

Mid-morning is prime time for household shopping and the market becomes a heaving mass (Fig. 7.9), people jostling each other and, during the rainy season, waiting impatiently in line to avoid the mud-pits that take over market streets. The market is a mix of cement-and-stucco buildings, crooked wooden awnings with tarps draped over them, and informal vendors selling from wheelbarrows or simply blankets unfurled in

Figure 7.9: Jigjiga's vegetable and spice market the week of the ʿEid holiday, June 12, 2018. Photo by author.

the street. An urban economic development plan notes that the recent clampdowns on contraband trade increased unemployment and informal enterprise in the market, with an estimated 72% of Jigjiga's businesses lacking licenses—most of which are concentrated in the central market's *qebele* 3.[22]

Continuing to the northern section of the market, one approaches the main east-west road through the

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[22]Jigjiga City Administraiton, "Economic Sector Developmental Program, 2009-2014 G.C." 2009. Document in author's possession.

center of town.  Around noon this area of restaurants and diverse retail businesses begins its daily boom with the arrival of *chat*, mainly from farms in Oromia (though some is grown in Somali Region).  Chat is one of the main sources of government revenue.  "When it comes to the number of people involved in chat trade in the town, it can be estimated to be several hundred, most of them being women."[23]  A survey of some chat sellers indicates no strict clan or ethnic control over the retail market: Jarso and Garre men sell chat beside Jibril Abokr (Isaq), Rer Isaq (Ogaden), Oromo, and Gurage women. The chat comes from from Awaday, Oboro, and Chinaksen.  They can make at least as much in a month as the salaries of high-level civil servants—most reported profits around 9,000 ETB monthly.[24]

Approaching the main road, ethnic composition begins to mix more visibly. On the north side of the main road, some streets retain a historic flavor of Amhara and Gurage predominance, with well-known venues such as Edom Hotel providing anchors for other ethnicities in an increasingly Somalized marketplace. The northeast section of the CBD, between the main north-south road and the Tog Jerer, contains perhaps the most visibly *Habesha* streets in a mixed city.  Neighborhoods farther north are no longer ethnically segregated but heavily mixed, with government civil servants and diaspora returnees living interspersed with and sometimes renting from long-time *Habesha* residents. To the northwest, these areas blur into the upper-class Qomada neighborhood. To the east, the Tog Jerer separates "old Jigjiga" from Badda ʿAs.

## A statistical snapshot

Before analyzing ways in which ethnicity *works* in Jigjiga, it is worth bringing into view some statistics regarding business ownership and investment.  According to both our own market survey and data from the Trade and Transport Bureau, Somalis are, not surprisingly, numerically dominant in both registered and unregistered businesses.  Because ethnicity was a particularly fraught topic after the forced removal of Oromos in 2017, enumerators in our survey did not generally ask for ethnicity, but observed (with the trained eyes and multilingual skills of Jigjigans) and recorded ethnic identities of business operators. Trade and Transport Bureau data included business names—businesses were often registered only under the name of the principal owner—which enabled Jemal Yusuf and myself to code for ethnicity based on naming standards as well as personal knowledge of many of the vendors.  While there were some variations in the percentages between our survey and Trade and Transport data, both sources document a significant

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[23]"Economic Sector Developmental Program, 2009-2014 G.C." 2009.
[24]Own surveys, February-March and June-July 2018.

predominance of Somalis in Jigjiga's market. They represented over 60% of registered businesses and of those documented in our survey (see Table 7.1). Among ethnically identifiable businesses in the Trade and Transport registry, Amhara made up the second-largest and Gurage the third-largest group, while in our survey this order was reversed.

Understanding temporal trends in market control requires juxtaposing some different types of data. Information on the year of business registration (Trade and Transport) and the year of business start-up (own data) show similar trends of rapid market expansion in Jigjiga in the years since DDSI's establishment. Nevertheless, these data do not account for business closures, including traders who left as well as those who have shut down and re-opened different businesses or different business premises during their time in Jigjiga. While Trade and Transport data show a fairly steady increase in business registrations since 2010 coupled with an increasing proportion of Somali-owned businesses, our own survey data in central market areas indicated that fewer businesses opened in the past three years—a time during which protests and perceptions of instability increased. Survey data also reflect the movement of many Gurage businesses to the New Taiwan location in 2013, and indicate a higher proportion of Oromo overall, perhaps in part reflecting our intentional sampling of "informal" *chat* vendors during afternoon hours.
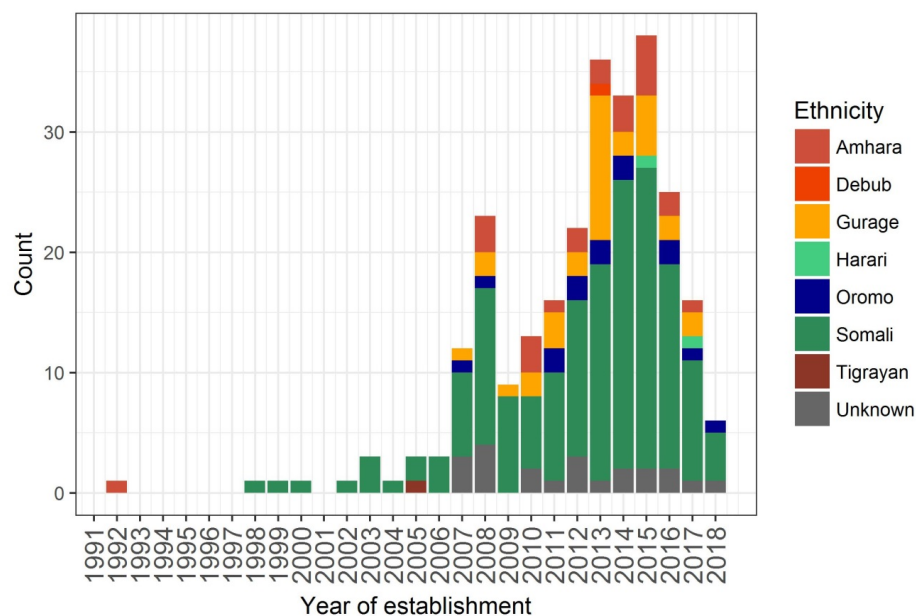


Figure 7.10: Number of businesses that reported their year of establishment, by year and observed ethnicity of owner. Source: own survey, June 2018.

| Source | Somali | Amhara | Gurage | Oromo | Tigrayan | Harari | Debub | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T & T, all types | 564 (69.6%) | 108 (13.3%) | 56 (6.9%) | 19 (2.3%) | 28 (3.4%) | 4 (0.5%) | NA | 31 (3.8%) |
| T & T, Retail | 68 (44.2%) | 41 (26.6%) | 31 (20.1%) | 9 (5.8%) | 4 (2.6%) | 1 (0.6%) | NA | 0 (0.0%) |
| T & T, Wholesale | 122 (74.4%) | 23 (14.0%) | 6 (3.7%) | 4 (2.4%) | 4 (2.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | NA | 5 (3.0%) |
| Own Survey | 168 (63%) | 23 (8.6%) | 35 (13%) | 14 (5.2%) | 1 (0.4%) | 2 (0.7%) | 1 (0.4%) | 24 (9%) |

Table 7.1: Ethnic business ownership in Jigjiga according to Trade and Transport Bureau (T & T) data and own survey, 2017-2018
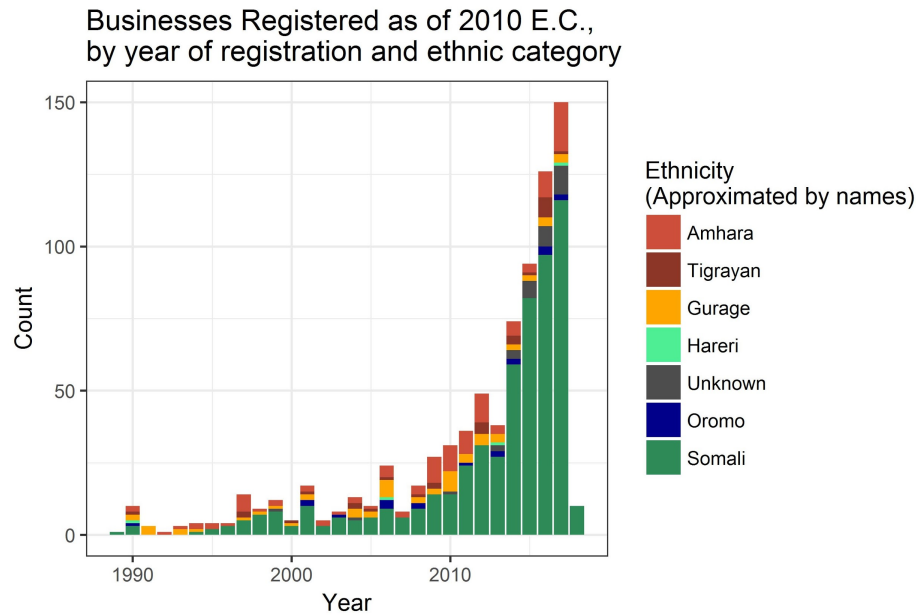
Figure 7.11: Number of businesses registered with Regional Trade and Transport Bureau, by year and approximated ethnicity of owner. Source: Trade and Transport Bureau, 2018.

## Pricing ethnicity

As indicated by the narrative observations about Jigjiga's marketplace, data on business registrations do not capture the distinct structural positions of different ethnic groups in the city, and the way these structural positions reproduce what ethnicity means. Ethnicity infuses both divisions between capital and labor and the meanings of money and transactional exchange in the market, although ethnic categories are transected by several class demarcations.

Somalis are proud to be Jigjiga's capitalists, relying largely on Oromo and Debub labor. Even after the events around Awaday, Oromos provided a massive source of Jigjiga's labor. While Oromos make up 2-5% of business owners in the survey and registration data, nearly every Somali household that could afford it had at least one Oromo houseworker (*shaqaale*). One former municipal official confided that the town's official population estimates did not include Oromo or Debub laborers, whom he placed at over 50,000, or around 10% of Jigjiga's population. These workers from other areas of Ethiopia are often migrants in multiple senses—having migrated to SRS from SNNP or Wollo, they are not invested in staying (say Jigjigans), but rather working to get enough money to transit Somaliland and try to get to the Arabian Peninsula, and perhaps from there to Europe.[25] Yet accounts of the past place such workers in a context of invisible Oromo

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[25] Field notes, 6/15/2015

labor in Jigjiga over the past century. Current elites argue that the Yebarre Sultan Sheikh Ḥassan in the 1940s brought Oromo to farm around Jigjiga, but did not enable them to assimilate (cf. Barnes 2004). The construction of their foreignness is enhanced by the territorialization of ethnicity under federalism.

Observing inter-ethnic relationships speaks to the diversity of ways in which ethnic boundaries are upheld and contested through understandings (and stereotypes) of cultural approaches to markets, morals, and valuation. Hashim, the elderly diaspora returnee who had informally adopted the young Gurage Alemu as his "son" often berated non-Somalis jokingly even as he spent most of his time with them. In discussing federalism's impact on regional market structures, Alemu pointed out that 11 *fawq*s in Jigjiga are owned by Gurage—including two Gurage who each own two *fawq*s.[26] Gurage are an interesting case in Ethiopia because they lack "their own" ethnic-federal region in which to invest, but clearly a significant number are doing business in Jigjiga, and succeeding. Somalis' generalizations about Gurage sometimes echo racializing stereotypes about Jews in the Western world. Jigjigans often claim that there are cultural differences in the amounts of start-up capital poured into businesses. Specifically, people say Somalis start big while Gurage and Amhara start small. Preliminary analysis of survey data do not indicate significant differences between ethnic groups in the amount of start-up capital they reported. Yet these types of claims about ethnic business practice and relative success are important to pay attention to as we seek to understand how ethnicity structures market access. Stereotypes shape how individuals interact with, anticipate, and trust or distrust ethnically distinct others, with implications for socio-economic organization.

Diaspora investors frequently lamented the poor work ethic that a reliance on highland labor instilled in Jigjiga's Somali youth—and indeed, I frequently observed a regionally-bounded attitude towards work among young men in Jigjiga. Young men derided the few Chinese construction contractors in Jigjiga for performing their own "low work" such as digging, cleaning, and washing their own clothes. In Yakob's shop one day, a young man flinched violently from getting dust on his clothes when handed something. I asked him if he was scared of dust, and he told me that in America it's fine to do dirty work, but here you have to be respectable.[27] Ethiopia's ethnic diversity compounds what returnees perceive as a problem of Somali unwillingness to work by providing ready non-Somali labor forces. The effect, as perceived by some of these returnees, is the leak of money from Somali-Ethiopia into Oromia and SNNP through intranational remittances and circular migration—parallel to processes that shift Somali wages abroad into

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[26]Field notes, 12/25/2017
[27]Field notes, 12/24/2017

capital in Jigjiga.[28] Yet, from another perspective, the distinctions stem from Somalis' relative valuation of relationships and, intertwined with these valuations, the capacity to command redistribution through means other than wage labor.

It is not that Somalis refuse to work. Rather, the price of their work is different, which observers explain in terms of their valuation of relationships and their obligations to kin and friends. As Jamal reflects on the price differences for the same trip in a *Habesha*-driven and Somali-driven *bajaj* taxi:

> One day I told a Somali guy I will not take any more Somalis!... A Habesha guy will charge me
> 20 birr. A Somali guy asked me 40 birr one day. I said to the guy, "The Habesha is asking me,
> hey, 20 birr—and you say 40 birr! It's twice over!" He told me, "The Habesha spends 50 birr a
> day (*Habeshiga konton birr buu berri bixiyaa*). I spend 300—for the family, the household."

Yet another common perception, which Jamal voices in the same conversation, is that Jigjiga's Somalis need 800 birr per day to chew chat. The habit is part of an easygoing lifestyle, tied into the relative valuation of relationships over work. Both African and Arab cultures, Jamal argues, "have a dependency: people live on each other. Your cousin comes and stays and eats, and—you know: when I have shelter and food and clothing and *chat* every day, I don't need to worry about life!" This is part of the Jigjigan "simple life" that Habtamu Girma (2018) examines as a feature of eastern Ethiopian culture. "People who never wake up to work," says Jamal, "but they live as good a life as the other one who wakes up in the early morning—or even better."[29]

Boundaries around kinship and ethnicity do not neatly demarcate responsibility or collective behavior. Somalis, of course, work—and Oromos invest. Competition in the marketplace, and fallouts between businesspeople, often lead to stereotyping about the role of money and transactionality in different ethno-cultural systems. On an April day, I climbed the steps to a vegetable broker's office on an upper level of a fawq in Jigjiga's produce market shortly after noon. The broker, ʿAli, is a returnee from South Africa who says he fought a price-war with Habesha merchants to establish himself in the market several years ago. Outside the office, there was a young Habesha man sitting on a stool with his head in his hands, apparently crying. ʿAli talked to him for some time, and then entered the office and complained to me that the man was crying because he had tried to steal money and gotten caught. According to ʿAli, the young man was already paid

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[28]Field notes, 6/15/2015
[29]Jamal, audio-recorded interview, 6/12/2018

and received a receipt, but now was saying that he had never received the money. The interaction launched him into a reflection on cultural relationships with money: "People are important; connections are important. Money comes and goes. You can get more money. But can you go out and buy another person? No." Transactionality, he argues, is a problem with Habesha culture: Habeshas will sacrifice relationships for a little money; they are not thinking about tomorrow. Somalis will give money for relationships.[30]

The following section goes on to explore the ways in which trust is reproduced among Somalis through debts and incremental payments, along with other forms of constructing dependence. It is worth noting, however, a topic that could fill multiple books in itself. Distinctions between Somali capital and Ethiopian labor elide the marginalization of Gaboye Somalis (a group categorized with Midgan and Tumal, "outcaste" Somalis), an axis of discrimination much discussed among Jigjiga's youth. Several informants critically commenting on cultural discrimination towards Gaboye while making little of Oromo and Debub labor exploitation. Two diaspora returnees were particularly virulent in their criticism: The Gaboye, says Yusuf, "work hard and invent things and are excluded for it. It's a shame."[31] A returnee from London criticizes Somali attitudes towards work more generally, using the Gaboye issue as an entry point for a broader critique:

> I don't get this Gaboye thing. To discriminate against someone because they work and are creative? It doesn't make sense to me. When I started my own company in the UK, I used to call Somalis who needed work and invite them to come work with me. They would refuse! I had a Ghanaian, a Nigerian, and some other West Africans working for me, but I would always offer Somalis a chance to come work with me and they didn't want to. One Majerteen guy came for a week, and then he wanted to go and take his money.[32]

The difficulty of harnessing Somali labor is both an oft-cited complaint of wealthy investors and a brake on inequality. As far back as 1900, Britons complained that Somalis refused to work consistently as wage laborers, and always demanded too large a share in the output. People would in many cases prefer not to work at all than to work for too little—and indeed, as long as they can either claim a share of someone else's wealth or establish forms of credit to negotiate their daily needs, they can afford not to.

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[30]Field notes, 4/24/2018
[31]Field notes, 10/15/2017
[32]Field notes, 5/20/2018

## 7.4    Entrustment in urban space and time

East of my rented house in Badda ʿAs, Fadumo, in her late 30s or early 40s, sat on a stool in a hole-in-the-wall restaurant, wrapped in a brightly colored headscarf and ladling ground-mutton sauce over plates of rice and pasta for a crowd of mainly young male Somalis. Her patrons mainly worked in the nearby university, customs office, and import-export businesses. As I repeatedly patronized her restaurant for a hearty $1 meal, Fadumo and her daily patrons repeatedly invited me to "become a customer" (*kustomer noqo*) by refraining from paying up-front and instead adding my name to the book of customer debts. My daily payments gave Fadumo an immediate profit on my meal, but were perceived to decrease my responsibility to return for future meals, in which case I might have accumulated more debt and ensured an increased long-term profit for Fadumo, strung out over time as she called me to account if I avoided payment for too long.

The indebted "customer" relationship is a general operation in Jigjiga. I regularly watched wholesalers hand over wheelbarrows full of goods while accounting the customer's name in the standard logbook. The other side of the exchange could easily produce confusion for an analyst looking for immediate transactions: sometimes, people would seemingly randomly show up at a wholesaler's and hand over a wad of cash while receiving nothing in return. The wholesaler would duly note the payment in the customer book. I originally framed the analysis of the situation thus: to a significant extent, credit and debt are not simply options in Jigjiga; they are expectations that shape the predictability of income. Yet to use the terms credit and debt risks painting these relationships as primarily marketized, as credit and debt have become in Western capitalist systems, governed by interest rates and forced collections. In fact, terminologies of credit/debt (*deyn*) seldom appeared in conversations or interviews. It is simply commonsense that a known and trusted customer has a right to delay payment. Such practices are important for two reasons. One, they make the marketplace something other than a transactional sphere of once-off exchanges. Transactions are tied up with other forms of solidarity and trust. Two, their formatting as commonsense rights suggest a relative valuation of people and their futures, the right to recognition that even if one cannot pay today, things may change tomorrow. These rights are not universal or completely separate from market relations: they must be upheld by incremental payments. If one fails to pay for too long when the lender is herself in need, the customer relationship breaks down.

A careful observation of Jigjiga's market reveals the predominance of rights to credit alongside cash

transactions in enabling exchange at virtually all levels. For a Western observer, this is particularly remarkable given the incredible degree of mobility among the city's residents.  As Warsame himself observes, "Culturally, it's a good system, but in a globalized world where your friend today can be in India the next day, it doesn't really work out too well."[33] At least some consequences of default know no borders or regulatory frameworks: in the transnational networks that connect markets outside of corporate-approved legal regimes, reputation is essential.[34]

Participants in Jigjiga's market engage in relationships of trust and dependence that are both enabling and constraining—they can be used, as Abolafia (1998, 69) suggests, both to pursue individual interests and to limit others' range of alternatives. Delayed transactions rely on shared culture and religion—and in most cases, ethnicity—as Warsame explains.  What prompted us to talk more in depth about the practice is that he called a young relative during an interview session and asked him to go pick up groceries for Warsame's household.  When the errand-runner arrived at the wholesaler's shop, the wholesaler called Warsame's phone to make sure he did, indeed, want to purchase 10,000 ETB (US$400) worth of groceries on his tab.

> This guy who I'm telling you, with the groceries, he will have thirty customers a month who each do their 10,000 or each 5,000—however big the family is. And some people will leave the country with three months' worth of groceries—30,000.  But then they will call up five years later.  Maybe they've gone—you know, they went through sponsorship and they didn't have money at the time, and five years later—because it's a religious thing as well.[35]

As various businesspeople explained to me on different occasions, the status of a trusted customer enabled not only delayed payments, but also benefits in pricing including currency exchange rates. *Ḥawilaad* or international money transfer operators such as Kaah and Dahabshiil in Jigjiga operated from inside Jigjiga's banks and were required to dispense money according to the bank exchange rate. In early 2018, that would have meant giving customers about 27 ETB for each dollar their friend or relative abroad sent. Familiar customers, however, could often get the market exchange rate, determined by the dollar trade on the border at Tog Wajale—32 or 33 ETB per dollar at the time.

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[33] Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

[34] "In high-end globalization, the contract is key and the businessperson who breaks contractual agreements will be subject to sanctions and lawsuits.  In low-end globalization, contracts mean little and courts are seen as useless; what is key is reputation. Low-end entrepreneurs cannot afford to be seen as less than fully honest and reputable" (Mathews 2017, 83).

[35] Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

## Equity, delays, and dependence

Diaspora investors sometimes opt for a more Westernized, transactional mode of relationship with local managers and employees and with urban society more generally. However, many of those interviewed relied significantly on local business partners who could not be reduced to employees and managed only through cash payment. The structure of the "average" diaspora investment model in Jigjiga is different from either the model of cash flows from global North to global South or of diaspora extracting profits from Ethiopia to fund their lives abroad. Successful and respected diaspora investors tend to look much more like long-term shareholders, often alongside their local business partners in a long-cycle, mutually beneficial relationship of slow returns that contrasts with the *maalin-taajir*s' illegitimate fast-money. Warsame is not looking for government contracts or quick profits. He invests through a distant relative who liaises with government officials and oversees the operations of numerous businesses—diaspora-owned as well as some belonging to government officials, and of course his own. Warsame at first describes him as a creditor, "but he's not really a creditor. He's a sort of..." he pauses.

> He's the one who looks after day-to-day operations of everything. Now the relationship between us is: any money that is collected from rent or the business, he keeps and he invests in his own business. Because we don't really need that money on a weekly basis or anything, so he can have a couple million birr at a time. And there's no contract or anything—it's just an understanding, you know: this is your property, the day that I leave, and you look after it like your own property. You don't really say "In return you're getting this," but he knows he has all that money, and he can invest. And he does that with not only us, but a lot of other different people. ... And you just call him at the end of the month and say, "How much profit has my business made this month?" And you write that down on a piece of paper, and you know—it's a trust thing. You don't even know if what he's telling you is the amount of profit you made; it might be more. But usually, if he's somebody who has that sort of social standing here, who's known by people...

He trails off, implying what is widely known among Somalis: "with Somalis, reputation is sort of a lifetime thing. It's also in his interest to not [cheat or default]." This creates a transnational system of mutual dependence: "there's a sort of understanding that when you even need that money—that if you clear out every

month's profit, you're not going to have someone minding your businesses."

> So it's not necessarily like a bank; if those thirty people rocked up today and said, "We all want our money," he would be in a lot of shit. But it doesn't happen that way. For five years I don't think we've taken 100% profit any year—you know, we'll maybe take 20% if we need it for something, leave the rest. So again, in terms of—when it comes down to the biggest thing in Jigjiga, which every business runs on, is contacts and trust. There are no contracts.[36]

From this perspective, the forms of diaspora investment in the region that appear to facilitate longer-term stability are less reliant on government legitimization—but also not reliant on the so-called "free market," an ideological formation in which private property prevails. While these investors with a view to the longer cycle pay the government whatever is required, they do not trust property entitlements legitimized by the government without seeking broader social recognition. Older investors still remember how the Derg took away family property in the 1980s as they limited the number of buildings a single person could own. Investors also recognize that constitutionally, the Ethiopian government claims ownership of urban property, even if Jigjiga's market is largely left alone from such claims. In the treatment of property, then, there is a recognition of the disjuncture between social and government legitimacy. Even as the regional administration opened up the region for diaspora investment, the actual modes of governance operative in Jigjiga's markets, particularly with regard to expectations about the future stability, favored socially-legitimated property systems over officially-sanctioned transactions. Cultural agreement not to suddenly withdraw assets from the system operate as a substitute for formal banking but still ensure predictable access to money should participants need it.

**Shareholding and sharing**

In the transnational cultural-economy (*dhaqan-dhaqaale*), kinship relations facilitate sharing, but networks of credit and trust stretch well beyond them. Shafi is himself a local manager of diaspora money, and he explains how he operates at both the intersection of kinship and non-kinship networks and of geographical flows of money and goods. His investment funds come from the US: "the people who invested with me"—in his case, in the hospitality industry—"are my family members, my sister and my brother." He explains his position in these multiple relational and geographic circuits: "When it comes to the investment,

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[36]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

most of them are in America, in the US. But when it comes to dealing with goods, and sending goods, and—kind of, business relationships, not investment—they are either in Dubai, or sometimes in Hargeisa. Some of them are also in China." In particular, he relies on one woman based in Dubai: "But that lady is not a relative; she never put any money in our investment. She's a business contact: we send money to her, and she sends the goods." Shafi describes his relationships in terms of reputation as well as ethnicity. The woman in Dubai "sends goods to many people. She's a nice girl."

I asked him: "OK, and what about the locations and relationships who you're connected with in business inside Ethiopia?" While my question intended Ethiopia as a space, he interpreted Ethiopia in terms of ethnicity: "We don't have contacts—like, we don't have joint investments with any Ethiopians in Addis, or in other places. Somalis are within themselves. We don't share things with these other Ethiopians. This is the truth!" He laughed at his honesty. "Not with Oromos, Amharas, Tigrayans—you rarely find a man dealing with these guys."[37]

To say that trust, waiting, and sharing are important is not to say that businesses in Jigjiga tend to operate like racialized versions of public companies in the West. Different sectors and different types of investments call for distinct modes of sharing and profit horizons. Aden, for example, is a well-respected investor, having received awards for creating employment in Jigjiga, and he has a number of people he identifies as business partners both in diaspora and in Ethiopia. He is not seen by friends as a profit-maximizing rationalist who has adopted Western culture during his 35 years in the US. Yet when he explains investment, specifically in government-connected sectors like import-export, he contests the notion of sharing and shareholding:

> Sometimes what happens is some people bring in cooking oil, rice, pasta, and the government opens up LC—license export/import. And that information is very important, too, when you're investing. And people say, 'OK, you pay this, we'll make this, we can divide that,' you know. So, yeah, those are the most important things, not... it's not going to be like the shareholders, and there's a business you have to share... Somalis don't do that... yeah, they like their cut quick, you know, they don't like to wait."[38]

Aden has waited for investment opportunities, and for his money to come to fruition, without taking complaints to the authorities. When it is possible to make a quick profit, investors will do so. Yet it is significant

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[37]Shafi, audio-recorded interview, 5/31/2018
[38]Aden, audio-recorded interview, 1/11/2017

here that Aden is talking about the government-connected import-export trade, in which he has dabbled. His other investments in agriculture and urban property operate differently, create opportunities for family members, and ensure that he and his wife can eventually retire in Ethiopia with family members to care for them and with strong relationships he has forged over years of coming and going, investing and sharing, treating people to meals and accepting their invitations.

Even if he shuns the idea of shareholding as a diaspora investment strategy, and voices a rather economistic view of some investment opportunities, the investments that he makes are not individualized private property. More broadly, if one simply looks at homeownership and residence location in Jigjiga, the image of increasing economic segregation holds. Yet if one considers the daily patterns of interaction, temporary stays, visits, claims on resources, and circulations arising from such claims, the model of segregation is more complicated than the "city of walls" model foregrounding physical separation (Caldeira 2000). The grounding of these forms of rights to time delays, shared wealth and mutual dependence, has two implications that are worth reflecting on in conclusion. First, we can reflect on the intersections of urbanism and capitalism as they take shape in this racialized regional system. Second, even if physical segregation in the city does not directly reflect social separation, it raises questions about the intersections between responsibility, welfare, and political participation.

## 7.5 Capital, time, and trust in urban space

Revised Ethiopian policies have attracted diaspora capital not only to Jigjiga, but to Dire Dawa, Adama, Harar, Addis Ababa, and other cities as well. Diaspora real estate investment dynamics suggested the reliance of these investors on globalized economies beyond Ethiopia: whereas diaspora buyers before 2008-2009 "represented as much as half or more of the demand in some higher-end developments" in Addis Ababa, inflated prices collapsed and orders for housing were withdrawn in the wake of the global financial crisis (Access Capital 2010, 12). Investors were connected to multiple economies, bridging worlds and articulating Ethiopia's cities with global capital. Yet a theoretical problem remains regarding how to think about diaspora returnees and their urban investments. Are returnees agents of development, bringing capital to Africa? Are they the vanguard of neoliberalism, bringing free-market values to Africa? If we consider capital as a relationship between people mediated through ownership of things, then answers to these questions hinge on the nature of responsibilities and obligations that investors take on (and to which they hold others)

when they bring their money into the regional economy—the question of who has effective command over diaspora resources whether they are within or beyond Ethiopia's borders.

To extend a point made by Maurer (2003, 74) conceptualizing diaspora investment and new transnational connections driving urbanization (and themselves also driven by urbanization) risks missing a key point. It misses the construction of both "capital" and "mobility" in the practices of people creating these forms of globalization. Mobility between the global North and Jigjiga is in one view simply a change of physical proximity without a inevitably creating a corresponding change in relationships of obligation or command over resources. The relative physical location of investors, claimants, and laborers in the system is clearly important—but it is mainly important insofar as it structures the capacity to assert and secure rights to distribution. In other words, the movement of money across borders does not inevitably constitute capital mobility. For one thing, wealth only becomes capital relative to its capacity to command work; money transferred into Ethiopia does not necessarily have the same inevitable equivalence with capital that it does in a monetized system of wage labor in the global North. For another thing, it is not only geopolitical borders that wall off wealth and opportunity from people's assertions of their rights to a share, though borders often do so fairly effectively. People can mobilize their rights to shares in wealth across borders—and the "owners" of wealth can deny their claims even when both owners and claimants are physically present in the same space. I have argued that residential segregation in Jigjiga has thus far not created social segregation. Claimants show up at their relatives' houses demanding payments. But this physical accessibility does not mean that they always receive what they desire; forms of evasion exist. The wealthy switch off their phones, disappear into less-known sections of town for the day, go to Dire Dawa or Addis Ababa for temporary respite when claims for distribution are overwhelming.[39]

Indeed, Jigjigans commonly assert that urban construction is not driven by diaspora money or government subsidy, but by a transformed relationship between people and place, by a higher degree of confidence in the future and in the permanence of investments. "This confidence," Jamal Yusuf told me one day, "it is established for people living inside Jigjiga, not only those outside—the diasporas. Most of the buildings or the development occurring in the town are not owned by diasporas. It is local people. Why didn't the local people contribute to the development of the city before that time?" He summarizes: it is confidence in

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[39]Compare this with Kristin Phillips' (2018, 3) portrait of claims and evasion in Singida, Tanzania: "But it did not take long for the most wealthy and well-connected of the village to flee the flood of claims: '*Amesafiri*' ('He has taken a trip') became the inevitable greeting the hungry received when they knocked on the doors of cattle-owners, businessmen, and ward officials."

property. The result is that diaspora capital has accompanied a broader transformation, but yet has still not effected class-based segregation of the town: "I don't see areas—diaspora areas, or diaspora schools, social segregation or changing the ladder of the community in economic terms. I don't see [returnees'] impact in a very significant way."[40]

Federal disbursements circulate into Jigjiga's economy, generating rapid market growth. Diaspora returnees bring US dollars and Asian commodities into the region, mobilizing labor and other resources. But do these constitute capital in the borderlands—the ethnic borderlands, the borderlands between legal regimes and cultural forms of appropriation and command? The connection between money and capital, argues de Soto (2001, 63), "runs through property." It is not the material circuits, but the virtual capacity for recognized possession—property—to make people accountable and assets fungible, track transactions, and thus provide the mechanisms for banking systems to work and for investment to function. "This capitalist apartheid will inevitably continue until we all come to terms with the critical flaw in many countries' legal and political systems that prevents the majority from entering the formal property system" (de Soto 2001, 68). But many in Jigjiga do not want this property system to emerge—perhaps it is better to have a place where you can be poor on your own terms than to lose your place by entering it into equivalence with foreigners' capital. As Ferguson (2015) suggests, personalized dependence and the capacity to claim entitlements may provide types of freedom that a depersonalized market system of (more or less) permanent dispossession would not.

Yet—and this is the second point I have suggested—even if a cultural ethic of claims and obligations remains strong, there remain questions about the intersections between responsibility, welfare, and political participation as property ownership and relations of obligation and entrustment span long distances. Jigjiga is a space of market growth and opportunity due in large part to federal subsidies and its borderlands location. New accumulations of wealth in the town, however, are subject to assertions of others' rights to a share—assertions which diaspora investors and wealthy locals variously recognize or seek to defer. The final chapter takes this up through a critical approach to social contract theory and neopatrimonialism.

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[40]Group discussion, audio-recorded, 12/19/2017

# Chapter 8   The social contract in an African frontier city

Between March and June 2018 I spent several days around Jigjiga with Qadir, a former high-level regional official of age 40. He had watched ʿAbdi Iley's ascent to the regional presidency and, he says, warned others in the government of ʿAbdi's authoritarian tendencies. In turn, Qadir had been ousted from government, though he remained a respected figure in a parastatal organization. Near the end of an afternoon we spent together in May, mainly playing with his children and watching Somaliland-produced TV shows, he asked me about the results of my research. I trusted him enough to share my findings about diaspora involvement in the region. I suggested that some returnees were investing for the longer term and in socially responsible ways, while others were looking for quick profits and seeking incentives from DDSI. He listened, and then made two points regarding how I should consider the results, from his perspective. First:

> This region is rented for business, to whatever clan is convenient at the time. A business person rents a room or a building. Once they rent it, what they do with it is their own business. That's how it is with this region. Right now it's rented by the Rer ʿAli Yusuf, and they are making their profit from it.

His second point related to the impacts of diaspora return on local development: "Most of the diaspora are looking for what they can benefit from here. They come to get free land, to get contracts—for their own interests."[1]

In 2016-2017, as protests in highland Ethiopia intensified, investments stalled. Yet diaspora returnees still showed up regularly in Jigjiga, and trade and residential construction went on much as before. Following the Awaday massacre, a common accusation was that everyone was simply trying to get as much profit from the system as they could before it inevitably collapsed. Public discourses villainized "rent-seekers" and

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[1] Field notes, 5/12/2018

other profiteers benefiting from political office.  On August 4, 2018, federal military forces surrounded Jigjiga.  ʿAbdi Iley was arrested and charged for his association with the killings of hundreds of Oromos that took place under his watch. Many of the businesspeople who had relied on DDSI reportedly fled the region. Others feared that with ʿAbdi Iley gone, the region might plunge back into the conflict and insecurity that had plagued it for decades before his presidency.

The unraveling of government authority provoked intense debates about the distinctions between investment and transaction, loyalty and self-interest—what might be phrased as "buying in" to a system versus "being bought off." The core question could be framed thus: what kinds of (trans)action equate to a vested interest in future stability of broader society? And what relationships enable people to command (or demand) actions that fall closer to buy-in (and shared benefits) than temporary transaction (and individualized profit)? Qadir's narrative seems to echo a much-discussed aspect of globalization: the potential for infinite extension of calculative rationality into all areas of life.  Jigjigans have watched people get rich quickly through government contracts. They have observed diaspora "returnees" appear and disappear from the city, some bringing piles of cash and others allegedly leaving with them. As ʿAbdi's government collapsed, many were openly discussing the convertibility of political power into material benefit, the capacity of diaspora returnees to exchange their coveted places abroad for positions of power in Somali-Ethiopia, and the directionality of power in a system that seems to diverge from the much-touted "diaspora for development" model of wealth transfer.  In short, Qadir and others were concerned that *even if* federalism and diaspora return were physically bringing money *into* Jigjiga, controls over the uses of money were simultaneously being displaced beyond the realm of social regulation.

In this chapter I want to reflect on state-building, diaspora investment, and the unfolding dynamics of this market frontier as *a politics of valuation and commensuration*. I argue, contra some neo-patrimonialist views that paint African state-building as largely transactional—unfolding within a "political marketplace"—that we must consider the negotiation of commensurability, the manipulation of temporalities, and the ways in which rights and other forms of power inhere unequally across a globalized landscape.  The analysis focuses on the government contract as a mechanism of social organization because it is a central concept in discussions about governance, the economy, and the legitimacy of wealth in Jigjiga. Contracts for provision of goods or services to DDSI are the most specific operation tying together regulation and opportunity for diaspora looking to fund regional development and fulfill the claims of their family members to a share

of wealth or employment. These contracts include agreements for the supply of goods, construction of buildings, or provision of catering services for government functions.

Theoretically, the concept of contractuality engages an analytic focus on exchanges or transactions that involve promises, expectations, and forms of trust and dependence due to three specific elements of uncertainty. One, the convertibility of power across domains—from monetary wealth into politics and vice versa—is never a certain operation. Because politics and economics are morally separated, there is no set market price for "buying" politicians, so to speak—and on the other side, not a defined amount of government responsiveness that will attract the loyalty of investors to government causes. Commensurability across these domains hinges on specific opportunities, requests, and promises, which makes conversions between political power and market opportunity an object of constant negotiation. Investors build relationships with politicians at different levels in the regional hierarchy, and bring different amounts of resources as they propose projects and business deals. Because of this, the boundaries of what can be exchanged (e.g., money for political support)—and what constitutes exchange—are key sites of struggle. Two, the distinction between "buying in" and "being bought off" involves cultural constructions of temporality. Assertions about time, and the strategic deployment of lapses between agreements and their fulfillment can be used to manage relationships of dependency and command. (This is particularly important to consider in a context where the equivalence between time and money is not culturally commonsense or enforced with interest rates.) Three, the shifts between physical presence (diaspora return) and virtual relationships (diaspora ownership or command) raises theoretical questions about the spatial demarcation of rights and responsibilities. I first revisit neo-patrimonial approaches, and then examine each of these three themes as they are manifest in Jigjigans' daily lives.

## 8.1   Contractuality and moral orders

When Qadir mentioned government contracts for diaspora returnees, he was engaging in a ubiquitous local discourse about DDSI efforts to gain political support through economic favors. Part of ᶜAbdi's success, contributing to his status as the longest-tenured regional president, stemmed from his negotiation of Somali Region's rights to federal subsidy disbursements. In large part through these federal subsidies, he "built businesspeople—awarded them with contracts," as Jamal, the 50-year-old diaspora returnee from Canada,

told me.[2]  Others complained that ʿAbdi channeled state resources towards diaspora Somalis, especially those from within his Rer ʿAli Yusuf lineage. As Yakob viewed it:

> Before this guy became president, his family [*jilib*, lineage] were working hard in America. They were working regular jobs, nothing special, and they were making money.  When he became president, suddenly they just threw down everything and came here and got contracts. They immediately became very rich.[3]

The specific issue of government contracts is an oft-cited cause of discontent among Jigjiga's businesspeople. They are awarded unfairly, on the basis of non-economic (kinship-based and political) considerations. They are often paid to regime supporters even if the work is not carried out properly, while people marked as having questionable allegiance often complain that their payment is delayed even when work is complete. Overall, they are understood as a practice through which DDSI created and sustained an elite class of supporters, an abuse of authority that constitutes a moral violation: "The locals—the nationals—lose their rights," says Yakob.[4]  This widespread view corroborates Parry and Bloch's (1989) argument that transfers of value from "transactional orders" of long-term stability—including governance and kinship—into short-term market relations—tend to be regarded as morally dubious in many contexts. More than this, however, it points to Jigjigans' distinctions between, on one hand, the independence and unaccountability created by fast-cash transactions—and on the other, rights to share in new opportunities that federal subsidies and diaspora investments created.

Jigjigans' narratives about contracts lend themselves to neopatrimonial interpretations of state formation, dovetailing with work by theorists including Bayart (2009; Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou 1999), de Waal (2015), Hibou (2004), and Reno (2004) about the African state as a tool of accumulation, about the blurring of private and public realms to deepen the power of elites.  Hibou (2004, 15–16) offers a perspective on contracts in this framework: "fortunes are made and unmade very rapidly—proof, if any were needed, of the political games involved in the procurement of contracts." (The focus on rapidity resonates with Jigjigans' complaints about *maalin-taajir*s.)  She sees such unpredictability "at the heart of politics," creating conditions for the exercise of power.  Hibou and others extend Tilly's approach to state-makers in Europe

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[2]Jamal, audio-recorded interview, 6/12/2018
[3]Field notes, 12/24/2017
[4]"*Kuwa lokalkaa—wadaniga—waxay noqonayaan, xaqoodi way waayayaan.*" Yakob, audio-recorded interview, 12/3/2017.

as "coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs," a view which Tilly argues "bears a far greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives," which include "the idea of a social contract" and "the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government"(Tilly 1985, 169). The benign notion of "social contracts" taught in Western political theory courses, in such a view, may be merely ideology legitimizing the concentration of power among elites.

Without adhering to the idealized view of "the social contract" in which government responds to the "general will" of society, Jigjigans' critique of contracts offers a framework for considering the moral and material terms of relationship between officials and constituents: the boundaries around who is included as party to such relationships, the temporalities of loyalty, and the legal and political consequences that may emerge from breaches of implicit or explicit agreements. Paul Nugent (2010) argues for this more generalized view of social contracts, recognizing that the consolidation of power—and the legitimacy of this consolidation in government institutions—may be sustained in a variety of ways. He sees actually-existing social contracts in Africa as "the product of historical compromises forged out of relations of opposition, and not a little conflict" between governments and societies (Nugent 2010, 43).

Carefully assessing the types of exchanges and agreements, the temporal frames within which they are negotiated, and the spatially uneven distribution of rights in today's world poses some problems for strands of neo-patrimonial theory. Bratton and van de Walle (1997, 458) define neo-patrimonialism thus:

> The essence of neo-patrimonialism is the award by public officials of personal favors, both within the state (notably public sector jobs) and in society (for instance, licenses, contracts and projects). In return for material reward, clients mobilize political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons.

This view frames neo-patrimonial relationships as essentially transactional. By this I mean that the time frame of exchanges appears immediate because time is rendered analytically invisible—but also that the price of political loyalty appears easily determined and settled. Neo-patrimonialists have argued that distributions of material reward tend towards a general contractualizing of relations, which results in the disappearance of ties of allegiance (Bafoil 2004). Even while working to modify the neo-patrimonial perspective by analyzing "diverse and changing forms of neo-patrimonial governance within different political-economic circumstances," de Waal (2015, 32-33) uses Bratton and van de Walle's analytical language of

distinct moral orders (the state, society), and collapses temporality into a transactional "political market-place" of short-term maximization.

Moral and functional equivalences between culturally distinguished modes of action—in this case, political loyalties, market exchanges, and social obligations—are subjects a line of anthropological thought that has built on and refigured "spheres of exchange" theories. Paul Bohannan (1959) and others explored how West African societies established distinct realms in which certain goods could be exchanged, often with particular rituals required for the "upwards" conversion from subsistence goods (e.g., vegetables) to more durable goods (e.g., metal bars) and finally to the order in which wealth could establish kinship connections through marriage. In a vein that resonates with Bafoil's more recent view, Bohannan posited that money tended to break down these spheres of exchange and in doing so undermine the accessibility and stability of social alliances. The neatness of the framing produced immediate critique, but shaped the rise of the "wealth in people" framework in which Africans were supposed to characteristically invest material resources in the accumulation and management of relationships (cf. Guyer 1993).

That relationships are themselves objects of appropriation and accumulation that are intertwined with and yet distinct from things was in some ways a rediscovery of the intersections between property and relationships that classic theorists like Weber or even Rousseau had been concerned with. Rousseau's concern with the legitimacy of property established through a social contract is an idealized case in point. Weber thought more carefully about the similarities and differences between appropriating people and appropriating things.

> For all property in natural resources developed historically out of the gradual appropriation of the monopolistic shares of group members. In contrast to the present, not only concrete goods but also social and economic opportunities of all kinds were the object of appropriation. ... For example, a person subsisting by, or gaining an income from, the cultivation of a given field is bound to a concrete and clearly delimited material object, but this is not the case with customers. Appropriation is not motivated by the fact that the object produces a yield only through amelioration, hence that it is to some extent the product of the user's labor, for this is even more true of an acquired clientele, although in a different manner; rather, customers cannot be "registered" as easily as real estate. It is quite natural that the extent of an appropriation depends upon such differences among objects. (Weber 1978, 343)

Even in marketized contexts, advertisers and public relations managers recognize that price and consumer loyalty operate alongside one another. In politics and markets, there is no simple dichotomy between loyalty and transactionality—though this does not stop the distinction from playing a key role in people's understandings of their own and others' behavior. The distinctions between citizen, client and customer hinge on their formatting as "political," "social," or "economic" relational domains. Claims that relationships fall into one of these categories shape conceptions of what types of rights and obligations can be demanded.

People, unlike other objects of appropriation, can leave, can shift their loyalty, and can make demands and organize force to push back against their patrons. This observation undergirds a set of classic arguments about wealth in people in Africa: the need to retain followers tended to check absolute power, rendering such societies not necessarily democratic, but at least leaders were somewhat accountable to followers due to their "exit options" of mobility. "In such a world," argues Ferguson (2015, 145), "dependence was not simply bondage or unfreedom (as the emancipatory liberal mind tends to assume). On the contrary, in a social system put together around competition for followers, it was actually the existence of possibilities for hierarchical affiliation that *created* the most important forms of free choice." Ferguson continues: "even as capitalism shattered the old social systems and drew the entire subcontinent into a world of wage labor and commoditization, *people* continued to be struggled over" (Ferguson 2015, 147).

This continuity Ferguson perceives must be analyzed within the radical differentiation of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities comprised by a complex transnational economy and massive diaspora population. A diasporic vision of wealth in people diverges from classic studies of chiefly authority and its conversion between economic, political, and social domains of life. Bourdieu (1977, 195) employs Malinowski's (1921, 12) classic phrase, a "tribal banker"[5] to highlight the chief's capacity to "build up a capital of obligations and debts which will be repaid in the form of homage, respect, loyalty, and, when the opportunity arises, work and services, which may be the bases of a new accumulation of material goods."

Elements of this conceptualization of power appear apt to assessing DDSI's personalized systems of enrichment and suite of techniques such as contracts that organize support. Yet other elements of the

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[5]Malinowski (1921, 11-12) cautioned against the pretentious or literal use of the term: "The chief's economic *rôle* in public life can be pointedly described as that of 'tribal banker,' without, of course, giving this term its literal meaning. His position, his privileges, allow him to collect a considerable portion of tribal yield and store it, also to transform part of it into permanent condensed wealth, by the accumulation of which he gives himself a still bigger fund of power. Thus, on the one hand, the chief's economic function is to create objects of wealth, and to accumulate provisions for tribal use, thus making big tribal enterprises possible. On the other hand, in doing so, he enhances his prestige and influence, which he also exercises through economic means." He continues: "It would be idle to generalise from one example, or to draw strained parallels—to speak of the chief as 'capitalist' or to use the expression 'tribal banker' in any but the most unpretentious way."

smooth systems described by Bourdieu, Malinowski, and others, fail to come to grips with a multi-ethnic and transnational set of relationships characterized by spatially and socially distinct regulatory systems and layers of differentially institutionalized power, organized by geopolitical borders and articulating in globalizing cities. In a context of vast inequalities in wealth and power between polities and vastly different opportunities afforded their citizens, the logics of accumulating relationships and forging capital through them can work in multiple directions.

Bourdieu sees the accumulation of such capital as having a "personal price," both that the power-holder redistributes goods and money and that they have "virtue." (A sort of modification of "wealth in people" analysts' suggestion about checks on political power.) As subsequent critiques have pointed out, a nexus of the issue is, precisely, price and valuation. Bourdieu applied an economistic framework that assumes people can and do estimate the relative value of things and relationships in a relatively straightforward way. Subsequent theorists have argued for a more complex understanding of how things, money, and relationships are differently valued, and how power relations lurk behind seemingly commonsense elements like price and the use of money (Graeber 2001; Gregory 1996; Guyer 2004; Strathern 1992). Graeber (2001, 254) argues for a view of value as "the way actions become meaningful to actors by being placed in some larger social whole, real or imaginary." He continues by suggesting that time and potentiality are important elements: things are also valued "partly by what they have the potential to become." Such thinking, I have suggested, underlies what might be thought of as "credit" in Jigjiga's economy, but reframes this as (trustworthy) people's right to a future. While in Western contexts, the time-value of money specifically has taken central stage in valuation, informing interest rates and other modes of structuring money supplies, this is also a cultural construction and not a self-evident assessment of monetary value (cf. Maurer 2003). In addition, things and relationships have importance in multiple "larger social wholes," often at the same time. This raises the potential for their valuation, circulation and accumulation in multiple forms. Alongside notions of capital as something "circulated" and "accumulated" over time, then, we need notions of how multiple people can claim rights to the same wealth through debts and payments (Hart 1986; Maurer 2007) as well as forms of "arbitrage sensibility" in which people equate valuations in multiple domains of life (Mellor and Shilling 2017; Miyazaki 2013; Riles 2014).[6]

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[6]Miyazaki (2013, 61–63) discusses "arbitrage sensibility" beyond the financial act of arbitrage as an underlying associational logic enabled by the ambiguity of exchange that requires people to believe or doubt the very categories that make arbitrage possible. "It is such ambiguity that allows the category of arbitrage to be stretched to various objects of arbitrage. Ambiguity allows associational reasoning. Abritrage's relativistic stance in turn requires its further extensions.

This perspective reframes Jigjigans' critique of government contracts in a way that I find renders the political-economic scene in the Ethiopian borderlands much more rich than do neo-patrimonial interpretations. In order to open up the perspective, and perhaps end this analysis with more questions than answers, in what follows I reverse the order of the problematic laid out in the introduction. First, I consider some ways in which people understand and value space and convert their claims to it (or appropriation of it) into opportunity in other domains. This includes assessing how federalism has created scope and demand for new financial transactions of which the government contract is an important one. Second, I focus in on the manipulation and strategic use of time to redraw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. These operations sometimes intersect with, and at other times work against, the construction of inclusion through spatial boundary-drawing. Third, I build on Jigjigans' perspectives on the values of relationships across space and time to consider what notions of the relative valuation of political inclusion and market stability suggest about the futures of capital, property, and authority in the borderlands city.

## 8.2   Space: the contracts federalism enables

"This region is rented for business." Qadir's phrase delegitimizes DDSI's pursuit of collective Somali-Ethiopian interests by framing their authority as a market relationship based on expectations of personal profit. Undoubtedly, as I have argued, the government-connected elites have profited individually; their buildings are visible in Jigjiga's skyline and rumors abound of their padded foreign bank accounts. Yet the framing also raises an alternate conceptualization of the multivalence of federalism. If the federal government "rents" Somali Region for business, then ⸜Abdi essentially "sold shares" in that business back to Tigrayan military elites, to regional businesspeople, and to diaspora supporters. He converted "political" command over the space into economic opportunities (not always directly into money or material resources). This was achieved by fragmenting markets and dividing up access into supply licenses and contracts. In the process, it was clearly not existing territorializations of space that enabled their convertibility into shares. Rather, the process of establishing a regional market that could be controlled and partitioned enabled the production of rights that could be exchanged (See Maurer 2003, 80). This process highlights one aspect of an alternate way of thinking about space and territorial access than that foregrounded in common ways of thinking about the world as fixed spaces traversed by mobile people and flows of commodities. The point here is not the well-recognized idea that space is produced (Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 2006; Marston

2000), but a further provocation to think through how space figures in valuations and exchanges outside of enclosure and commodification. By creating distinct market areas that can be subjected to valuation (both in terms of prospects for economic growth and in terms of the way territory enables claims of exclusive rights to market access), the carving up of territory establishes new horizons of finance.

## Exchanging Ethiopia for ethnic subdivisions

Whatever support the concept of federalism enjoys in Ethiopia, on a general level, the subdivision of the country enabled military and party elites in the TPLF to centralize power and establish control over numerous spatially distinct markets. These two dynamics are intertwined and their analysis interrogates a critical fact of postcolonial political economy: the realization of political aspirations for "self-governance" through territorial-political segmentation creates new markets. New markets of credit and debt are intimately connected to politicians' power to make promises on behalf of entire populations, mortgaging their futures and tying them to foreign banks' interest rates. Perhaps the most obvious case is the frontiers discovered by Western capital markets in indebting African states via the World Bank and IMF.[7] These re-framings of relations—the creation of financial capital through territorial politics—also operate on more localized scales. When ꞇAbdi worked to fulfil both federal interests and those of secessionist-leaning Somalis, he constructed authority in part by creating debts that could be transmuted or arbitraged between political and market realms.

Despite the positive possibilities for inclusion in governance through federalism, it restricted participation in Ethiopia's politics and markets to spatially-confined and largely ethnically-defined domains. The deferred promise of future development for Ethiopia's "emerging" regions sought to legitimize the existing domination of TPLF cadres across the national political economy as a whole. Yakob reiterated to me on numerous occasions how federalism had defined his relationship with Ethiopia. "The federal system here makes life narrow," he told me in late 2017. "I don't feel like I can go to any other region. To go to Mekele, to Gondar—it doesn't even enter my mind. And, for example, I feel that there are only three places in Ethiopia that I can invest: this region, Dire Dawa and Addis."[8] Rather than a fulfillment of a social contract

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[7] Michael Goldman's (2005, 20) insightful work on the world bank theorizes the central role the World Bank plays in "enlarging the scope for global capital accumulation" and "in the making of the highly inequitable global economy." The language of a particular line of critique is intriguing for its resonances with spheres of exchange reasoning: "the fundamental links between countries within the North-South world system are made invisible through the everyday discursive practices of development, such that today development is still interpreted as a gift of the North and any specific failures are attributed to the shortcomings of leaders of the South, reductively assumed to be mired in corruption and irrationality" (p. 21).

[8] Field notes, 12/24/2017

by devolving governance "closer to the people," in his view what federalism effected was a bait-and-switch of spatial rights. As one non-Somali resident of Jigjiga complained to me in February 2018, "They took Ethiopia away from us, and they gave us little woredas and counties. This is a very significant geographical loss. I am deprived of my rights to live where I want to live." A few minutes later, he emphasized again his "foreign" status in Ethiopia as a whole: "I am like a Chinese here. They are here to invest, and if their investment goes bad, they return back. But I'm deprived of a place. [The government] took that away from me!"[9]

This spatial fragmentation enabled political and military officials to extract rents by creating markets. As shown in Chapter 6, Ethiopia remains under a complex system of spatial controls in which checkpoints seek to prevent unlicensed trade between even the smallest political units. De Waal argues that federal organization enabled Ethiopia's security forces in particular to benefit from the collection and redistribution of rents through the center:

> The immediate challenge for Ethiopia is the nature of competition within the political leadership of the EPRDF and the security services and army. Control over state rents is distributed among this elite, whose members have the power to appropriate those rents for personal enrichment (an "elite cartel" model of systemic corruption), for factional political budgets, or for both. (de Waal 2015, 173)

De Waal treats Ethiopia as a single polity and focuses on the institutional arrangements—party, security, and military—that traverse state boundaries. From Jigjigans' standpoints, the organization of the federal system created two levels of political-economic organization. The level of Ethiopia as a whole was accessible based on party affiliation and personalized coordination with military and security leaders. The regional level was more broadly accessible based on ethnic identity. While businesspeople without political connections complained about the system, those with connections were utilizing rigid spatial division to amass wealth by managing transfers between markets. As I documented in Chapter 6, one of the biggest opportunities in this regard is the direct exchange of US dollars on the Somaliland border at Tog Wajale. The spatial fragmentation also enabled these elites to be the gatekeepers for import-export licenses and provision contracts.

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[9]Field notes, 2/8/2018

What if, rather than thinking about people moving across pre-existing space, we were to picture Ethiopia's regions as objects of association and valuation that entered into certain forms of commensuration and exchange? These circulations operate on several different spheres: on one hand, political elites might essentially buy and sell political or economic authority within the delimited markets. But on another level, as the idea of exchanging Ethiopia for ethnicized subdivisions suggests, space enters into new modes of valuation through the ethnic identities assigned to it. Federalism creates new demands for political space, for spaces of belonging—and also struggles over the scale at which such belonging is effective. In this view, spatial fragmentation established a new horizon of possibilities for the creation of value beyond budget-centered rents. Migration then might be viewed as people exchanging spaces for a variety of reasons, in which market opportunities play a role but not necessarily the defining one.

The intersection of these multiple valuations of Somali Region is a historically-specific problematic. We have seen how ʿAbdi allegedly "handled" TPLF cadres by opening up profitable investment opportunities with his regionally-based power. As many diaspora returnees complained, Ethiopia's elites were converting political power into money in foreign bank accounts. Yet here, on the other hand, were diaspora investors who had money in foreign bank accounts, using their cash to "buy in" to an unstable political system! Profit opportunities and desires for the homeland do not adequately explain the logic (whether one wants to term it "rationality" or not). The values of federalism for diaspora investors are intertwined with the interests of kin in the region, but also distinct because of the different range of opportunities available—as indicated in the racialized system outlined in Chapter 4. Investors' "buy in" to an unstable region, and tacit support for an autocratic regime, should again be considered in light of opportunities available elsewhere. It is a matter of interests in buying into overlapping systems—globalized markets, citizenship or citizen-like belonging in multiple sites, and investment in multiple value registers that offer a semblance of future stability.

**Diaspora return and contracts**

"Most of the diaspora are looking for what they can benefit from here." Some diaspora returnees undoubtedly perceived financial interests and sought to make a quick buck through government contracts or simple cash payments for loyalty (given to diaspora singers, for example). Yet this narrative of return migration posits, in a sense, the convertibility or commensurability of place available to holders of American and European passports. Why exchange life in Minneapolis for dusty Jigjiga? The reasons, of course, stretch

well beyond material benefits—and perhaps it could be said that this lowers the cost of DDSI efforts to "buy off" the diaspora, because many returnees were already prepared to "buy in" given the chance.

Government contracts fall within a range of strategies for attracting and regulating diaspora involvement in the region, some of which I examined in Chapter 4. ʿAbdi's outreach to diaspora Somalis, beginning in 2010, was a late adoption of a practice that other African governments had been utilizing at least since SAPs in the 1980s challenged states' financial viability. Diaspora bank accounts, in other words, could be functionally equated with development banks as steady sources of incremental funding. (But without interest or financial repayments.) Regional and international organizations have pushed for governments to partner with diasporas for development, exhorting emigrants to see their contributions to national development as a moral obligation (Mohan 2008).

Because diaspora Somalis were beyond the territory in which DDSI could effectively use force, a more lenient relationship appeared the most productive way to structure emigrant behavior. Before the administration's crisis of legitimacy in late 2017, diaspora returnees often reflected on the favor they enjoyed with officials. ʿAbdi "values the diaspora people so much," Faisal argues. "He says so much—and he always, every year, makes a dinner party for them. He dances with them, he enjoys with them. I like the way he values the diaspora in this region."[10] The value of the diaspora was, in part, political. Diaspora returnees often see themselves as playing a leadership role in the construction of regional authority: "the diaspora—without them, nothing will work," says Warsame; "the locals over here followed whatever the diaspora leaned towards." DDSI, however, did not need to entice all returnees through economic incentives; many were prepared to return to the region to visit their families as soon as there was peace and as soon as "they don't have to deal with, you know, Amhara."[11]

Yet these liberal relations coexisted with coercion, as Chapter 4 showed. For one thing, as relations with the diaspora began expanding, DDSI threatened diaspora Somalis' relatives in the region to gain acquiescence abroad (Human Rights Watch 2016). There were implicit threats paired with opportunities all along. ʿAbdi "uses, on one side, fear, and on the other side, generosity and kindness," as Warsame put it. Recall the opening of Chapter 4 in which Musa somewhat humorously recounted the unexpected pivot between force and incentive in a DDSI-organized diaspora outreach meeting. In the face of all complaints against ʿAbdi's brutal modes of governance, one thing inspired commonly-stated respect and some mystification:

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[10]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017
[11]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

his creative capacity to switch between value-registers, to establish incentives in multiple forms (threats, gifts, opportunities).

What is at stake here is not simply opening a market frontier for diaspora capital, as if Somali-Ethiopia was previously closed and was now open for business. Rather, what is at stake is the creative production of equivalencies, the bringing into relationship of multiple interests and assets. It could be thought of as arbitrage, an "art of association" that establishes functional equivalence between assets that are valued differently, and to produce new forms of value by bringing them into relationship (ideally, within as short a time as possible) (Miyazaki 2013; Riles 2014). While in financial terms arbitrage is a strategy of minimizing risk and locking in immediate profits by simultaneously transacting in two or more markets, more broadly it involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of assets into forms that can be valuated and exchanged. Mellor and Shilling (2017, 24) argue that the concept contains "an exemplary approach towards managing the unknown via a creative commitment to overcoming economic *and* human limits." In Jigjiga, different interest groups valued assets (including political access and money to invest) in distinct ways and creatively sought to forge new relationships in order to establish the commensurability of interests in multiple domains. Some put their faith in the monetary returns they could reap by investing their effort in establishing government relationships. Others placed more value on the relationships of mutual support they could establish with regional kin and friends.

## Government contracts

Government contracts came in many varieties. One of the earliest diaspora investors from Sweden bought land and built a large, warehouse-like structure in 2013 for a total of about $60,000 US. A windfall came that December in the form of a temporary government contract that gave the restaurant first priority for visiting guests. The following year Ethiopian Nationalities Day was celebrated in Jigjiga and the restaurant fed almost 1,000 people for three days, turning a quick $10,000 return on the contract. A few months later, another regional meeting yielded another $15,000 return. As of 2015, most days the profit was between $50 and $200, and some days the restaurant broke even or even lost a little. A three-day contract, in other words, can equate to over two months' profit of normal business.[12] Even without having received contracts more recently, the restaurant remains open. Now that it has paid back the initial investment, it creates jobs for family members and also serves as a foot in the door for future investment. The fast profits which diaspora

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[12]Field notes, 7/9/2015

are sometimes accused of seeking are unpredictable, and fast money can translate into slower money. In this investment model, a continuation of rapid growth appears unnecessary. The investor did, in fact, search for other opportunities—seeing the restaurant as a foot in the door to other markets—but the restaurant itself, after making the initial profit, converted into a stable cash-generator for family members rather than a profit-maximizing enterprise.

In 2015, other restaurants and hotels were eclipsed by the opening of City Crown Hotel, which reportedly cost around $2 million due to spiking real estate prices, its central location, large lot, and imported furniture and equipment. Five brothers, most with Finnish but one with UK citizenship, invested in the enterprise and took turns rotating through Jigjiga to manage the business, while also employing some cousins their own age as managers for the hotel's everyday operation. City Crown quickly became the hub for official meetings of government and non-governmental organizations as well as the preferred hotel for diaspora returnees (many of whom felt a need to uphold standards of luxury befitting their foreign citizenship). The hotel took contracts to house delegations from outlying parts of the region, to cater or cook in for meetings of government offices, NGOs, and educational institutions, and generally ran a booming business until it was forcibly closed in September 2017. In this case, the owners' deployment of time and claims to the future are revealing: they put little stake in DDSI's appropriation of the hotel property and trusted that they would return to reopen the hotel after ʿAbdi fell. As with the case of other restaurants and hotels, government contracts could be a means to jump-start longer-term investment whose logic was not quick profits, but creating stability for the investors and their dependents.

Supply contracts were another matter, and whether they were profitable for diaspora returnees appeared to depend significantly on the investor's relationships with officials. Aden complained that he had initially set up to turn a quick 5% profit on a contract, but found he had to pay everyone off along the way. After taking a supply contract to provide computers for a newly opened office, he began advising everyone else against it. Beyond the simple unpredictability of profits, he explained this reluctance in terms of the social demands on his income that would attend seeking contracts: "I don't even want to be seen with [politicians]. People perceive you are getting money from them or have a big government contract," he said. "If you get a contract and get money, people will immediately come to you and you will buy them *chat*, give them some things, and before long the money is gone."[13]

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[13]Field notes, 11/30/2017

These narratives about diaspora contracts challenge the idea that they are simply "buying off" returnees. Evidently, they are not always profitable. Diaspora investors recognize the risks involved in a fluid political environment. On the government side, a contract requires trust in the "private" provider to fulfill the service; on the side of the provider, an agreement entails trust that the government will (a) continue to exist, (b) have sufficient financial liquidity, and (c) be willing to pay the amount as agreed once service is provided. One aspect of such contracts is that by indebting the government to people, the government creates a vested interest in its continued existence and its financial strength. A view of mutual obligations and interests reveals how contractualizing state-society relations does not eliminate allegiances or divert them into a purely transactional domain. It does, especially in a context of highly personalized rule, introduce new time constraints on the expression of allegiances as long as businesspeople want to make sure they get paid. And it is not only these businesspeople who have this interest, particularly in the Somali context: people who obtain government contracts find, on one side, creditors ready to finance them given the right share in investment (interest is, of course, religiously prohibited), and on the other side, kin prepared to make claims on their right to a share of the profits. While some investors complain that this detracts from profitability, others see it as simply a better opportunity to construct their own dependencies and modes of command.

## 8.3 Time: the process of "buying in"

"They immediately became very rich." Employing this phrase, Yakob joins an often implicit mode of delegitimizing investments that seem to fall, temporally speaking, on the more transactional side of things. For Hibou, the "rapidity" of contract-related fortunes points to the "games" being played in conversions between politics and markets, reflecting a common perception of a lack of social commitment—this is exemplified in the discourse delegitimizing *maalin-taajir* figures. The pervasiveness of such discourses points to the importance of time in establishing the legitimacy of wealth and embedding investors as fixtures in the social landscape. The contrast between immediacy and sustained engagement is one facet of a broader set of practices in which people construct dependence ("buy-in") by asserting the relevance of time and by strategically extending or compressing it in exchanges. In other words, people establish the value of time in multiple ways and work to commensurate it with forms of social or political support and monetary transaction.

**Temporalities, 1: waiting and accumulating debts**

While it may make sense to speak of "opening up" the region to diaspora investment, in practice this opening involved in some cases onerous bureaucratic controls that gave officials power to shape diaspora inclusion. The Ethiopian federal bureaucracy, famed for its adherence to procedure, was in effect a partner that enabled the regional administration to appear as a friend to diaspora investors helping them to get through a burdensome process. As Faisal recounted his experience at the Federal Revenue Authority in Addis Ababa,

> They gave me a really hard time on that. I asked - I told them, 'Hey, this is my card.' They said, 'Oh yeah, this is card that you're diaspora.' 'Yeah, I'm diaspora - Ethiopian diaspora. It says so. American diaspora.' But, and he asked me, and I said, 'If you cannot accept it, you want me to give you my birth certificate?' And he said, 'No, we don't accept a birth certificate.' 'Then what do you need?' Then he said, 'Get me a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Addis Ababa - Federal Foreign Affairs Ministry - supporting your diasporaship, in a sense.' I was so pissed off. I was sort of, OK, that's the only way. And that officer who says that, there's no other way you can go around and ask for somebody else. It's that guy - your fate is on that guy. If he denies you, you are denied, you get out of there.

> So what happened was, I went to ... Good thing I didn't stop right there. I went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diaspora Office, and I complained, and I wrote a letter, and I complained about it and what they are asking, and my equipment and all my documents with me. There is this guy who was really a good guy, his name was Faisal. He used to be a Dire Dawa governor, at one time. And he saw, and said, 'Why are they asking you for this shit? I'll write you a letter.' And he wrote me a letter to the customs saying, 'Please facilitate for this Ethiopian diaspora guy to get his stuff in. THAT's how they let me in - my equipment. Can you imagine? After I cleared everything, after I had all the other requirements and everything, then they had to ask me for a letter from Foreign Affairs.[14]

Ḥassan, from Norway, said that when he planned to invest in Ethiopia, he went to the federal government to request an import-export license. "The Tigrayan people" ("the military leaders of the country"), and

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[14]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017

a "very tough" guy in the licensing office in particular, told him that he needed the regional government's permission. So he came to Jigjiga, where the Diaspora Bureau Head took him to meet ʿAbdi. He accompanied ʿAbdi's retinue on a trip to provide aid to people in the Ogaden, and after he expressed his loyalty to the regional government, ʿAbdi signed a letter for him to obtain the license. He claims that when he returned to Addis Ababa with the letter, the federal minister called ʿAbdi directly to confirm the permission. This capacity to personalize diaspora attempts to navigate Addis Ababa's bureaucracy enabled Somalis in regional or federal government to help out "the right" diaspora in their efforts while leaving others to the mercy of non-Somali officials who were, in returnees' view, often suspicious if not outright hostile towards Somalis.[15]

A result of these processes is that returnees frequently build up significant obligations to officials and others even before obtaining contracts, licenses, import permits, or property titles. They spend money but also accumulate obligations as they wait in Jigjiga, networking with local business and regional government contacts, buying people *chat*, waiting for the paperwork to go through—or, more commonly if they do not have a good local partner—wondering why the paperwork is moving nowhere and who they should pay to have it completed. I watched several diaspora investors establish their businesses and then spend months chasing officials around for contracts or for finalized paperwork to expand their business operations or receive free land. In fact, in some cases it became not the contract but the obligations incurred in pursuing contracts that kept diaspora returnees doing business in the region—perhaps reluctantly.

Here, Faisal explains more about his process in setting up a business, which he only later used as a foundation for seeking contracts:

> Oh, it's not anywhere close to what I expected. I expected to be running, you know, getting my equipment in and running in a matter of two months. That's what I expected. But it took me now four years. [laughs]. FOUR years! Can you imagine? And I still - I kind of, kind of minimally started my business now. Minimally. You know, I even haven't started my big equipment yet - bigger machines yet. I haven't started yet. I've only started a tiny bit of the machines, just to keep me going, you know? So, I mean... what only keeps me here is my patience.

His patience, he explains, stems from a combination of his faith in the future and his commitment to simul-

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[15]Field notes, 9/10/2017

taneously contributing to the region and establishing a profitable business:

> I'm being patient, you know, on this, because I believe in what I'm doing and I don't want to cut and run. You know what I mean? I just want to make a fruitful business one day, and get going. So that's what keeps me going. Uh, ... but it's not... I mean, there's a friend of mine who was my partner, and he ran away a long, long time ago. I had to sell his share to somebody else to pay him off. So, um... I mean, it's not anywhere close to what you may expect—how quickly you want to start things in here. You have to prepare for the long haul. [chuckles] In my experience. So, four years. And part of it now is because we ran out of money. And nobody is going to give you money. There are no banks that will give you money. You will not get credit - because, you know, credit - we would have gotten some loans from the bank. But the government refused to give us the land papers; we didn't get the land papers, up to now - this time. I would have gotten some loan from the bank, but the bank will ask you for the land papers. The ownership. No, I don't have my land papers. I only got my legal document that I bought this land and I own it. But the government has to give you their own land certificate. So that land certificate... believe me now - I paid for that, I processed that land certificate in here, like - like eight months ago. And I paid the money. 50,000. Almost 50,000, eight months ago. In the municipality. And I still didn't get it.

The result was waiting, which resulted in accumulating social "debts" or, perhaps more accurately, claims to a share once he did get the business up and running:

> **Faisal**: So that's what makes you stuck. So you're stuck. You just wait.
>
> **Me**: So you didn't have any loan or anything to finance it?
>
> **Faisal**: No, I have no loan whatsoever, from nobody. Yeah, all I was running is from my own bucket. Friends bucket, help me - family. [laughs] That's all.[16]

It may be years before Faisal recuperates his initial investment. A contract might help. Yet, on the other hand, profit might be only part of the point. For most returnees, becoming a *maalin-taajir* might have been nice, but it wasn't the ultimate goal.

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[16]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017

**Temporalities, 2: global futures**

For many diaspora Somalis—even those who did not live through Somalia's 1991 collapse—the world of states, banking, and formal finance looks much less stable and predictable than Western financial analysts may make it seem. "Crises" such as the 2008 financial collapse point to the instability of financial wealth: billions of dollars can literally be erased in seconds. Currencies can devalue overnight. As numerous anthropologists of finance have pointed out, "promises about the uncertain future" are the stuff that Western financial markets—which themselves are intimately connected to currency markets—are made of (Appadurai 2015). In Leins' (2018, 12) terms, the "narrative economy" makes "imaginaries of the future become a central tool of resource allocation." In other words, people attempt to commensurate the future to a cash value in the present. This line of thinking frames the second temporality that shapes diaspora investors' motivations and willingness to wait, to accumulate local debts, and to forego the profits and risks of banking in other contexts. What is the future worth? How can one calculate its value in today's material assets and invest in the right relationships?

Warsame voices his family's investment strategies in relation to global options and uncertainties about the future—a narrative in which Ethiopia functions as a site of asset diversification. He emphasizes that he is far from certain about the future of his family's investments in Jigjiga:

> But then, you're not always so sure. You know, I mean, it's Africa. These businesses can—you think, fuck, can you really rely on Ethiopia? Maybe you need to do another business in Somalia, in case Ethiopia fucks up. So you have something. And that's every Somali. Like, I mean, any Somali with enough money has at least three different countries–I think it's sort of being war-torn, a sort of effect. You don't trust—or you don't believe in the safety of any country that you're in. You sort of feel that—

He turns to me, and frames the cultural understanding of markets and political stability in relation to nationalities:

> —like, for you: you probably can't see 10 years later down the track... Or let's say not you, because you've been through Africa quite a bit. For the average American, they can't envision America burning in ten years. But I think with a Somali, he can see the way America is today, and 15 years later down the track, he sees there's a 50% chance that it could become like

> Somalia. All it takes is a war with North Korea or something. And so they tend to never settle. In mind, they're sort of living in that one country, but they're always looking at what's the second or the third option of where I should invest in case this one fucks up, and the second one fucks up–then I've got the third. And I think that can only be brought on by going through a war, or having a war-torn country.

He concludes the thought by explaining a cultural logic of investment and orientation towards the future, framed in terms of uncertainty:

> Even with me, although I've never seen war, because of the stories that the older generation tell me, I always see myself—if; you know, I use the word if. If, if, if everything turns out to be fine, I will, you know, three years later down the track I'll buy this or I will invest in this. But that's Africa. Tell me one African country apart from Kenya and South Africa... OK, not even South Africa because South Africa just went through apartheid twenty years ago–but one African country that has gone through relative stability for fifty years, after independence. Has gone through 20 or 30 years without a coup, without a governmental change...[17]

This vision mobilizes a relative valuation that may seem foreign to liberal market logics: one should convert cash into relationships because cash in unstable. Business investments in Jigjiga blur finance, material property, and social relationships including kinship obligations into one more or less fungible set of assets that establish a modicum of stability in an uncertain future.

## Temporalities, 3: retirement

For diaspora returnees looking to their own futures, stability, relationships, and comfort—if considered as assets—are priced vastly differently between Western systems and the Horn of Africa. Investing in relationships in Somali-Ethiopia is functionally equivalent to saving for retirement, and for many diaspora Somalis, much less bleak than the vision of saving the $1 million currently recommended for a 20-year retirement in many US states in which one's shares in so-called stable investments (such as bonds) are the primary source of sustenance. Yusuf explains his logic, connecting the reorganized political system to his own future:

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[17]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

I was thinking to retire in other countries, like Tanzania, like South Africa, Cape Town. I was searching - Malaysia. I was searching some other places to retire. And now I am retiring in Jigjiga. See? And that attracted me... I mean, at least I live over there with relatives living there, and I can get service, at least what I need. And that's better, where other places... My mind changed to that. So I like it... I mean, improving the administration, all this stuff - it takes time. But as far as concerning ethnic federalism, I like it. And that's why I go every other year.

Framed somewhat differently, he could see himself exchanging the costly but politically "free" life in the US for a stable retirement with friends and family in Jigjiga even under an autocratic government. He continues reflecting on Somali Region's future, particularly the availability of a young workforce to take care of the region's elderly:

Really, I think that the Somali Region will... It depends on the other Ethiopia, the situation. But as far as I see, if it's going this one, it will be better and better in the future. There are a lot of issues now: the administration, the corruption, and that. But, relatively, it's good. Eh, I mean, they have roads - coming up - water, electricity, security is way better, schooling, other opportunities, attraction to the diaspora; they are attracting them; they like diaspora to come.... As far as I see it, relatively in Africa, I see it's a good place. I like it. And the future will be good; and even young people are everywhere, in offices, in businesses, and they will change [things].[18]

Retirement strategies differ between elderly returnees. Yusuf intently watches US financial markets, keeping much of his wealth in stock and bonds which he sells as needed to invest in property and relationships in Jigjiga. When we are together in Atlanta, we talk about the stock market and its unpredictability as he strategically anticipates its rises and falls and converts stock equities into social obligations in Ethiopia. One returnee from Australia sought to establish a larger foundation for his future, telling me he withdrew $600,000 from his retirement account—established over nearly 30 years of working in Australia and Southeast Asia—to build a hospital outside of Jigjiga.[19]

Not surprisingly, not all Ethiopian-Somalis wish to retire to Ethiopia. ʿAbdinur, well short of his retirement, does not necessarily see himself in Jigjiga—but not necessarily in the UK either: "You know what?

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[18] Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017

[19] Field notes, 6/27/2018

The place I would most like to live is Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I always think when I retire, I'm going to go there and build some houses there. Because I went twice for holiday. It's nice to live there."[20]

## Temporalities, 4: the value of commitment and familiarity

In personal relationships, as well as in property investments, social valuations have a way of accreting over time. People and businesses can become fixtures, valued for their familiarity and stability—in some ways, for their very visibility and recognition as something that is "part" of the social whole that people conceive themselves as living in. As things gain such value, in part for their stabilizing role in organizing social relationships, their entry into transactional spheres can become more and more questionable (Herzfeld 1991).

I have suggested that being forced to wait—and giving people time—generates a degree of common interests among participants in Jigjiga's market. This means that the fast-money "overnight millionaires" (maalin-taajiriin) built through government contracts are particularly prone to delegitimization; though they may have legal titles in place, urban society often collectively unravels this by requiring not only avenues other than those of the state for the conversion of possession into property, as argued in Chapter 6, but also lengthier times over which to valorize investments in order to make them socially acceptable.

While my analytic language throughout this work has differentiated diaspora returnees from locals or nationals, the valuation of time and commitment in relationships among people, things, and places problematizes this framing. In other words, shifting towards a wider problematic of the value of people, things, and money to people's construction of meaning in Somali-Ethiopia explodes the issue of diaspora "return" and "investment" as isolatable phenomena and forces the analysis back, on one hand, towards assessing how people understand the moral valence of buying into social systems (cf. Graeber 2001), and on the other, towards analyzing how inequality maps onto space in terms of the affordability of life and access to opportunity for people who maintain commitments across multiple geopolitical spaces. From the standpoint of Jigjigans, isolating oneself and one's wealth abroad from claims of relatives and the moral demands of contributing to an underdeveloped region is a moral decision: diaspora Somalis have an obligation to their relatives and their broader "homeland" community that demands forms of redistribution. A key question for investors then becomes whether it is more valuable—in moral, relational, and monetary terms—to continue eking out a living in the global North or to convert what wealth can be gained there into some assets and

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[20]ʿAbdinur, audio-recorded interview, 1/17/2018.

relationships that go some way towards fulfilling social obligations. Yet it must also be recognized that in "returning" to Jigjiga, diaspora businesspeople often maintain another (and perhaps more expensive) set of obligations to provide for spouses, children, and other relations in the global North.

## 8.4   A politics of value and commensurability beyond capital

The multi-sited obligations maintained by diaspora Somalis raise an issue that runs to the core of Western political theory: in a world in which people's loyalties and commitments are not necessarily localizable, how should one's living location and investment in a place relate to political participation?  In the ways that Jigjigans discuss diaspora investments the idea is sometimes mobilized that people who have invested in land and other immovable assets tend to have, at least on the face of it, a more grounded interest in future stability of the polity in which they have invested.  Such reasoning parallels Rousseau's version of social contract theory, in which there is a logic of political authority mediated through property: many seem to forget that one of his primary concerns was not simply broadening political inclusion beyond France's elite classes, but also addressing inequality by redistributing property such that the distribution of wealth reflected the popular legitimacy of government. It was when governance upheld a morally just distribution of entitlements that the "general will" was advanced and "possession" was converted into "property." From this reading, it could be narrated that what unfolded in the Western world as non-whites, non-property owners, and women were gradually included in the "body politic" constitutes only one possible (and perhaps defective) form of democratization in which the high value assigned to political inclusion masked the near-complete obfuscation of rights to govern wealth.  This is not to argue for a return to citizenship based on landownership, but to invoke a vision for an alternate history in which democratization might involve recognition of claims on wealth and access to share in material advancement as part of political inclusion.

I invoke this history because from such a view it can be suggested that complaints about government contracts and the "buy-off" of diaspora support in SRS engage a vision of political accountability from the opposite side of the equation.  In Qadir's formulation, contracts and diaspora investments are particularly problematic precisely because they give political control primarily to the non-owners of the land, the non-indigenous, those without grounded material interests in political stability.  Yet I perceive a substratum of these issues to be the question of commensurability between material assets and political power, their mutual entanglement.  What this opens up is room for constant negotiation over degrees of responsibility

and authority in political and economic realms. As I have shown, despite Qadir's view, returnees are not generally seen as only profiteers. Yet struggles emerge over defining the appropriate degrees of investment in the region that *should* result in some say or privilege in politics. This "buy-in" is multi-valent, encompassing not only material investments in property, residence, and business, but also investment in people. There is a constant politics of moral and relational valuation in which people engage in moral assertions about whether certain types of action constitute social obligations, political loyalties, or market transactions.

## Social payments and loyalty

The money that diaspora return and federal devolution have brought to the region, as I have shown, often takes forms other than expanding market exchange (and thus becoming "capital"). As Maurer (2007) argues, studies of capitalism have failed to pay adequate attention to social payments and struggles over the commensurability between monetary valuation and political loyalty. Diaspora returnees claim tax breaks and assert that the repatriation of their funds to Somali-Ethiopia is contribution enough for regional development. In such a view, one could argue that even if surplus value is ultimately extracted from the region (as diaspora capitalists "look for profit"), it is still a net benefit if it drives circulation through the local economy. Yet even if tax breaks are formally given, numerous demands for payment confront Jigjiga's businesspeople and generate struggles over the intersections of wealth and political loyalty—though under DDSI, such struggles took the form of subtle criticism and forceful personal demands for redistribution rather than outright protest against the diaspora-government alliance.

The targeted implementation of tax was one mechanism within a range of strategies DDSI could employ due to their exclusive control over regional borders, urban real estate, and the larger-scale order of economic transactions more generally—a spatial rent. Taxation and "voluntary" contributions to government initiatives became means by which officials created new obligations and discursively constructed these financial obligations as shared interests in terms of patriotism and loyalty. The threat of accusation for disloyalty—and the always-looming specter of being thrown in Jigjiga's famous "Jail Ogaden"—were powerful motivators for people to pay tax and make public contributions quickly and generously. I watched such operations at work when I regularly accompanied an official in charge of collecting "voluntary" contributions on his circuits around town. He knew exactly how much each business could afford to pay, and made sure that they paid the maximum amount. I also saw these operations applied to the owner of my house, himself a

diaspora investor with real estate interests in the region.  One day tax officials knocked on my door telling me the owner owed the government a tax and, because he was delinquent on the tax, he was unpatriotic and potentially disloyal to DDSI. I shot back that he had been granted awards for the jobs created through his business investments, and told them that he would pay the tax. He immediately did so, and the tax officials suddenly agreed that he was, indeed, a loyal citizen.

Alongside tax, the granting of supply contracts and exclusive licenses for tax-free imports of certain goods established means by which government-connected elites could make their "contribution" to regional development by supplying the market rather than just through taxation.  In the eyes of Jigjiga's public, the status of such government-connected elites was always questionable; yet it did not turn solely on their access to government contracts—a good person could get a contract too—but rather on the ways in which this wealth was distributed through non-government circuits, both the more generalized market sphere in Jigjiga (purchasing from local businesses) and redistributions to kinship as well as charitable giving through *zakat* and more generally.  Thus despite government efforts to control the market, the longer-term interests of businesspeople relied on the construction of some degree of mutual interest and often time-delayed exchanges that stretched beyond government and kinship networks.  Poorer people did not simply rely on diaspora returnees' largesse, but would often invest a full day's income in buying gifts, meals, or chat for returnees who were friends or relatives.  Such debts could go weeks without being repaid, but after an indeterminate time the returnee would be marked as "tight-fisted" (*gacan adag*), accused of having adopted a Western transactional outlook on exchange.

Practices of market organization that create such mutual interests combine with a cultural ethics of egalitarianism that tends to generate rapid circulations of credit and cash among Somalis not only in Jigjiga but elsewhere (al-Sharmani 2007; Hammond et al. 2011; Thompson 2016).  Somalis, wrote Lewis, "are well aware of the power which wealth brings, and at the same time, of the responsibilities which it entails in the support of poorer kinsmen."  This is not to say, as Lewis observed, that such an egalitarian ethic tends to *eliminate* wealth differentials—"there are often considerable variations in wealth," he says (Lewis 1961, 197).  What comes into view is a chain of entitlements to a share in wealth that legitimize the existence of the wealth itself.[21]  Such a view of the embeddedness of markets is not new; yet questions remain about the time scales at which valorization from such embedded property relations is acceptable in different contexts.  If

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[21]Cf. Sen (1986)

someone invests in such a "solidarity economy," can one realize profits through disinvestment? Are diaspora investors who go through the socially legitimate channels "stuck" in Jigjiga without being able to realize their profits, in contrast to those who make a quick buck from contracts and take the money abroad? It is too soon to answer these questions with regard to diaspora investment in Jigjiga, but among diaspora investors who remained based outside of Ethiopia, many said that they were making incremental profits that funded their lives abroad, in part due to their early entry and Jigjiga's rapid market growth.

The impacts of the contract system were not limited to their effects on investors. DDSI's encroachment on markets and particularly on the urban property regime created visible patterns of inequality and accumulation. Debates about urban property as a manifestation of state-backed wealth were particularly potent sites of contestation as the regime unraveled.

## Urban property

Urban land markets were a domain in which investors had to navigate the multiple domains of wealth regulation generated by social practice and government procedure. Jigjiga's land is understood to belong to the local Bartirre (on the south and east sides) and Yebarre (on the north side) branches of the larger Jidwaq clan-group, which also includes the Abaskul. Yet businesspeople and officials from diverse clan and ethnic backgrounds have lived in the city since its foundation. Some long-established residents belonging to other clans legitimated their property holdings through *ḥeer*—that is, by contracting an agreement to pay bridewealth and blood money with a Jidwaq *jilib*. While maintaining their natal clan status and relationships, businesspeople and sheikhs on the south side of town have historically joined a Bartirre lineage. Many Isaq residents who can trace their ancestry within Jigjiga several generations have marriage or *ḥeer* ties to Jidwaq. This creates mutual claims on wealth across kinship lines.

With the boom in land investments under DDSI, Jigjiga's land prices soared while the regulatory requirements essentially doubled. Diaspora investors drove rising demand for land titles issued by the municipality as they requested these titles themselves and thus forced locals with competing claims to land to request them as well. Yet the foundation of legitimate land transaction was not government title, but the "informal" market that continued to rely on clan-based recognition of market transactions instead of property titles from the municipal government (Jemal Yusuf Mahamed 2014). Kinship and egalitarian cultural orientations do not determine the legitimacy of land distribution, but rather provide an encompassing

moral system within which market transactions are permitted to take place.  The ability to unravel claims to wealth through these socially-grounded chains of entitlement raises a counter-narrative to the assumption that increasing inequality in property holdings amidst the intersection between diaspora investment and government-backed privatization necessarily creates more or less permanent divergences in access to wealth through land's "commodification" (Korf, Hagmann, and Emmenegger 2015).  The mode by which market transfers are legitimized is important, and government-backed legitimacy is questionable, property entitlements thus conferred always subject to potential future undoing.

The buildings of Jigjiga's prominent government-backed businesspeople provided focal points expressed discontent about the government's economic regulation, expressed in such terms as a previously mentioned common joke about *maalin-taajir*s' buildings needing wheels to take them to the investors' "true" homeland.  This half-joke points back to the perception that the regional administration has favored the Ogaden and enabled them to accumulate resources including urban land without purchasing the rights from locals. Areas in which the government has given away land to constituents are marked in popular discourse as pockets of illegitimate wealth in the city: an alternative name for the *Badda ʿAs* neighborhood with its heavy diaspora presence is *Bole Qaran*, a reference to a Mogadishu neighborhood famous for its corruption in Siyad Barre's day.  The old airport, where land that had been expropriated from Yebarre holdings long ago by the imperial government was distributed by ʿAbdi Iley to some of his elite supporters, became quietly known as Marsin—a reference to ʿAbdi's home area in the eastern Ogaden.

Beyond its spatial meanings, however, the common joke has a distinct temporal suggestion that brings to the surface a common complaint among investors who purchased land in Jigjiga through official means. These investors argued against such delegitimizing claims by pointing out that the market boom enriching Jigjiga's Jidwaq residents resulted in large part from the security provided by DDSI. This view centered on the multiple valences of time manifest in Jigjiga's urban real estate: Jidwaq could theoretically sell the land amidst a market boom, take the money, and then claim that the land had been unfairly "taken over" through illicit means, and thus claim it back as a reserve of their "traditional" rights.  As Jigjigans began to expect DDSI's downfall over the course of 2017-2018, complaints about litigation increased.  ʿAbdinur complained about these dual claims through which Jigjigans sold land on the market and later reclaimed it through kinship: "OK, fine. First, if you don't want us here, we'll take the capital city to Qabridahar," he quipped, touting Ogaden beneficence: "we'll even give you land there for free!" Second, he located Ogaden property

claims in Jigjiga, though perhaps upheld by the state, as essential to the broader community of Somali interests: "Second, if we take the Liyu Police with us, within 72 hours the Oromo will be in Jigjiga."[22]

The exaggerated threat of Oromo invasion, as I showed in Chapter 5, was a means by which ʿAbdi sought to cultivate allegiance to DDSI. Yet there is truth to the investor's assertion that Jigjiga's market was, in a sense, "indebted" to Ogaden politics and ʿAbdi's draconian regime for its existence. This convergence between the interest of regional officials, diaspora investors, and Jigjiga's urban society was a critical element in extending the regime's survival up until the broader transformations began to unfold in Ethiopia in 2017-2018. As DDSI collapsed, the *maalin-taajir*s whose wealth was so visible in Jigjiga were consistently rumored to have fled abroad at the least sign that ʿAbdi might lose power. Who would take over their land and buildings? Ostensibly, a relative would take responsibility, perhaps based on some compensation for groups who claimed to have been forced out through DDSI's urban land grab. These debates are only now unfolding.

## 8.5   Requiem for an arbitrageur?

I left Jigjiga on July 5, 2017. Since Dr. Abiy Ahmed had come to power in March, anticipations of ʿAbdi's collapse had reached fever pitch. Bureau heads and government-connected *maalin-taajir*s were nowhere to be found. Their phones were switched off. Rumors circulated that some had fled to Somaliland or had decided to rebel against ʿAbdi and take shelter in Addis Ababa. The death throes of DDSI were causing consternation throughout the city. When former inmates of Jigjiga's "Jail Ogaden" were released, some celebrated the crumbling of authoritarianism while others said that ʿAbdi had released all the criminals to cause chaos that would push people towards supporting him. DDSI sought to prop itself up using religion, force, and finance. The day before the ʿEid holiday, civil servants were given shirts with the logo of a new youth organization, HEEGO, to wear to the sacred communal prayers the following day. "Will you wear that to prayer tomorrow?" I asked a young finance official.

"Of course! If I don't, I'll get fired!" He half-laughed, cynically.

On one side, critiques of the government intensified and extended into multiple domains. I spent several evenings in June with two wealthy businessmen and some diaspora relatives who were visiting them. An American visitor from Lewiston complained about local politics, free speech, and free media. The busi-

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[22]Field notes, 12/25/2017

nessmen listened respectfully but said little. One of their relatives, an elderly man, piped in and criticized DDSI for taking land from the Bartirre and giving it away to supporters, but his critique was not for the reason I expected: "At least they should have leased it!" he said of the land grants. "This is completely unsustainable!" Buy-in could be created without just giving things away.[23]

DDSI was not only seeking to buy off diaspora and elites in its bid for survival. ʿAbdi allegedly spent millions of dollars creating the supposedly "grassroots" youth movement HEEGO, designing and printing shirts, mobilizing supporters, paying people to post propaganda on social media (Fig. 8.1). It was too late, in the eyes of many youths in Jigjiga: they wore the shirts out of fear even while opposing the regime. A bajaj taxi driver I knew well pasted a large poster of ʿAbdi on his windshield ("Long Live CMC!") and shrugged when I asked him about it. Young men in private made fun of HEEGO and the contradiction of paying people for political support.[24] The outward displays of fake political loyalty were the topic of derision. People asked, "what does HEEGO even mean?" The Deputy Head of the Sports Bureau, one of the movement's founding members, showed me an English acronym he had typed out on his phone: "Highly Effective Educated Generational Organization." In Somali, *heego* means a strong rain at the end of the dry season, but it is an obscure term.

"HEEGO is something this president made to try to defend himself," one young Ogadeni told me. "If a young man has nothing, and you come to him and give him something and tell him, 'Defend me,' he will defend you. ʿAbdi spent a lot of money to create this thing." This prompted a discussion on the supply and demand of political support. "Yes," another young man answered. "But it's not sustainable. The amount of money the youth demand today will increase tomorrow. Once the youth satisfy their material needs, they will demand more."[25]

I was in Atlanta when I received a call on August 4 that federal military forces had finally surrounded Jigjiga, and ʿAbdi was nowhere to be found. Facebook and Whatsapp videos showed HEEGO supporters of DDSI burning Ethiopian symbols such as churches, breaking into banks, and sowing chaos in the town. When phone service was restored to the region a few days later, however, people began calling and telling me how things had opened up, how they were free.

A few complained that security had deteriorated and questioned whether another strong administration

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[23] Field notes, 6/14/2018
[24] Field notes, 6/29/2018
[25] Field notes, 7/01/2018

Figure 8.1: Car in downtown Jigjiga newly painted with HEEGO propaganda. The text on the car includes *Dhallinyarada kacaanka gaamuray ee HEEGO* (The youth mass-movement HEEGO) and *HEEGO waa heegan* (HEEGO is prepared to act), and the printing is labeled *Madbacadda Codka Shacabka* (The People's Voice Printing Press). Photo by author, June 2018.

that could continue engaging the diaspora and ensuring peace in the region would come to power. Whatever social and spatial fragmentation was wrought by ʿAbdi Iley's violent authoritarian regime, in the aftermath of its collapse, it is evident that a new time-horizon of interests in the Ethiopian system, in Somali Region's markets, and particularly in Jigjiga's urban market and society has been established among diaspora investors. On the other side, while suspicions remain there are those at the federal level who appear to be convinced that Somalis can "become Ethiopian"—a realization of success in the project of granting limited regional autonomy, perhaps. Even if the authoritarian regional state was largely transactional in exchanging economic incentives and contracts for support, over the course of eight years it created a broadening of interests that were now "bought in" to Somali Region's stability. Questions remain as to whether the changes induced by a dictatorship could change how people view space and time in eastern Ethiopia such that the dependencies between markets, society, and the state could last beyond the dictatorship and make diaspora investors "truly" Ethiopian, and Ethiopian officials recognizably responsive to Somali voices.

The next time-space horizon for Jigjiga's Somalis is the move from a peripheral and ethnically suspect

population towards acceptance spatially and socially as part of a broader multi-ethnic but fully Ethiopian political society. Rentier organization over fragmented spatial units within Ethiopia and within Somali Region has not simply reflected the preexisting organization of society according to ethnicity and clan, but politicized these divisions in particular ways. Time will tell if the divisions that emerged under DDSI's governance will unravel in ways that open up possibilities for the pursuit of a shared future. As debates over this future proceed, it will be important to consider the issue of rent-seeking that has emerged in Ethiopian federal discourse and think seriously about the ways in which territorial claims intersect with control over markets and property more generally, and the ways in which such control can create broader rather than narrower interests in the success of the region's Ethiopianizing project.

# Chapter 9    Conclusion

I set out in the research presented here to examine how Somali businesspeople in Jigjiga mobilize wealth, kinship, and political authority to carve out for themselves relatively stable spaces of life in Ethiopia's politically volatile eastern borderlands. The study addressed how Somalis conceptualize their investments and so-called "return migration" in relation to new configurations of federal decentralization, social obligations and other commitments to the "homeland's" development, and to profit opportunities on a market frontier. I have argued that while Somali investments in Jigjiga stem from a diversity of motivations, investors' decision-making and implementation of business decisions requires constantly negotiating claims that blur distinctions between private property and collective wealth, and between temporary market transactions and ongoing relationships configured by friendship, clan, and ethnic loyalties. Forms of command over social activity (or "capital") are created and sustained in the region by intertwined processes of geopolitical border enforcement and social boundary maintenance. With regard to geopolitical borders, political entrepreneurs and diaspora returnees have capitalized on their capacity to manage trans-border relationships, while the cross-border mobility of locals has been severely curtailed (in this, local dynamics intersect with a context of heightened global concern about the mobility of poor people of color (see, e.g., Hyndman 2012; Menjívar 2014)). At the same time, the social boundaries between "Ethiopian Somali" and "other Ethiopians" as well as "Somalian Somalis" have established a new ethnonational identity that can be mobilized by both locals and diaspora returnees seeking economic rights and opportunities. In both cases, dynamics under ʿAbdi Moḥamoud ʿUmar's DDSI administration (2010-2018) on which the dissertation focused were characterized by authoritarian efforts to centralize the management of relationships across these boundaries.

The effects of these border- and boundary-making strategies have been to define Somali-Ethiopia (*Deegaanka Soomaalida-Itoobiya*) not only as an ethnonational space within Ethiopia's federal system (distinct

from the breakaway connotations of its previous "Ogaden" moniker), but also as a site of new globalizing dynamics in relation to a large and far-flung population of diaspora Somalis who can trace their roots to Ethiopian territory.  As I have shown, DDSI employed a state-building strategy that sought to create diaspora buy-in as an integral part of post-conflict development and stabilization.  New rules of inclusion and exclusion in the political realm (the Somalization and Ogadenization of the administration) and in markets have created new forms of belonging and shaped the meanings of what it means to be Somali and what it means to be Ethiopian in these borderlands (cf.  Verdery 1998 for a discussion of similar dynamics in post-Soviet eastern Europe).  Yet a close examination of the regional political economy centering on Jigjiga highlights the conundrum of an administration beholden to Ethiopia's central government and to the interests of diaspora Somalis.  While diaspora Somalis are engaged in political projects in Somali-Ethiopia, the problematics of diaspora inclusion cannot be reduced to the notion of politics without accountability, as if accountability applies exclusively to people who reside within a territory.  Diaspora investments are caught in a fabric of power that weaves together the organization of wealth and markets with kinship and multiple forms of political authority that continue to evade capture by would-be state-builders.  Increasing diaspora involvement in the political economy and the appropriation of local resources by absentee owners is a dynamic that builds on a long history of multi-sited command over resources and political authority.

Highlighting how political authority is distributed in transnational Ethiopian-Somali society enables me to point out the multiple meanings of wealth or capital in Jigjiga as people leverage money and property to rearrange relationships of loyalty and obligation.  A corollary of the analysis is to point out what I understand as a fundamental flaw of the diaspora-for-development literature (e.g. Plaza and Ratha 2011) in its equation of money's mobility with the mobility of wealth and capital.  Even as federal decentralization and diaspora investment have vastly increased flows of money and goods through Jigjiga, in the perceptions of many locals, they have not necessarily increased people's economic power, their capability to command labor and resource distribution.  At the moment, the very meanings of financial wealth and it conversion into capital through the political organization of opportunity are contested as Jigjigans seek to establish their claims to both federal resources and diaspora wealth.  I foregrounded Jigjiga's location as both a geopolitical borderland and an urbanizing patchwork of ethnonational identities in order to show how people use their differential access to (and belonging in) spaces to create relationships, and work to convert spaces and relationships into resources—often incrementally, without losing the spatial access or relationships in the

process of their conversion. Yusuf describes the considerations and claims of relatives that shaped his strategy of investing for eventual retirement in the region:

> "People called me—even my sister, and her children—they asked me to invest. Either—both ways, in the economic-wise and in other things, as a residence and for the name. I mean, people want to say, 'Oh, this is Yusuf's house.' They like to see that—my sister [likes to show people] that I have houses, I have good things, even if I'm not living there."[1]

Yet in a subsequent conversation, Yusuf asked himself a strategic question: should he sell his land in Jigjiga temporarily, invest the $100,000 in the U.S. stock market to make a return, and then return the capital to Jigjiga? "By the time I go to build my house," he argues, "I could probably make another 30% on it."[2] In seeking to stabilize their futures, Ethiopian Somalis have employed strategies of diversifying their assets in financial and non-financial sectors, of creating conditions for new practices of commensuration and arbitrage which preclude commitment to one form of investment, or to one territory or polity.

The multiplicity of investment raises questions about the intersection between moral and cultural values and people's monetary (or more broadly economic) valuation of goods, places, and relationships. I argued that struggles over the commensurability of goods, relationships and power across geographical territories as well as social domains of markets, kinship, and politics have animated the regional political economy over the past century. The connections between Jardine's perceived aspiration of Somalis in the 1920s to become "once again the normal nomadic tribesman" and ongoing practices of migration, investment, and return are not to be found by focusing on diaspora investors in their roles as nation-builders or market capitalists, vanguards of neoliberalism working to commodify their homeland. From an economistic perspective, current Somali investments in Jigjiga appear often as "irrational" as 1920s Somali seamen's conversion of wages from Europe into livestock in the Horn. The logics of investment for people like Musa—who invested after his family was threatened by DDSI—and Warsame—who sees Jigjiga as a long-term investment from which he may never realize a calculable profit—push the boundaries of individualistic calculation and force analysts to seek the outline of the broader system within which people assign value to investments in an unpredictable and autocratic environment. Dynamics of global racial-capitalism manifest themselves in specific forms like those I have sought to describe in Jigjiga. Connected to such world-systemic dynamics

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[1]Yusuf, audio-recorded interview, 1/23/2017
[2]Field notes, 5/12/2017

are moral questions about how people draw the boundaries around their obligations and responsibilities. Reflecting briefly on the two theoretical focuses of the work—on regional state-building and on market dynamics in Jigjiga—will enable me to foreground the issues of valuation and commensuration that are emerging in the Horn amidst early-21st-century global shifts.

## 9.1 Constructing authority

Part I framed the current conjuncture between federalism and Somali investment in Jigjiga in terms of the ongoing reconfiguration of ethnicity, clan, and political authority in Somali-Ethiopia. The historical overview in Chapter 2 indicated how ethnic and clan identities were reproduced and changed in connection with state-building efforts, while Chapters 3 and 4 suggested how new alliances and interests have in some ways fragmented these identities (e.g. through the emergence of an explicit Ethiopian-Somali identity) and in other ways reinscribed their political relevance (e.g. when diaspora returnees are registered and granted opportunities according to clan identities).

While Chapter 2 is far from the first attempt at a political-economic history of these borderlands, social scientists have in my view not yet adequately connected the dynamics of imperial economies and their associated labor and migration patterns to the particular conjunctures of racially-infused "nation" formation and shifting relations among social groups (clans, ethnic organization) in the early 20th century. I sought to organize some notes on socio-spatial organization that draw together insightful analyses by migration scholars ("a century of Somali migration") and regional histories to discern the outlines of an extended regional formation in which Somali wages abroad were converted into livestock and other forms of social command in the Horn. The web of multi-sited relations that shaped the geopolitical history of Jigjiga's borderlands region was not confined to British and Ethiopian official networks, but included Somalis and their specific connections to the Horn as well as their impact on race relations in Europe that shaped colonial history in ways that have yet to be fully examined. These relationships changed the meanings and manifestations of Somali ethnicity and nationality, of kinship, and of the junctures between political and economic power in the region and among transnationally mobile Somalis.

Current political discourse in SRS frames postcolonial history in terms of a set of contingent choices about belonging to Ethiopia or breaking away. While such decisions about loyalty to, and investment in, a polity are commonly described by participants and analysts in terms of clan and ethnic loyalties, I sought to

indicate some ways in which the shifting terrain of regional geopolitics continually re-makes the meanings of these groups and their relationships. By complicating notions of "Ogaden politics" specifically, Chapter 3 sought to understand discourses and practices of governance under ʿAbdi's DDSI government, which many Jigjigans understood as a pragmatic and cynical military-capital alliance even as the administration's public discourse promoted Ethiopian-Somali nationality. The nuances of regional history inform interpretations of what it means to be Ethiopian-Somali: many Jigjigans have committed to Ethiopia, but discourse surrounding the Kali narrative indicates that such a choice is always revocable. Whether material and relational investments have now tied more Somalis' interests into Ethiopia in a way that discourages future secessionism remains an open question. As of mid-2019, Jigjigans are debating the merits of the ONLF's recent return to Ethiopian politics after Dr. Abiy welcomed opposition groups that were formerly banned in the country. Aden recently assured me that even if the ONLF succeeds in upcoming elections, they will no longer advance a secessionist platform but will push for increased autonomy within the federal framework. Others do not seem so certain.

Even amidst such uncertainty, diaspora return and investment appears to have continued since ʿAbdi's fall. Chapter 4 framed diaspora investments not simply as a response to state-building and stabilization, but as part of diaspora Somalis' efforts to construct a space of belonging and futurity for themselves and their regionally-based dependents. Analyzing diaspora investments in terms of financial flows from the global North to global South captures very little of intersecting worlds that people carve out for themselves amidst the influx of investment and return migration in SRS—however temporary or enduring such "return" is. Finance is converted into other forms of stability: relationships with politicians, business connections, entrustments to relatives, as well as material investments in housing for retirement and in businesses that create jobs for dependents. What I have sought to highlight is how diaspora investment has heightened struggles over rights to participate in economic growth, the meanings of capital and labor (or the capacity to "force" people to rely on market-determined wages), and wealth distributions beyond markets. The claims of local relations and others to shares of diaspora money can be seen as a significant drain on diaspora finance—and they often are. Yet finance is only one source of stability among other domains that Jigjigans are working to create and to convert resources between.

Chapter 5 indicated how people practically mobilize their trust (or lack thereof) in "the state" and other social structures by tracing perceptions of, and responses to, the gradual collapse of ʿAbdi's DDSI adminis-

tration in 2017-2018. The chapter builds on anthropological approaches to people's understandings of, and responses to, the state as a feature of everyday life by exploring how anticipations about Ethiopia's future shaped everyday strategies and political loyalties in Jigjiga. References to Somalia's collapse and skepticism about politics notwithstanding, people's trust in property and livelihood secured through kinship and shared culture kept many businesspeople, including some diaspora returnees, hopeful about the region's future and invested in their properties and businesses even as the regional state administration appeared to crumble.

## 9.2   Borders and cities

Shifting from a broader conceptualization of regional dynamics to the specific dynamics of borders and cities, Part II analyzed how federalism and diaspora investment have affected opportunities and processes of wealth accumulation and distribution in the urban-regional economy.  The intersecting worlds of diaspora returnees and local businesspeople reveal ongoing reconfigurations of eastern African livelihoods and opportunities amidst early-21st-century globalizing processes.  In a context of heightened concern about migration, debates over responsibilities towards fellow citizens and foreigners (including ongoing debates in the US and Europe about the proper relationship between taxation and philanthropy in caring for "the poor"), it seems to me particularly important to assess how people navigate their rights and responsibilities at geopolitical borders and in the concentrated diversity of globalizing cities of the global South.

The ethnography of border-crossings presented in Chapter 6 revealed how people resent and subtly protest against the new border regulations enforced by DDSI since 2010. Border enforcement is understood to reproduce a military-centered system of patron-client relations and controlled sectors of opportunity that can be used to "buy off" businesspeople who present potential threats to government legitimacy.  Strict border regulation and the decreased profit opportunities available to border traders reveals a cultural ethics of resistance to economic regulation and people's everyday reliance on forms of social solidarity and trust that make up what I termed "contraband urbanity." As a site of globalized trade flows and patterns of mobility, Jigjiga's urban market offers a lens into how Ethiopian Somalis understand economic rights and struggle to control access to opportunity in a world of shifting flows of finance and trade goods. Interviews with border traders suggested that for Jigjigans, the issues are not captured by the concepts of a "free market" versus state-led social distribution; rather, market openness at the border combines with social regulation of wealth and the recognition of others' economic rights. Traders do accumulate wealth, but such accumulation occurs

alongside patterns of social distribution and reciprocity.

The juncture of federalism and diaspora investment has provoked new discussions about the morality of wealth accumulation, the price of work, and people's capacity to command distributions of goods and money on their own terms. I argued in Chapter 7 that people's assertions about rights to sharing in wealth and opportunity translate into modes of establishing and valuing relationships that affect spatial organization and ethnic and class relations in the city. Jigjiga is both the site and a stake of struggles over wealth distribution—struggles in which people mobilize ethnic identities and differentiations between diaspora investors and locals and between people who seek to ally themselves with officials and those who do not. Ethnic differentiations are reinscribed through divisions between capital and labor and by the ways that people interpret and mobilize relationships in the marketplace. I argued that among Somalis, practices of delayed payment roughly analogous to small-scale credit provision are fundamental to the circulation of value. In terms of urban spatial organization, people's relationships and claims for distribution cross-cut the increasing spatial segregation evident in Jigjiga as diaspora returnees and government-connected elites have bought up properties in neighborhoods like *Badda ʿAs* and *Qomada*. Relationships that cross-cut residential segregation patterns highlight the ways in which people mobilize relationships across broader international space. I emphasized in conclusion that diaspora return to Jigjiga does not inevitably create a corresponding change in relationships of obligation or command over resources, though it does increase the visibility of claimants' and the accessibility of those from whom they demand distribution. As a site in which globalization is made, dense social relationships seem to drive many activities, including investment and trade, as much as Jigjiga's borderlands location.

The final substantive chapter drew together issues of federalism and diaspora return through a critical approach to two theories of social organization—social contract theory and neo-patrimonial theory. The chapter foregrounded issues of how relationships of responsibility and obligation are formatted in terms of politics, economics, or kinship domains, and how people understand the conversion of value across these domains—what I termed "buying in" to a social system versus "being bought off." I explored practices and perceptions of government contracts as they relate to negotiating commensurability of power across domains of market, politics and kinship, arguing for a view of ongoing struggles to control Jigjiga's political economy as a politics of valuation and commensuration. I sought to examine how the distinction between loyalty or "buying in" and transactionality or "being bought off" was understood by Jigjiga's businesspeople, both

local and diaspora.  Key to this is discerning the larger social wholes within which Jigjigans understand themselves to act, and focusing on the people's moral valuations of activities.  In this regard, whatever distinctions people make on the ground between economic investments, staying out of politics, and fulfilling responsibility to kin, all of these are woven together in a complex system of power that is continuing to take shape in the region.

## 9.3    Concluding reflections

The question of investment as an intersectional issue, a question of relative valuations and people's actions on their efforts to commensurate things and people, draws together themes that recent analysts of Ethiopia's Somali Region have tended to explore in somewhat disparate ways.  Studies in Somaliland have shown how diaspora remittances and investments, functioning as much more than money, fulfill obligations and reproduce relationships across transnational space (Lindley 2010; Hansen 2014).  While some, like Yusuf, point out the demands of their family members as concerns that shaped their decisions to invest, others, including Faisal, argue that for them, the fulfillment of such obligations is "a side-effect" of profitable business investment: "You create business to make wealth.  It has to be profitable, not just for family-feeding, but it has to be a business that you can pay yourself through and make money out of."[3] Despite this ideal, as I showed, however, Faisal was far from realizing profit on his investments.  At the time I left, he was sometimes working hard to build relationships with officials through which he might obtain a lucrative government contract, and at other times, he was investing his time in non-economic ways—in friendships and family relationships in Jigjiga.

While there are emerging dynamics of commodifying space and resources in the Ethiopian-Somali transnational system (Korf, Hagmann, and Emmenegger 2015), to focus on the conversion of communal resources and even relationships into monetary forms is to miss other aspects of commensuration.  Surely some Somali investors are looking primarily to profit from privatizing land and resources in Jigjiga and the region; yet in view of the continuing power of egalitarian orientations and collective claims on wealth, such property appears to exist on a shoestring, liable to undoing through government changes.  Most diaspora investors understood, and often contemplated, the potential for reversals of fortune and the ways in which their property constituted a claim within a shifting terrain of identity and power.  Warsame recalled a story

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[3]Faisal, audio-recorded interview, 11/17/2017

about his father's childhood: the last time his father had come to Jigjiga before returning in 2015 to invest was as a displaced child, knocking on houses inhabited by "Ethiopians." Warsame quotes his father's words:

> "And some people spat at me," [my dad said,] "because when they find out that I'm Ogaden—even the other Somali clans would see us as something beneath them. It was a dangerous thing to be Ogaden and traveling through Jigjiga. And today I've come back to this country, the same country, different time—and I'm an investor."

"It's an amazing transition," I reflect to Warsame. "Yeah," he concedes. "But when he told me that, it scared me! I thought to myself, the same people that were the elites then are the shoe-polishers today." His final thoughts on the topic trail off: "I just saw it as [saying] Africa is really volatile. Things can change very quickly, and even if you're a millionaire today, a government changes..."[4] This vision of return to the ancestral homeland as a tenuous investment leads investors not only to diversify their holdings across territory—for example, Warsame's family properties in Australia, Kenya and Ethiopia—but also to reflect on the beliefs that underlie their worldly investments. Property is a relationship that can be unraveled by competing claims, and so people diversify not only into different markets, but also into relationships and forms of regulating resource distribution and access to opportunity that may offer some stability apart from finance.

I have argued that the concentrations of relationships, claims, obligations, and social interactions generally at cities and borders make them particularly important spatial sites at which people work to configure their rights and obligations across social wholes that transect ethnonational and state organization, including family and clan as well as the multiethnic identity of "Ethiopian" and the ethnic but multinational category of "Somali." I hope that the work indicates to readers some facets of positive and negative change in eastern Ethiopia under the federal system, and some of the possibilities for ongoing transformation. At the same time, I hope that the narratives of Jigjigans go some way towards shifting analytical focus away from the state as the site of obligation and responsibility and placing it in a position relative to other ways of configuring political and economic morality that coexist with discourses that posit the nation-state as the primary unit at which people can assert their rights of belonging in the world.

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[4]Warsame, audio-recorded interview, 12/8/2017

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| BMA | British Military Administration, 1941-1954 |
| DDSI | *Dowladda Deegaanka Soomaalida-Itoobiya*, Ethiopian Somali Regional State Government (used to refer to administration under ꜥAbdi Moḥomoud ꜥUmar) |
| EPRDF | Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, coalition of several ethnically-mobilized parties that took federal power in May 1991 |
| SRS | Ethiopian Somali Regional State (used to refer to territorial region) |
| ONLF | Ogaden National Liberation Front |
| SPDP | Somali People's Democratic Party |
| TPLF | Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, lead party in the EPRDF coalition since 1991 |
| UZ | United Zones Group |
| WSLF | Western Somali Liberation Front |

# Appendix A   Note on language and transliteration

The everyday language in which most of the research for this study was conducted is Somali. Field notes were taken in English, involving immediate translation, though I recorded the Somali phrasing where I thought it important. Interviews were conducted in Somali or English, according to the interlocutor's preference. Most diaspora returnees who had lived for decades in the US or UK chose to speak English. Most locals or returnees from non-English speaking contexts spoke Somali. Due to people's distrust of the regional government amidst a deteriorating security situation, I did not involve translators or research assistants in the collection of in-depth interviews that comprise much of the information in what follows.

Privileging ease of reading over consistency, I employ two modes of Somali transliteration in this text. In long quotations, poetry, and cases of translated passages where I feel it necessary to clarify terminology, I employ Somali spellings in line with Fiqi's Somali-English Dictionary. For names and terms that are referenced repeatedly, I employ the following convention:

*Consonants*

- Somali C becomes ʿ, e.g. Cabdi = ʿAbdi

- Somali X becomes ḥ, e.g. Maxamed = Moḥamed

*Vowels*

For readers' ease, I have avoided using Somali double vowels in commonly recognized names but have marked them with a standard transliteration approach where words are used repeatedly that need some marking to distinguish them from other Somali terms. For example:

Internationally-recognized names and proper names I have kept in common Anglicized forms, e.g. Ogaadeen I have kept as Ogaden; Isḥaaq as Isaq; al-Itiḥaad as al-Itiḥad. For non-proper terms as well

as some less-commonly-known words used occasionally, I keep the double vowel. For example:

- Maalin-taajir (millionaire-in-a-day)

- Magaalo (town)

- Miskiin (poor or humble person)

# Appendix B  Representation of clan lineages

For comparison with my own analysis, I include several clan-tree diagrams by anthropologists and historians.

- Lewis' *Peoples of the Horn of Africa* (p. 22) contains a chart of Ogaden lineages with structure represented below (Fig. B.1)

- Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur's more recent work *Taariikhda Afka iyo Bulshada Soomaaliyeed* contains a large Daarood branch diagram with the following lineage for Kuumade (p. 242). (Fig. B.2)

- Peter Little's *Somalia: Economy without State* (p. 50) places Ogaden as a clan and Mohamed Zubeyr, Auhlihan (Cawlyahan), Abdwak (Caabudwaaq), Tolamoge, and Mokabul as subclans (Fig. B.3). The Bartire are also labeled as a clan alongside the Jidwaq, but this is hardly surprising as other Jidwaq clans (Abaskul and Yabarre) do not constitute large populations in southern Somalia or Kenya, where Little did his fieldwork.

- Jan Abbink's Ogaden lineages in *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy* are illuminating because he marks clans as a variety of informants place them on the lineage; yet this is also extremely confusing because the same groups appear at different levels, often with different spellings. Fig. B.4 is a selection of the Ogaden branches, showing the Mohamed Zubeyr clans. Abbink refers to the Ogaden as a sub-clan, and Mohamed Zubeir appears among sub-lineages, jilibs and further sub-groups.
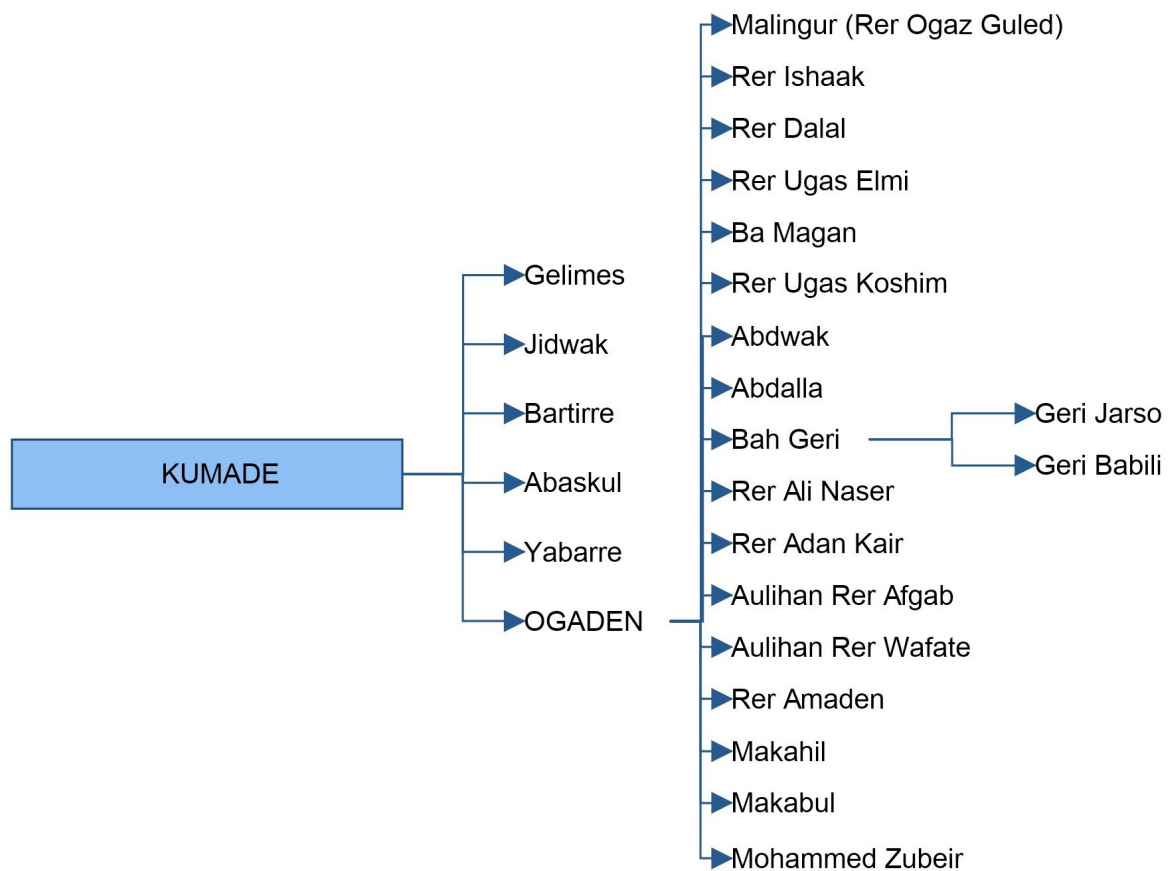
Figure B.1: Kumade lineage diagram from I.M. Lewis' *Peoples of the Horn of Africa* (p. 22)
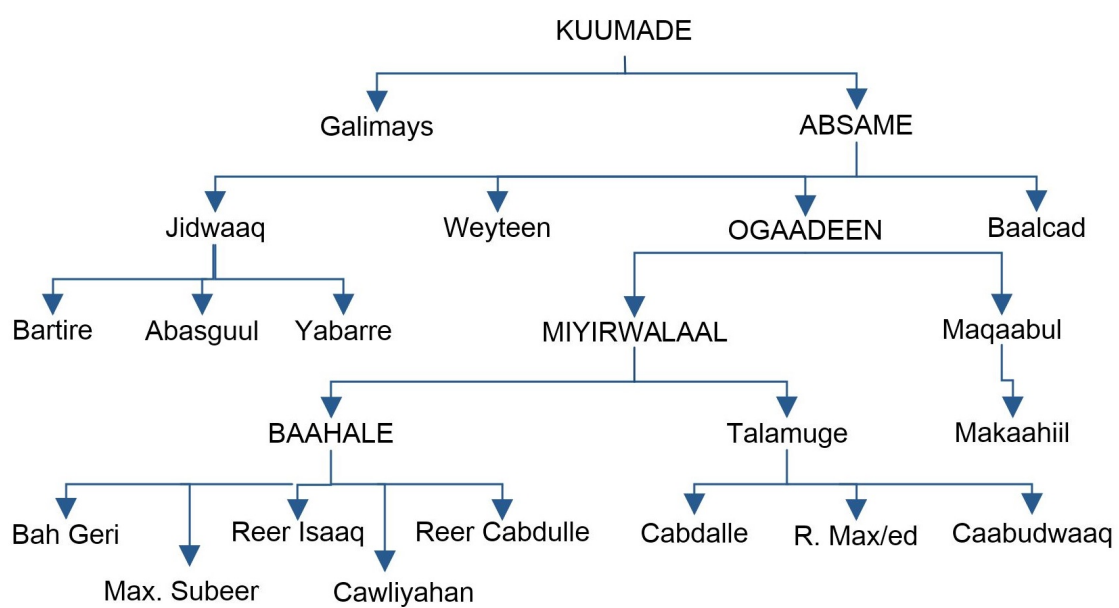
Figure B.2: Kumade lineage diagram from Cabdalla Cumar Mansuur's *Taariikhda Afka iyo Bulshada Soomaaliyeed* (p. 242)

Clan Family                                              Darood

Clan Confederation                    Absame                        Harti

Clan            Ogadeen              Bartere         Majerteyn              Marehan

                                     Jidwaag         Warsangeli

                                                     Dishilhe

                                                     Dolbahante

Subclan         Mohamed
                Zubeyr

                Aulihan

                Abdwak

                Tolamage

                Mokabul

Figure B.3: Darod lineage diagram from Peter Little's *Somalia: Economy without State* (p. 50)

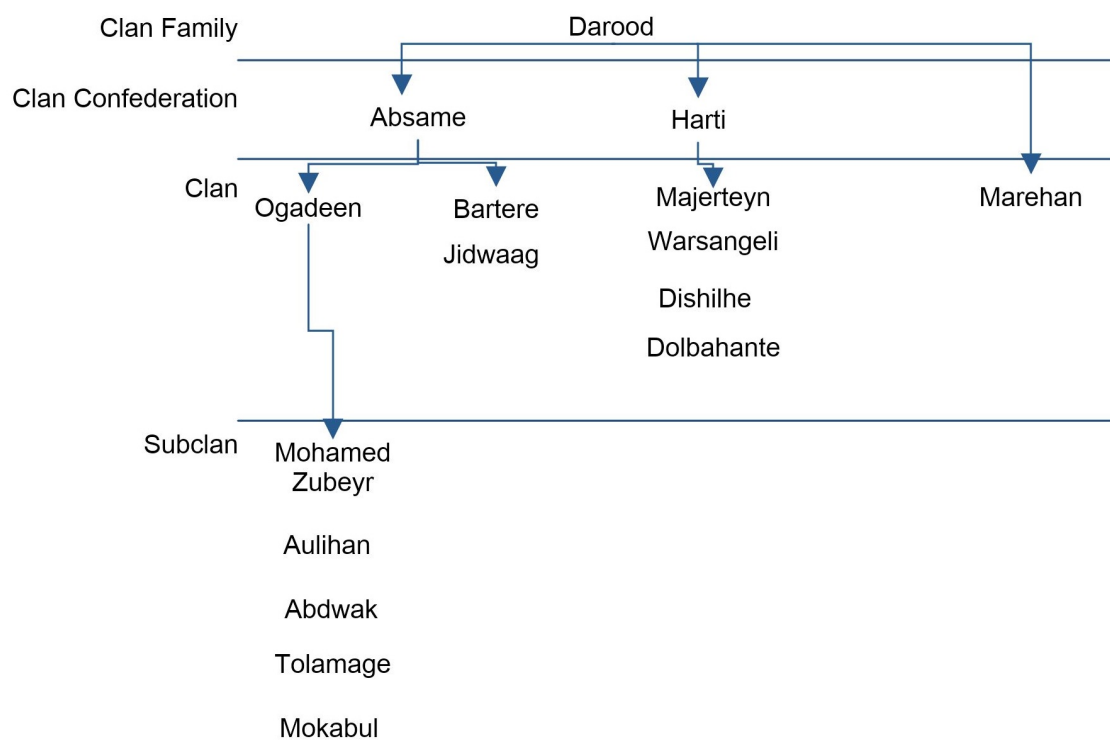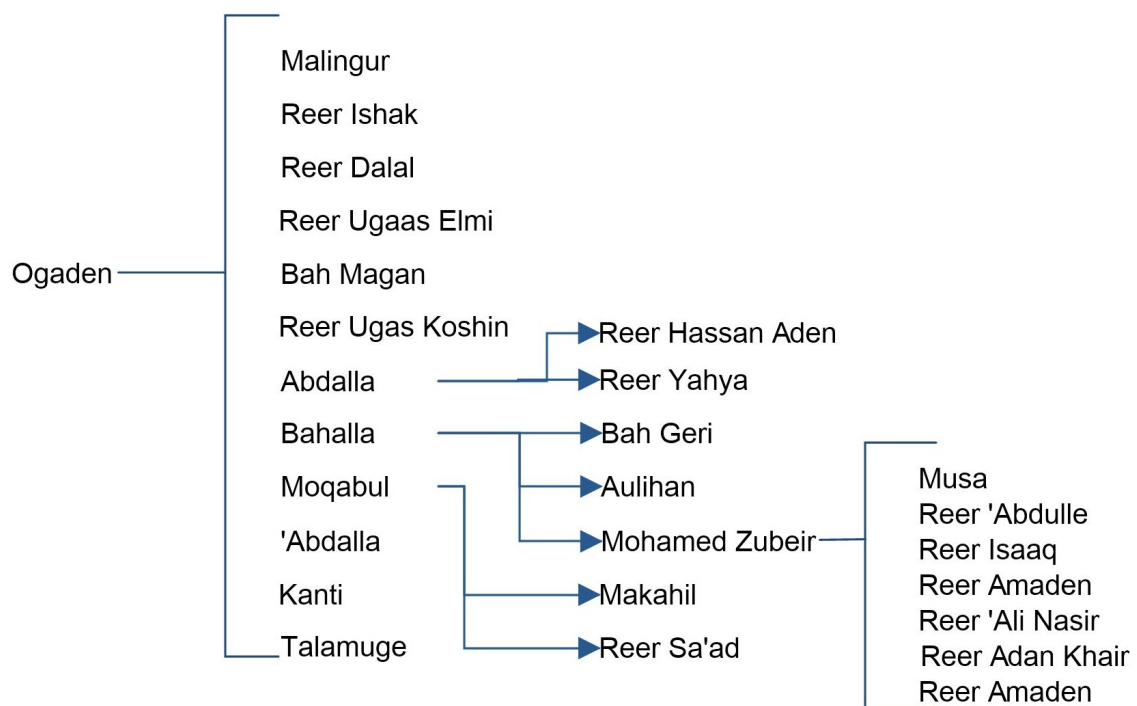Figure B.4: Ogaden lineage diagram from Jan Abbink's *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy*

# Appendix C   Place preference analysis

Data were divided into living preferences and business preferences. I will deal with each of these separately.

## Living preferences

The open-ended ranking of five countries among 39 participants resulted in 40 unique countries named. For mapping, Somaliland and Somalia were grouped together. The U.S. and Ethiopia were tied for the most frequently mentioned, with 25 mentions each. Canada followed with 15, Saudi Arabia with 13, and Australia and the UK each with 11. Total mentions of Somalia (7) and Somaliland (4) also came to 11. (See Fig. C.1 for map of living place-preferences.)

Since informants either put Somalia or Somaliland on their lists, not both, I combined those two for the analysis as well. My procedure for ranking is as follows:

- Assume that the 40 countries mentioned constitute a universe of possible living preferences for people in Jigjiga (i.e., bound the possible preferences to only countries that were actually mentioned at least once).

- Create a matrix of ordered data. That is, I created a matrix with n = 39 (participants) and 40 columns representing the order of countries preferred from 1-40. Columns from 6-40 were assigned a value of 0, meaning that 5 countries "participated" in each competition. Based on this order matrix, rank summaries were calculated using the PLMIX rank_summaries() function, I created a table with the mean rank of each country and the number of times it was mentioned. Sorted by the frequency of mentions, this yields Table C.

Table C.1: Frequency and mean ranks for countries named in living preferences survey, for countries named at least one time

| Country | Freq. | Mean rank | Freq. (diaspora) | Mean rank (diaspora) | Freq. (locals) | Mean rank (locals) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethiopia | 25 | 2.083333 | 9 | 1.778 | 16 | 2.267 |
| USA | 25 | 2.041667 | 10 | 2.11 | 15 | 2 |
| Canada | 15 | 2.6 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 2.4 |
| Saudi Arabia | 13 | 2.75 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 2.57 |
| Australia | 11 | 3.090909 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 3.11 |
| Somalia | 11 | 3.454545 | 7 | 3.43 | 4 | 3.5 |
| UK | 11 | 4 | 3 | 3.67 | 8 | 4.125 |
| Kenya | 8 | 3.75 | 6 | 3.83 | 2 | 3.5 |
| UAE | 8 | 2.625 | 3 | 2.33 | 5 | 2.8 |
| Norway | 6 | 2.5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Sweden | 6 | 3.6 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 |
| Turkey | 5 | 4.2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4.25 |
| Finland | 4 | 3.25 | 2 | 3.5 | 2 | 3 |
| Qatar | 4 | 3.25 | | | 4 | 3.25 |
| Djibouti | 3 | 3.666667 | 2 | 4.5 | 1 | 2 |
| Germany | 3 | 2.666667 | | | 3 | 2.67 |
| Netherlands | 3 | 3.333333 | | | 3 | 3.33 |
| Tanzania | 3 | 3.5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Denmark | 2 | 3.5 | | | 2 | 3.5 |
| Egypt | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| France | 2 | 3 | | | 2 | 3 |
| Japan | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Malaysia | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 2.5 | | |
| South Africa | 2 | 4.5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
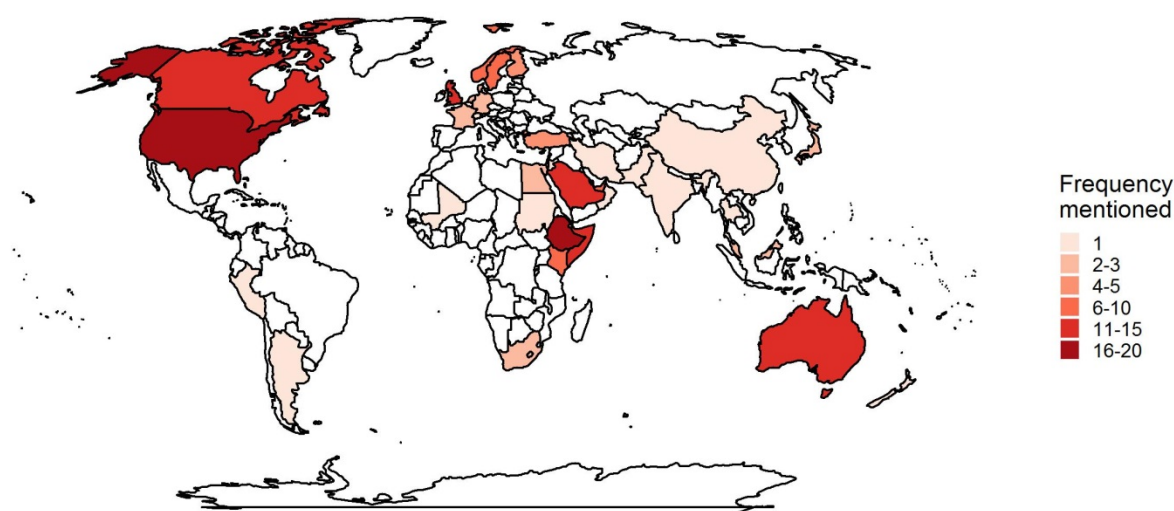
Figure C.1: Geographical representation of countries mentioned as preferred places to live.

## Business preferences

Ranking of places to do business resulted in 42 unique countries named. In terms of frequency mentioned, Ethiopia was the clear winner with 29 mentioned, followed by Somalia and the U.S. with 18, UAE with 16, China with 14, and Kenya with 13. (See Fig. C.2 for map of business place-preferences.)

Diaspora returnees tended to rank Ethiopia higher in terms of living (1.78 average) and lower in terms of business (2.55) than locals (2.27 living/1.79 business). A couple of trends observed qualitatively are interesting: locals named a somewhat wider range of countries and tended to perceive certain countries that did not even show up on diaspora returnees' lists (Japan, United Kingdom, India, Russia, Norway) as decent for business. At the same time, a subtle distinction went on in many of these interviews: are we talking about business/investment, or working? Because, as one local businessman said, you go abroad to work; you return home to invest.

Table C.2: Frequency and mean ranks for countries named in business preferences survey, for countries named at least one time

| Country | Freq. | Mean rank | Freq. (diaspora) | Mean rank (diaspora) | Freq. (locals) | Mean rank (locals) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethiopia | 29 | 2.12 | 12 | 2.545 | 17 | 1.786 |
| United States of America | 18 | 2.470588 | 9 | 1.75 | 9 | 3.111 |
| Somalia | 18 | 3.647059 | 8/1 (SLD) | 4/5 | 4/5 (SLD) | 4/2.4 |
| United Arab Emirates | 16 | 2.4375 | 6 | 2.333 | 10 | 2.5 |
| China | 14 | 2.714286 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 2.5 |
| Kenya | 13 | 3 | 9 | 2.89 | 4 | 3.25 |
| Japan | 7 | 4 | | | 7 | 4 |
| South Africa | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3.5 |
| United Kingdom | 5 | 4.4 | | | 5 | 4.4 |
| Turkey | 4 | 2.25 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 |
| India | 4 | 3 | | | 4 | 3 |
| Qatar | 3 | 1.666667 | | | 3 | 1.67 |
| Saudi Arabia 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Djibouti | 3 | 2.333333 | | | 3 | 2.33 |
| Russia | 3 | 2.333333 | | | 3 | 2.33 |
| Uganda | 3 | 2.5 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Tanzania | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | | |
| Canada | 2 | 2.5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Norway | 2 | 2.5 | | | 2 | 2.5 |
| Sudan | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Rwanda | 2 | 4 | 1 | NA | 1 | 4 |
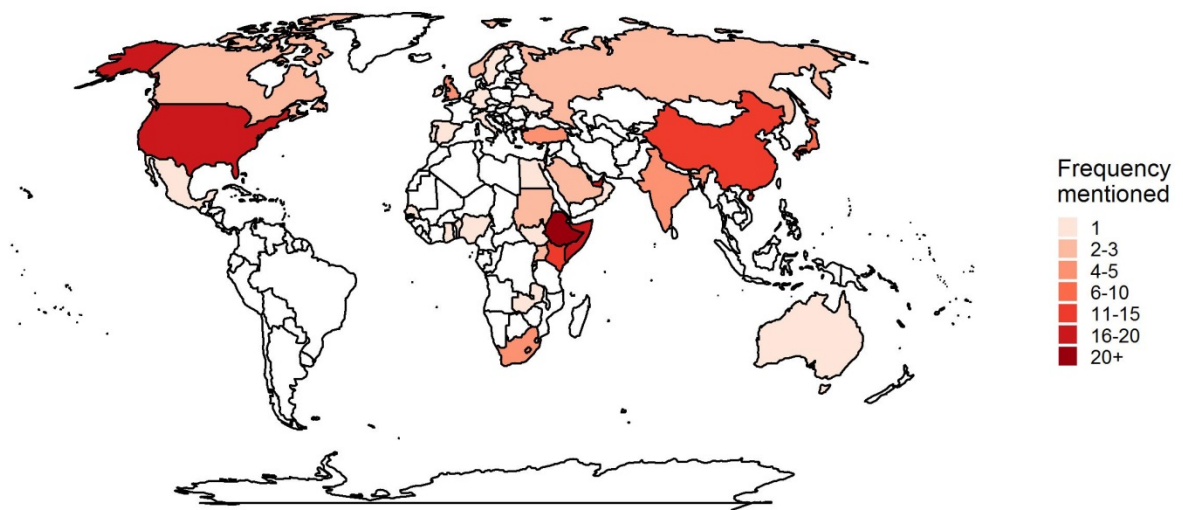
Figure C.2: Geographical representation of countries mentioned as preferred places to do business.

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