# EXTENDED ESSAY GLOBAL POLITICS

**EVOLUTION IN SOMALIA POLITICAL INSTABILITY BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2012 RE-WRITE OF THE CONSTITUTION.**

# What are the causes of the occurrence of the political instability in Somalia since the re- write of the constitution in 2012 and the means to resolve them?

**Contents**

[Introduction](#_bookmark0) 3

[Methodology](#_bookmark1) 3

[Main Body 5](#_bookmark2)

[Areas of Global Politics used… 5](#_TOC_250001)

Foundation theories of global politics applied in Somalia 7

[Course Concepts Used… 9](#_TOC_250000)

Constructivism in

Somalia 11

Global Political

Challenges 12

Conclusion……………………………………………………………………………………

14

[References…………………………………………………………………………………….](#_bookmark4)

[1](#_bookmark4)6

# Introduction:

For more than a decade, there has always been reports about political instability, civil wars happening, with rampant cases of brutal killings, from the political conflicts. Since the 1990s, after the fall of President Mohammed Siad Barre, Somalia has been involved in major political and civil wars, with transitional governments being formed, which have not been effective in securing peace and stability. It is while reading The Roots of Somali Political Culture by Fox M.-J. (2015) that I came up with the question of what is being done to solve the conflicts in Somalia.

The research is centered on political instability in the country of Somalia, before and after the new constitution. This will cover past governments in Somalia prior to the new constitution, the political affairs and the problems experienced by these governments, (Fox , 2015).

Thus, I will seek answers as to the causes of political instability of Somalia, prior to and after the re-write of the constitution in 2012 and ways in which the political affairs of Somalia can be resolved. Answering this question is important in that it can help bring political stability and peace in a country that has been reported to be plagued by conflicts and war for more than a decade, without knowing a lasting peace.

Research conducted will be captivating as well as interesting as it will lead one through an ongoing process of exploring ways of resolving conflicts and will trigger a train of thoughts on the history of the political conflicts in Somalia, its genesis and efforts taken to find lasting peace.

# Methodology:

Around 500,000 have died since 1991 as a result of the political conflicts that have been happening in Somalia. Civil wars have been rampant for decades in the country and the cause of this has been the political instability the country experiences. In her book, The Roots of Somali Political Culture, Fox M.-J. (2015) reports that civil wars emerged in Somalia, after the collapse of the government of General Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991. Fox M.-J. shall be resourceful in helping us understand the political affairs of Somalia during the period around which the government of Siad Barre was removed from power. However, the book may appear biased to some extent in detailing the events that happened in that decade.

Another aspect greatly covered by this essay will be on interventions made by all stakeholders involved in the political affairs of Somalia. Terrence Lyons , in Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction (2010) explains how effective these interventions were in the effort to bring peace and political stability in the rather volatile country. Terrence provides great insights on the number of political players present in Somalia, and how they worked in trying to find lasting solutions for the war-torn country,

Another important part of this essay will be to touch on the history of Somalia, from its independence, through its rigorous times of regime changes, conflicts, and challenges it has experienced. Njoku R. C. ’s book, The History of Somalia (2013) will be vital in providing us with the history of the country of Somalia, with regards to political administration, secessions experienced, democratization process and also terrorism.

We shall also be covering in an in-depth manner the conflicts that have been present in Somalia, since its independence, the causes of such conflicts in the country, and steps that have been taken to resolve the civil conflicts in Somalia. Pontecorvo, C. M.’s book, Armed conflicts

in Somalia under international law, will prove resourceful in that aspect. Many other books will also be used that help shed light on the political affairs of Somalia spanning decades, which shall be mentioned at their usage. However, books used may be subject to bias, and thus information given may be incorrect in nature.

This essay will be relying on several types of global politics analysis to seek understanding of the causes of political affairs in Somalia, by using different perceptions derived from these types and in effect draw some insights on what is applicable in Somalia, which will be drawn from the comparisons. I will be using the realism foundation theory and universalism foundation theory to help explore the evolution of political affairs in Somalia, prior to and after the 2012 new constitution.

# Main body:

Political developments in Somalia had been taking a downward spiral turn prior to the re- write of the constitution. Administrations and regimes in power always got removed from power because of poor governance. For example, Fox M.-J. (2015) reports that after Siad Barre was removed from power, clan divisions took full force, even though he fought against them vehemently. Interventions such as UN’s UNOSOM I, UNOSOM II, and the United States’ UNITAF, were brought to try and quell inter-clan and inter-tribe conflicts. However, this attempts at restoring democracy and peace in the country brought no lasting change.

# Areas of Global Politics used:

Rwandese example:

We can compare the situation in Somalia with that experienced in Rwanda in 1990 where civil war caused deaths of many Rwandese nationals. The political affairs of these two countries is similar, in that both have had to deal with tribal clashes. Somalia has been a

country plagued with inter-clan and inter-tribe conflicts, involving many clans and tribes, Rwanda only has two tribes, i.e. Hutus and Tutsis, where many Hutus exterminated an estimated population of 75% of the Tutsis.

International intervention in both countries have also been brought into question, where some Somali leaders have questioned the United Nations pledge to support the formation of government that will oversee the transition into democracy. According to Lang, A. F. (2002), in his book Agency and ethics : the politics of military intervention, US president Bill Clinton apologized for not stepping in to avert the crisis in the country. The United States remained silent as people were being butchered in Rwanda.

The differences in the two political affairs of the two countries, is that while power struggle and coups have been the primary cause of the instability in Somali, Rwanda was a bit different in that even though politics were used to fuel the civil war, the war did not happen as a result of the power struggle. It was centered on misinformation by the ruling elite to fuel ethnic hatred and anarchy.

The steps taken by the new government of Rwanda, led by the new president, Paul Kagame to find a lasting solution to ethnic and tribal hatred have yielded tremendous results, as the country has not had any other political issue since then. Political goodwill and good governance have led to political stability in Rwanda, as democracy is in the heart of Rwandese politics, as stated by World Bank in the book Education in Rwanda : Rebalancing Resources to Accelerate Post-Conflict Development and Poverty Reduction. The political processes in Rwanda have led to Rwandese nationals putting their trust in their leadership and this reduces the risk of political instability.

However, this has not been usually the case with Somalia, as most political problems by having a compromise of the democratic processes. Governments have been overthrown, time and time again, regimes are put in place without a proper plan on how this means for the democratic agenda [Ter10]. This however changed during the 2009, with the move to have a centralized government in the capital Mogadishu.

Lack of centralized government in Somalia, because of resorting to numerous methods of resolving conflicts, such as the Islamic courts led to secession of some groups, such as the Puntland, Somaliland and this has caused fragmentation of the old territorial Somaliland. There was no such a thing in Rwanda and this may be one of the reasons as to why there is still political instability in Somalia.

The rewrite of the constitution in 2012 which led to formation of a federal parliament of Somalia, and establishment of the Somali Federal government. The major problem the country currently faces is the rise of Islamic insurgents such as al shabaab terrorists who continue to attempt to scuttle the political developments made in the country.

# Foundation theories of global politics applied in Somalia:

Realism theory was used as several states are seen to be concerned and in fact intervening in the political affairs of Somalia. For example, the United States played an important role in the evolution of democracy in the country, by helping in the establishment of a federal parliament and in essence, federal government. This is because the US realizes the importance of having a politically stable country of Somalia, and its significance in the way issues of interest between the two states, i.e. US and Somalia could improve. So, military and political security of Somalia is paramount to US.

The United States, in pursuit of its national interest seemed to turn a blind eye to the ongoing political affairs in Somalia. It was solely interested in maintaining a realist view of the situation in Somalia, and thus was only concerned with the affairs that affected America in the country, by putting America first [Ant02]. This could help explain why some African dictators stayed long in power, oppressing Africans, while America watched in silence.

The involvement of the US is seen as a move to counter the Soviet’s influence in the country, which was predominant in the country as Somalia had indeed become a socialist state. The US and Russia had just emerged from the cold war and were now in search of influence in the world, and the US had to intervene in Somalia as a way to preserve its capitalistic interest and affairs in the country. This struggle between US and Russia over Somalia somehow led to differences and conflicts of interest among Somali leaders, which in turn usually led to evolution of power struggles and conflicts in the country.

Liberalism on the other hand seemed to also play a role in the political affairs, with the involvement of key players for humanitarian actors like the United Nations Operations in Somalia, which sought to provide humanitarian aid, and establish peace and improved livelihoods of Somalis, since the ouster of President Siad Barre in 1991 and the clashes that ensued.

However, the situation would get so volatile that sometimes, the UN agency’s mission would sometimes be withdrawn several times. The agency was involved because the country was in great need for help, which was not being provided by the state to state parties present in Somalia [Ter10]. The withdrawal of this agency when the situation got more volatile was seen by many as to trigger more problems for Somalis as this would lead to even greater insecurity and the warring factions would feel in greater control.

International politics seemed to play a major role in the political affairs of Somalia, after independence, especially during and after the cold war. The Soviet Union played a major part in influencing politics and running of Somali affairs, which made Somali leaders leaders declare Somalia as a socialist country [Ter10]. Siad Barre’s regime was much influenced by the Soviet Union’s socialism that they signed a pact with Soviet Russia that enabled Somalia obtain military aid in form of sophisticated Russian weapon systems like fighter jets, tanks and missile defense systems.

In exchange, Somalia was to allow a military base in Somalia, at Berbara port which is near Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This would enable the Soviet Union to counter United States military in the seas and ocean, control trade and influence of America in the Middle East and Africa. The Soviet Union even helped Somalia invade Ethiopia, which ended badly for Somalia as Ethiopia was helped defeat the Soviet backed Somalia by countries such as East Germany and Libya. Somalia was defeated and this worsened the relationship between Somalia and the Soviet, and the United States took advantage of this by providing military assistance to Somalia, to counter the Soviet influence in the country.

This relationship between key players in international politics is thus seen as to be contributing to the worsened political affairs of Somalia, since its politicians aligned themselves with the conflicting aspects brought about by socialism brought by the Soviet Union, and capitalism brought by the United States. This fight for control over Somalia by America and Russia is thus a contributing factor in the local political affairs, as well as regional affairs in a larger scope, as Somalia tried to battle Ethiopia.

# Course Concepts Used:

The political affairs in Somalia, prior to and after the rewrite of the constitution in 2012, is a case of power, where struggle for power among its leaders and politicians can be seen as the major cause of the situation in Somalia [Rap13]. The regime changes that often were basically characterized by struggle for power between clans and tribes, as one clan on one side tries to exercise control and exercise authority over other clans and tribes, are the causes of political instability in Somalia, which has spanned decades.

In 1969, military general Siad Barre overthrew the civilian government that was led by Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, who was assassinated by his own security detail when on a visit in an area struck by drought [Rap13]. This led to the establishment of socialism in Somalia, which was enforced by the new military administration of Siad Barre. This struggle for power led to dictatorship of Siad Barre.

In the 80s, concerns of fair representation in government of Siad Barre led to the rise of the insurgent group, Somali National Movement (SNM) with its main intention being the overthrow of Siad Barre’s regime. SNM seized two cities, Hargeisa and Burro, but Barre’s regime was able to defeat the insurgents. Fitzgerald, N. J. (2002), in his book Somalia : issues, history, and bibliography narrates that when America withdrew its support from Somalia, after the Soviet Union was divided, America’s interest in Somalia was no longer, Siad’s regime became weak. The United Somali Congress (USC), which was led by Mohamed Farah forced Siad to flee the capital, Mogadishu. This power struggle contributed to affect Somali political affairs in a great way.

After Siad Barre was ousted, political affairs in the country worsened as the warlords who ousted him fought for power. This led to the re-emergence of regional and clan politics in Somalia. Clans and tribes started fighting each other for power and authority over each other.

The USC split into two factions, one lead by Ali Mahdi, the self-appointed president, and the other which was led by Mohamed Farah [Rap13]. This war to control power between the two sides led to many deaths and destruction of property. This war led to each side inviting support from their respective clans, which in effect turned Somalia into clan politics, instead of a national agenda.

Power continued to play a major role in Somalia political affairs as is evident in 2009, as the coalition government initiated a counteroffensive against militia controlling the southern part. Al shabaab and Hizbul Islam, two Islamic insurgent groups for complete control and establishment of sharia law, experienced in fighting amongst themselves, which led to their weakening and success of the coalition government, in gaining control of the southern region.

Thus, power can be seen as an integral part of the evolution of the political affairs of Somalia, as various divisions, clans, tribes and political groups struggled for control and exercise of power and authority in Somalia. The struggle for power led to overthrow of government regimes, affecting the politics of Somalia.

Peace is another concept that is to be looked upon with regards to the political affairs of Somalia. Virtually since its independence, Somalia has never had lasting peace. Residents of Somalia have lived with the fear of war as clan, tribal, religious and national political conflicts have taken the country to wars and conflicts [Rap13]. Clashes have always been happening, as regimes are overthrown, and rulers opt to use their clans and tribes to satisfy their thirst for power. Conflicts have been prevalent in Somalia, since independence, up to date as the Islamic extremist group, Al Shabaab still poses a major threat to peace in the country.

Inequalities in power distribution have also been a major factor in the political affairs, as this has usually led to disagreements in governments. Lack of representation in leadership has resulted in the creation of divisions, which often lead to talks and plans of secession. In the 80’s, a section of opposition leaders demanded fair representation from the Siad Barre government, and when he neglected their demands, they resorted to becoming an insurgent group, the Somali National Movement (SNM) [Con12]. Thus, inequalities in representation can be seen as a contributing factor in the evolution of the worsened political affairs in Somalia.

# Constructivism in Somalia:

Constructivism can be applied in the political affairs of Somalia since its independence, since the political situation in Somalia can be attributed to the political and social history of Somalia, and are indeed not as a result of natural causes. Power struggles in Somalia, poor international intervention among other factors are key causes of the evolution of the poor political affairs in Somalia, prior to and even after the 2012 rewrite of the constitution.

Societal problems, such as inter-clan and inter-tribe conflicts, accompanied by religious differences have majorly affected the way politics is played in Somalia, as we have seen that quite often, political used these divisions to fight for their rather selfish interests. Thus, changes in the way social interactions are carried out by states can be useful in establish greater peace and security. States involved in the political affairs of Somalia can really bring positive change by engaging all societies involved in peace of Somalia. This can help bring the conflicting clans together and find ways of ensuring a lasting peace in the war-torn country.

Constructivism is an incredible critic of realism, in that while realism is centered on how states are concerned only with their interests, and that each state is responsible for its own peace, which forced Somalia, in certain times, to rely on no other state for its own security, as the United States and Russia would withdraw support to Somalia, constructivism on the other hand argues that social constructions can be changed in their meaning, which would create room for reducing anarchy. Constructivists are concerned with providing a better understanding of international relations by having a constructive look at social reality elements such as threats, identities and cultures, in that they seek to bring progress in international relations.

# Global Political Challenges:

Global Security:

The evolution of the political affairs, before and after the rewrite of the constitution has had a significant impact on the world security. Islamic militants took control of the volatile country, and started enforcing Muslim sharia law. Sometimes, Islamic leaders would resort to their clans to seek and recruit militants [Con12]. For example, Gorowe region was under Islamist militant rule before pres. Abdullahi Yussuf organized militants to remove them from the region. These militants fled and reorganized in the much volatile southern region as their base, where they re-emerged as Al-Itahad al-Islamiya before it was neutralized.

The rise of Islamic terrorist group, the Al Shabaab, a terrorist organization that operates with its base in Somalia poses huge threat to global security, as it continues to carry out terror attacks on its targets, especially to its neighboring country, Kenya. This Islamic extremist group is hell bent on establishing Islamic sharia law in and outside Somalia.

It has carried multiple attacks on government buildings and killed and executed many who oppose its agenda. It has killed many Kenyans on Kenyan soil, by using IED’s and carrying out of terror attacks on institutions such as Garrisa University in Kenya, and WestGate and Dusit mall attacks.

The political affairs in Somalia led to the rise of Islamic extremism, such as Al Shabaab in Somalia, which poses great threat to global security as it continues to carry out its operations in and outside Somalia. Jones, S. G., & Corporation, R. (2013), in their book The terrorist threat from Al Shabaab, states that interventions have been made by key players, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia, and the United Nation in an effort to trying to stop the rise of Islamic extremism in Somalia. Even though the extremist group Al Shabaab has continued to attack and kill peacekeepers in Somalia, tremendous progress has been made in trying to combat them.

Poverty:

Another way the political affairs of Somalia has affected the world is that it has led to increased poverty in the country, which has led to efforts being made to provide humanitarian aid to those affected by the outcomes of poor political development in Somalia. Around 43% of all Somalis are poor with the Southern part more prone to poverty due to the conflicts that happen in the region [Ant02]. Somalia ranks among the poorest countries of the world, appearing in the top ten list.

Lack of a centralized government is a major cause of poverty because the economy can’t be controlled, and distribution of resources can’t be done effectively. Civil disputes that led to ouster of regimes, have led to civil wars, which further escalates the poverty problem in

Somalia [Ter10]. The UNDP has as a result been in the forefront in providing humanitarian aid to the poverty-stricken people of Somalia.

# Conclusion:

The political affairs in Somalia which is attributed with conflicts, atrocities and brutalities, appears to be a never-ending problem for the country. The political struggles as seen have been caused by a number of factors playing in Somalia. Poor leadership seems to be the major contributing factor in the evolution of politics in the country. Somali leaders have quite often used their respective clans and tribes to fulfill their political ambitions and fuel rivalry in the country.

Both Somalia and Rwanda have had inter-tribal conflicts and warfare, with thousands of people ending as victims of the conflict. Propaganda has been found to be a thing that enhanced the already tough and volatile situation. International intervention by states like the United States have been put into question over their reluctance to provide much needed aid in these countries, and their role into the conflicts rose questions as to what their interests in the conflicts are.

However, the quick formation of a centralized government of Rwanda contributed greatly to the restoration of peace and good governance by leaders, and hence increased people’s trust in the new formed democratic regime of Paul Kagame. Somalia has not quite really been successful in the formation of a centralized government. This has been due to poor leadership and the secession attempts of regions such as the Puntland. The existence of Islamic extremism has made the situation in Somalia really difficult as politicians find it hard to deal with groups such as the Al Shabaab.

International affairs like role of socialistic Russia and capitalistic United States have been found to further escalate the political instability in the country of Somalia, as the struggle between the two always led to conflicts in Somalia.

Power struggle also caused the political situation in Somalia as political leaders strove to obtain dominance over others, which is seen in the frequency of overturning regimes in power. Democracy has been lacking in the country, as thirst for power led leaders to plan to either overthrow governments, or to try secession.

Therefore, the political affairs in Somalia can be caused by a number of factors in the country, including religion. The people of Somalia must find ways of coming up with a lasting solution to the political problems in the country, as its effects have been felt, not only locally in the country, but also regionally and internationally. The greatest effect can be said to be the rise of Islamic terrorism. Al shabbab have taken Somalia as its base for planning attacks that have been executed and led to loss of thousands of lives, in the globe.

References

Bank., W. (u.d.). Education in Rwanda : Rebalancing Resources to Accelerate Post-Conflict Development and Poverty Reduction. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Fitzgerald, N. J. (2002). Somalia : issues, history, and bibliography. Huntington, N.Y. : Nova Science Publishers.

Fox, M. (2015). The Roots of Somali Political Culture. Boulder, Colorado : First Forum Press. Fox, M.-J. (u.d.). The roots of Somali political culture by Mary-Jane Fox . Boulder, Colorado:

First Forum Press.

Jones, S. G., & Corporation, R. (2013). The terrorist threat from Al Shabaab by Seth G Jones .

Santa Monica, CA : RAND Corporation.

Lang, A. F. (2002). Agency and ethics : the politics of military intervention. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Njoku, R. C. (2013). The History of Somalia . Greenwood.

Pontecorvo, C. M. (2012). Armed conflicts in Somalia under international law. Napoli : Satura.

Terrence Lyons, A. I. (2010). Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction. Brookings Institution Press.