

Pushing Marginalization: British Colonial Policy, Somali Identity, and the Gosha  
'Other' in Jubaland Province, 1895 to 1925

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Darod, Ogaden, and Herti

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, large numbers of enslaved people were brought from southeastern Africa to work on Somali plantations along the Benadir Coast and Shebelle River. As these southeast Africans were manumitted or escaped bondage, many fled to the west and settled in the heavily forested and fertile Gosha district along the Juba River. Unattached, lacking security, and surrounded by Somalis-speaking groups, these refugees established agricultural communities and were forced to construct new identities. Initially these riverine peoples could easily access clan structures and political institutions of surrounding Somali sub-clans, which in pre-colonial Jubaland were relatively fluid, open, and—in time—would have allowed these groups to become assimilated into Somali society. British colonial rule however changed this flexibility. Somali identity, once porous and accessible, became increasingly more rigid and exclusive, especially towards the riverine ex-slave communities—collectively called the Gosha by the British—who were subsequently marginalized and othered by these new “Somali.” This project explores how British colonial rule contributed to this process and argues that in Jubaland province a “Somali” identity coalesced largely in opposition to the Gosha.

This master's thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late grandfather Joseph Gordon Spicer, Sr. whose passion for story-telling, folklore, and history instilled in me a love for history that has carried me to where I am today.

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## Introduction

On August 1, 1922 a group of Darod Somali<sup>1</sup> elders submitted a letter to British officials in Kismayu expressing grievances over the British administration of Jubaland province.<sup>2</sup> Among their concerns were the need for schools to be built in the province, changes in trade policy, and better water access and development. These issues, though, were not the elders' main grievance. Instead, their letter focused on the British policy that classified the Somali as African, to which the elders were vehemently opposed.<sup>3</sup> The Darod elders argued that:

We come to learn that [Luo], Nandi, Wakimbas, Wakikuyu, Swahili, Wagalla, Wardey [sic], [Sudanese], and Somali are classed together by the Government and the same rule applied for all. But allow us to say that in our opinion this wrong and is degrading and injustice to us all, to be ill treated like this by our Government. The Government Officials who have visited our country know we are descendent from Arabia, and this we have already proved and we can prove we assure you that we cannot accept to be equaled and compared with those pagan tribes either with our consent or by force even if the Government orders us this we cannot comply with, but we prefer death than to be treated equally with [these] tribes for as the Government knows well these tribes are inferior to us and according to our religion they were slaves who we used to trade during past years.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In any study of the Somali people it is essential to understand the importance of clan lineage as the primary source of one's loyalty and identity. For the sake of brevity, Somali clan structure is organized as follows: clan-family, clan, primary lineage, *diya* paying group, and then one's family. The Darod who wrote this letter are one of the four clans that make up the Samaale clan-family and migrated into this Juba River Valley during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For more information on Somali social structure and the migration of the Darod, see Lewis, I. M. *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. 4th ed. Eastern African studies. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), whose study on Somali clan structure, the segmentary model, and its relationship to Somali social, political, and economic interaction is extensive. Also see, Turton, E. R. "Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/Tana Area." *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975): 519-537. Furthermore, there is some conjecture over the origin of the term "Somali." Cassanelli, Lee V. *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 15-16, points out that the word "Somali" first appeared in an Ethiopic hymn during the early fifteenth century and that "the word Somali itself does not appear in any Arabic documents before the sixteenth century, but references to *Somali* clans appear occasionally in Arabic literature after 1300." While, I.M. Lewis argues that the term Somali is an ethnonym for Samaale, an Arab through which many Somali clans claim descent. See Lewis, I.M. *A Modern History of the Somali*, 5-6. Thus, the term Somali suggests close ties to Arabia and Islam, although its precise origin is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> "Letter from Darod Somali Elders to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi (on tour to Kismayu)," KNA: MC/Coast/470. 1 August 1922. This document provides evidence on how the Somalis viewed themselves in relation to other ethnic groups in Jubaland, as well as how they viewed their relationship with the British. The letter is signed by nine Darod Somali elders or their representatives and shows a clear understanding of what it meant to be 'Somali' by Somalis.

<sup>3</sup> I use African here and throughout this paper as a categorization of peoples who inhabited East Africa and who did not claim Western or Asiatic descent. Specifically I use the term to collectively refer to Bantu, Boni, Warday, and other peoples who the Somali may have encountered in the Horn of Africa prior to and at the turn of the twentieth century.

<sup>4</sup> "Letter from Darod Somali Elders to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi," KNA: MC/Coast/470, 3.

For the elders, colonial attempts to make Somalis “native” undermined the very foundations on which their identity and their alleged superiority were based. To the elders, the Somali were not African because they were—in part—of Asiatic descent.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Somali claimed difference based on certain physical characteristics—softer hair, lighter skin, and a taller stature—and the practice of Islam that distinguished a Somali from other, African, peoples. These characteristics marked substantial barriers that defined Somali identity, while denying others access to this identity.<sup>6</sup>

The British response and ensuing administrative debate to the letter shows a surprising level of misunderstanding, confusion, and racism. In searching for a resolution to the Darod Somali elders complaints, the Senior Commissioner of Jubaland province, H. Hastings Horne, argued to his superiors in Nairobi that:

You are dealing with the most advanced brain on the East Coast. I always think this fact is overlooked. To cope with the Somali you want a similar type of brain in his rulers, a similar type of energy and endurance.<sup>7</sup>

Horne’s answer was to accommodate the elders’ demands and treat them as a separate, non-African racial category.<sup>8</sup> Doing so would not only change the way Somalis were administered and taxed, it had broader implications in that it validated Somali self-identification. It also helped to reinforce barriers

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<sup>5</sup> I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 5, 20-21, notes that intermingling between Arab traders and coastal Somali peoples may predate the Islamic period. However, Somali clan claims of being directly descended from Arab founders appear to be fabricated, suggesting that Somali claims were originally an attempt to draw Somalis closer to Islam. See, Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 16-17, 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> I used the term identity here to refer broadly not only to historical, religious, and physical characteristics that defined a Somali from a non-Somali, but also to describe the access to greater economic, social, and political structures that were afforded to a Somali (as opposed to a non-Somali who was denied) in a Somali dominated society. Thus, my use of identity for this paper encompasses questions of upward mobility, equity, and equality that are associated with the access and the denial of groups from the dominate structures and modes of power that are found within a society. In this sense, my use of the term is also Foucaultian, in that one’s identity is something determined and produced by mechanisms of power; in addition to being defined by other characteristics. Finally, it is important to recognize that identity is not a static concept; what it meant to be a Somali in 1895 was not the same as it was to be Somali in 1925. Identity is something that is constantly changing, and I argue is partially constructed in opposition to those viewed as the “other.”

<sup>7</sup> “Correspondence from Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi,” KNA: MC/Coast/470. Hastings Horne, 30 October 1922.

<sup>8</sup> The progression of this argument can be seen through the following letters: “Tribal Councils,” Correspondence from Ag Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief of Native Commissioner at Nairobi, KNA: MC/Coast/470, 5 September 1922.; “Correspondence from District Commissioner Jennings at Kismayu to the Ag. Senior Commissioner at Kismayu.” KNA: MC/Coast/470. 15 October 1922.; “Correspondence from the Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief of Native Commissioner at Nairobi.” KNA: MC/Coast/470, 16 October 1922.; as well as the aforementioned “Correspondence from Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi.” KNA: MC/Coast/470, 30 October 1922.

that differentiated Somali from “African” and prohibited non-Somalis from access to this identity.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, the debate and language used to describe the Somalis is indicative of how the British approached policy and understood Somalis in relation to other inhabitants of the province, validating Somali views of their own identity in relation to others.

Among the other inhabitants of Jubaland province was a minority agricultural community of African Bantu peoples. In the nineteenth century they had settled along the lower and middle Juba River valley in a region known as Gosha, and later became collectively referred to as the Gosha.<sup>10</sup> They had a unique history; having descended from manumitted and escaped slaves from Somali plantations along the Benadir Coast and the Shebelle River. The Bantu peoples’ legacy of slavery was well known to Somalis, who used it to mark the Gosha as an inferior “other” and create a barrier that separated Somali from Gosha.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Somalis, who claimed partial Arab ancestry, the Bantu of Gosha were a distinctly “African” people. Somalis stereotyped Gosha as physically distinct, and easily distinguished by Somalis due to their darker skin, flatter noses, shorter stature, and hard hair.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the Gosha had not converted to Islam until after having been enslaved and still preserved aspects of their previous religious beliefs and rituals. The blending of Islam and “pagan” beliefs further supported Somali notions of superiority, whose identity was strongly centered on the proper practice of Islam.<sup>13</sup> As a result of these factors—Arab vs. African, master vs. slave heritage, and religion—the Gosha were marginalized from

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<sup>9</sup> I use the term marginalization here and throughout my paper to describe this process in which non-Somalis were denied identity, or at the very least access to Somali identity. Accordingly, marginalized refers to the denial of upward mobility, equity, and equality to the dominate Somali social, economic, and political structures.

<sup>10</sup> Bantu is a language group that can be found throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and encompasses over a hundred ethnic groups who live in the region. In fact, the Bantu group that inhabited Gosha consisted of at least six, and possible up to 12, different peoples: Yao, Zigua, Nyasa, Makua, Kikuyu, and Nyamwesi. The word Gosha translates to mean “forest people,” owing to the dense forests that once encompassed the lower and middle regions of the Juba River. See, Menkhaus, Kenneth. “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia’s lower Jubba Valley.” University of South Carolina, 1989: 19-35.

<sup>11</sup> Besteman, Catherine Lowe. “The Invention of Gosha: Slavery, Colonialism, and Stigma in Somali History.” In *The Invention of Somalia*, 43-62.

<sup>12</sup> For more information on the ways physical differences shaped the perception of the Gosha see, Besteman, Catherine Lowe. *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 114-119.

<sup>13</sup> Declich, Francesca. “Identity, Dance, and Islam among People with Bantu Origins in Riverine Areas of Somalia.” In *The Invention of Somalia*, ed. Ali Jimale Ahmed, 191-222. Lawrenceville, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1995.



Somali society. This division only grew over the twentieth century, and was used by Somalis to justify their mistreatment of the Gosha/Somali-Bantu.<sup>14</sup>

This study examines the effect of British colonialism on the coalescing of Somali identity. Specifically, I argue that colonial policies helped reinforce and validate Somali notions of superiority, while creating barriers that marked the Gosha as the inferior “other.” The British administered Jubaland province from 1895 to 1925 when it was part of the British East African Protectorate (BEAP). But this thirty year window of colonial rule was formulaic in the construction and consolidation of both Somali and “Gosha” identity.<sup>15</sup> British rule introduced theories of race and racial hierarchies that led to remarkably different colonial experiences for Somalis and the Gosha—turning pre-colonial differences into immutable racial characteristics. For Somalis, British rule created, reinforced, and sustained a Somali identity based on their alleged Arab ancestry and their inherent racial superiority over African—black—peoples. For the Gosha, colonialism resulted in the imposition of a racial identity that treated them as a biologically inferior people. The Gosha were relegated to the bottom of the colonial hierarchy, marginalized, and exploited. Meanwhile, pre-colonial patriarchal and adoptive systems had afforded the Gosha protection and permitted them access to Somali clan structure and identity were closed off.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Besteman, Catherine Lowe, and Lee V. Cassanelli. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War Behind the War*. (London, U.K.: Haan Pub, 2003); and Van Lehman, Dan and Omar Eno. *The Somali Bantu: Their History and Culture*. Washington D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 2003. For more information on the ways the Gosha were marginalized and mistreated in post-colonial Somalia. The term Somali-Bantu is an ethnonym created by aid-workers in the 1990s to differentiate between Somali and “Bantu” peoples who fled the violence in southern Somalia during the Somali Civil War. These Somali-Bantu are the Gosha discussed in this study. To avoid confusion, I use the term Gosha to refer to these people throughout this project; I only return to the term Somali-Bantu to describe post-colonial distinctions between Somalis and the Gosha.

<sup>15</sup> The formation of identity is an ongoing process; it is always open for contestation. Before and during the British colonial period there was no such thing as a “Somali” or a “Gosha” per se because neither was fully cohesive enough to fit into such hardened racial categories. Thus, my use of the terms “Gosha” and “Somali” to describe these two groups is teleological. As such, I try to avoid using the two terms to describe the relationships and interactions between these groups in pre-colonial Jubaland, when these groups scarcely resembled any distinctive ethnic group. However, since a major component of this project is to analyze the impact of colonialism on identity—and because the British officials used Somali and Gosha to distinguish between the two—my use of Somali and Gosha throughout this study tends to treat them as two different groups. Moreover, I use the terms heavily to highlight colonial classifications to support my argument of identity alteration caused by British rule. Although, I do take care to show that notions of a greater “Somali” and “Gosha” identity were “forming” and coalescing during this period—primarily as a result of colonial influence.

<sup>16</sup> See Webersik, Christian. “Differences that Matter: The Struggle of the Marginalized in Somalia.” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 15, no. 47: 516-533. For a discussion on the ways traditional patron-client adoptive relationships broke down and no longer protected the Gosha, nor did they allow access to Somali social identity. Besteman makes a similar argument, that clan adoptive procedures had ceased to afford any kind of social mobility and protection to the Gosha as they

My project evaluates these three actors—the Somali, the British, and the Gosha—to determine how their actions, or lack thereof, and their understanding or misunderstanding of one another contributed to this process. During British colonial rule in Jubaland, Somali identity consolidated around myths of Islamic heritage, Arab ancestry, and pastoralism. From these factors, the Somali constituted an image of what it meant to be Somali. Focusing on these characteristics excluded the Gosha, with their slave legacy and African origins. At the same time, this study will explore how British policy played a critical role in the formation of identity and marginalization among the Gosha and Somali. British perceptions and policies treated each group differently, while shaping, reinforcing, and legitimizing Somali exclusionist identity. Previously, identity in Jubaland was fluid. By the end of British rule in 1925, Somalis increasingly constructed their identity in opposition to the Gosha; the barriers between the two were far less surmountable than before.

### ***Methodology, Design, and Goals***

Several scholars have recently written on the Gosha and their marginalization and mistreatment in Somalia during the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> This literature has tended to concentrate on exploring the relationship between the Somali and the Gosha in post-colonial Somalia. My study looks to engage with and expand on this work by focusing on the earliest period of colonial rule along the Juba River. The British administration of Jubaland was the first colonial experience in the region, yet current scholarship

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would have done in the past. See Besteman, Catherine. "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State." *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 3 (August 1996): 579-596.

<sup>17</sup> Cassanelli, Lee V. "The Ending of Slavery in Italian Somalia: Liberty and the Control of Labor, 1890-1935." In *The End of Slavery in Africa*, edited by Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, 308-31. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988; Declich, Francesca. "Gendered Narratives," History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigua and Shanbara." *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 93-122; Menkhaus, Kenneth. "Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley." University of South Carolina, 1989; Besteman, Catherine Lowe. "Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia." University of Arizona, 1991; Besteman, Catherine Lowe. *Unraveling Somalia*; Besteman, Catherine Lowe, and Lee V. Cassanelli. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia*; Luling, Virginia. "The other Somali-Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, University of Hamburg, August 1-6, 1983* (1983): 39-55.

has not given adequate attention to this thirty-year window.<sup>18</sup> Prior research into the Gosha has tended to lump the periods of British and Italian colonial rule together into a grand colonial experience with little differentiation between the two administrations. While both the British and Italian government utilized methods of indirect rule to govern their colonial possessions, I argue that it is necessary to analyze each period separately if we are to understand the ways that colonial policy reinforced an exclusive Somali identity and marginalized the Gosha.<sup>19</sup> The British and the Italian governments implemented policies that were unique to their administrative structure. In addition, both governments treated Jubaland differently in the context of their respective colonies—the East African Protectorate and Italian Somaliland.<sup>20</sup> Only T.H.R. Cashmore has extensively examined the British administration of Jubaland, devoting a chapter to frontier policy in the BEAP.<sup>21</sup> However, Cashmore’s work does not examine identity and he scarcely mentions the Gosha. This project contributes to the literature on the Gosha by reexamining this period of British control over Jubaland to show how colonial policy worked with a legacy of slavery, ethnic differences, and the practice of Islam to push the Gosha to the margins of Somali society.

Further scholarship on colonialism and the creation of tribalism Africa provides an analytical framework from which to evaluate the colonial experience in Jubaland province.<sup>22</sup> The scholarship has explored how British colonial rule relied heavily on a hierarchical system of indirect rule, which was dependent on the use of chiefs of who often lacked any local legitimacy. Colonial rule often mistook the

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<sup>18</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*; Besteman, “Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia;” and Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” which are the most extensive volumes on the Gosha and Jubaland all fail to address the British colonial period separately from Italian colonial rule.

<sup>19</sup> Menkhaus, Kenneth. “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley.” 202-205, provides a discussion on the similarities between the British and the Italian systems of indirect rule.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Cashmore, T.H.R. “Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918.” PhD diss., Jesus College, Cambridge, 1966.

<sup>22</sup> Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1993); Hodgson, Dorothy L., ed. *Rethinking Pastoralism in Africa: Gender, Culture & the Myth of the Patriarchal Pastoralist*. (Oxford: James Currey, 2000); Hodgson, Dorothy Louise. *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Vail, Leroy, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1989); Hobsbawm, E.J. and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

political and social reality of the territory or people being administered. Such a policy resulted in the artificial creation of distinct “tribes” and power structures that undermined pre-existing African social and political organizations and, in part, changed the way Africans viewed themselves. Scholarly debate has been divided between two camps on the nature of ethnicity: primordialists, who view ethnicity as nostalgic construct that built on myths and traditions, versus instrumentalists, who understand ethnicity to be a much more recent phenomenon that is the result of interactions and a negotiation of needs and resources with others.<sup>23</sup> This study examines Somali ethnicity from a blend of these two perspectives, which is in line with how scholars who have done work on the Gosha have viewed the concept.<sup>24</sup> My position is that Somali identity was built around myths of Arab/Islamic ancestry and traditions, which pre-existed colonial rule, but which did not automatically and permanently exclude the Gosha. During the British colonial period, however, this understanding increasingly excluded the Gosha, whose slave legacy and former subordination to Somali masters now identified them as the antithesis of Somaliness. At the same time, my project will explore how British policy played a critical role in the formation of Gosha and Somali identities. Thus, as Somali identity was consolidated under British colonial rule, pre-colonial structures and institutions that allowed for the assimilation of outside peoples into Somali clan structure became predatorial relationships that benefited Somalis exclusively and justified their continued mistreatment of the Gosha.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally my research explores the role of, and relationship between, Islam and slavery in the social and political organization of Jubaland. Broader scholarship to this effect has already been

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<sup>23</sup> See Spear, Thomas. “Introduction.” in *Being Maasai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1993), 14-17. And Vail, Leroy. “Introduction: Ethnicity in Southern African History.” In *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1989), 1-7.

<sup>24</sup> Declich, Francesca. “Gendered Narratives,” History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigua and Shanbara.” *History in Africa* 22 (1995): 101-109; and Besteman, Catherine Lowe. *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*, 155-158 and 233-234.

<sup>25</sup> See, Besteman, Catherine. “Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State.” *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 3 (August 1996): 579-596. In this article, Besteman makes a similar argument that clan adoptive procedures has ceased to afford any king of social mobility and protection to the Gosha as they would have done in the past.

conducted by specialists in East Africa.<sup>26</sup> However, much of the work does not adequately explain the model of Islamic plantation slavery that the Gosha experienced along the Benadir Coast and Shebelle River, nor has much research fully explored this Somali brand of slavery.<sup>27</sup> Frederick Cooper's evaluation of slavery in Zanzibar offers the closest representation to what slavery was like on plantations in southern Somalia.<sup>28</sup> Plantation slavery on Zanzibar and in Somalia was closer to the chattel slavery more prevalent in the West Indies and Americas than kinship models of slavery found throughout Africa. I argue that this unique brand of African slavery placed Bantu people outside patron-client like systems of slavery that were more traditional in Somali society and strongly influenced the way Gosha were viewed and their future marginalization. The Gosha, unlike previously subjugated and enslaved peoples, were forced into less incorporative plantation slavery that dehumanized them more than their predecessors.

In support of these claims, I rely heavily on British colonial archival material from the Kenyan National Archives; Colonial Office and Foreign Office records from the National Archives in London; and the collections of former colonial officials housed at the Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House. The material encompasses a wide array of sources, including dispatches, logbooks, district and provincial annual reports, intelligence reports, handing over reports, anthropological studies, traveler accounts, geographical surveys, and miscellaneous correspondence among British officials. To be fair, all of these sources—with a few exceptions—are written from a British colonial perspective and thus are tainted with biases for which I must account. Despite this weakness,

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<sup>26</sup> See Willis, John Ralph, ed. *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*. London, England: F. Cass, 1985; Lewis, I.M. *Islam in Tropical Africa*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980); Glassman, Jonathon. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995); Lovejoy, Paul E., ed. *Slavery on the frontiers of Islam*. (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004); Lovejoy, Paul E. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Miers, Suzanne, and Igor Kopytoff. *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Miers, Suzanne and Richard Roberts, eds. *The End of Slavery in Africa*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

<sup>27</sup> Although Declich's recent work has attempted to fill this void. See Declich, Francesca. "Dynamics of people mixing and women slaves in nineteenth century Somalia." *The Horn of Africa between History, Law, and Politics*. North East African Studies, 10, no.3 (2003): 45-69; and Declich, Francesca. "Unfree labor, forced labor and resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba, Southern Somalia", in Edward Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman (eds.), *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. (London: Routledge, 2006), 24-39.

<sup>28</sup> Cooper, Frederick. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

the material is still useful because it is accessible, comprehensive, and represents some of the only surviving written material on the Gosha and Somali.

This study is significant for several reasons; the first of which is that it fills a gap in the literature in the study of the Gosha. As I argued earlier, the thirty year period of British colonial rule has not received adequate analysis. It has been combined with the Italian colonial rule, so that both are treated as a singular experience, even though the British period marked Jubaland province's first colonial administration and was critical in the validation of Somali claims of superiority. This project reexamines this period and illuminates how British colonial policy altered notions of identity and excluded the Gosha from accessing Somali social and political institutions. Additionally, my study contributes to the growing body of literature on the Gosha by evaluating how the stigmatization of a slave legacy combined with physical and cultural differences to create barriers that marked the Gosha as other, while justifying their mistreatment. My project also adds to broader scholarship on the study of identity in East Africa. By exploring how Islam, slavery, and physical differences shaped identity, I am building off of, and adding to, existing scholarship that has explored these concepts and their effects in East Africa.

Most importantly, this work contributes a growing body of literature attempting to deconstruct the myth of Somali homogeneity and reevaluate the value of the segmentary model. Previous scholarship has treated the Somali as a homogenous society.<sup>29</sup> However, in the wake of the Somali Civil War and the dissolution of Somalia as a nation-state, scholars have reevaluated the nation's supposedly homogenous society.<sup>30</sup> My project adds to this deconstruction by examining how Somali identity in

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<sup>29</sup> Grottanelli, Vinigi L. "The Peopling of the Horn of Africa." in *East Africa and the Orient: cultural synthesis in pre-colonial times*. Edited by H. Neville Chittick and Robert Rotberg, 44-75. New York: Africana, 1975; Lewis, Herbert S. "The Origins of the Galla and Somali." *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1966): 27-46; Lewis, I. M. "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa." *The Journal of African History* 1, no. 2 (1960): 213-230.

<sup>30</sup> See Ahmed, Ali Jimale, ed. *The Invention of Somalia*. (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1995); Lewis, I. M. "Visible and Invisible Differences: The Somali Paradox." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 74, no. 4 (2004): 489-515., and Webersik, Christian. "Differences that Matter: The Struggle of the Marginalized in Somalia;" Besteman, "The Invention of Gosha;" and Besteman and Cassanelli. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War Behind the War*

Jubaland was formulated and shaped in opposition to the Gosha during this early thirty year period of colonialism.

My project is not without its limitations in its design and application. The source base I am using is largely limited to British colonial sources that are inherently biased towards a Western perspective. The authors of these documents were more concerned with effective governance of Jubaland province than with understanding the people and places under British administration. Accordingly, when British authors mentioned the Gosha and Somali, it is frequently on unequal terms that struggle to comprehend the two groups, portraying the Somali as superior and the Gosha as inferior.<sup>31</sup> Yet such sources are key insofar as my thesis examines how British colonial policy and administration contributed to the strengthening of Somali identity and marginalization of the Gosha.

Still the lack of primary source material that addresses the Gosha perspective is an unfortunate limit for this project. My original intent was actually to evaluate how British policies and theories of race affected the way the Bantu riverine ex-slave communities and Somali peoples understood one another. To analyze the degree to which, if any, Somalis and the Gosha “internalized” British hierarchies, perceptions, and mobilized the differences in British treatment to construct their own identities. However, there is simply not enough evidence available to properly evaluate how “Gosha” were affected by British policies and perceptions.<sup>32</sup> The Gosha did not practice writing; instead, like many African peoples, they used oral traditions to record and recollect their past. Unfortunately, given the Gosha’s historic marginalization and their attempts to assimilate into the greater Somali society, many of these recollections tend to minimize historic differences between the two groups.<sup>33</sup> Owing to the

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<sup>31</sup> Aylmer, L. “The Country between the Juba River and Lake Rudolf.” *The Geographical Journal* 38, no. 3 (September 1911): 289-296; Clifford, E. H. M. “Notes on Jubaland.” *The Geographical Journal* 72, no. 5 (November 1928): 435-440; Elliott, F. “Jubaland and Its Inhabitants.” *The Geographical Journal* 41, no. 6 (June 1913): 554-561; “Report on native customs, Gobwen, by Asst. DC Kismayu Lamb.” KNA: PC/Coast/1/12/121, Lamb, 25 September 1913; “Memoranda re Jubaland Somalis, Wagosho, and Bajun tribes, by AgPC.” KNA: MC/Coast/462. 20 December 1917.

<sup>32</sup> However, this does not mean that we cannot glean instances of Somali and Gosha identity during this period. Where my evidence allows it, there are interesting glimpses of identity that I examine when appropriate.

<sup>33</sup> Besteman, “Public History and Private Knowledge,” 574-577.

scant material available on the Gosha, I rely heavily on the handful of available secondary source material to reconstruct the Gosha's pre-colonial history.<sup>34</sup> Beyond these authors little has been written on the Gosha. The scholarly silence speaks to the extent of their marginalization and the myth of homogeneity that shaped post-colonial scholarship on Somali society.<sup>35</sup>

This work is also limited by its scope and applicability; it focuses on one particular period of Somali-Gosha history, which is itself a small part of Somalia's colonial past. The precedents established during the British colonial period are just one component to understanding how Somali identity was constructed and how the Gosha were marginalized by Somalis. Accordingly, my project looks to fill a niche in the literature that will have to be built and expanded upon through additional research. Finally this thesis is limited by the incomplete nature of my own research.

To better examine British policy and its impact on identity in Jubaland, I found it helpful to split the thirty years of British colonial rule into two periods: an early and a later phase. My decision to do so is bracketed by three major events: the Foreign Office's takeover of the province in 1895, establishment of forward policy in 1910 under Governor Girouard, and the cession of Jubaland province to Italy in 1925. What I define as the early period of colonial rule, 1895 to 1910, is highlighted by British difficulties in controlling Somali sub-clans, the abandonment of province's interior, and an overall passive administration of the region. The later period, 1910 to 1925, marks a change in British policy and involvement in Jubaland. After 1910, the British took a more active role in the interior of the province and the governance of Somalis; they also attempted to develop agriculture, and, to a greater extent, exploit the riverine populations along the Juba River.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Menkhaus, Cassanelli, Besteman, and Declich are the only authors I have found who have written extensively on the Gosha and their relationship to ethnic Somalis.

<sup>35</sup> The preeminent post-colonial Somali historian I.M. Lewis makes little to no mention of the Boni and Gosha in his earlier work. Other writers fail to examine the Gosha in detail, preferring to mention their minority status and move on.

<sup>36</sup> I must caution the reader that the "more active" approach taken by the British after the enactment of the forward policy is relative. The British still exercised limited authority in the province's frontier and the British colonial staff was meager in comparison to other areas of BEAP. Still I feel that the change in administration is significant enough to mark it as a different phase, especially if one considers how colonial rule impacted identity.



This thesis is composed of three chapters, each of which examines a different period in Jubaland's history. My first chapter, titled "Fluid Identities: Somalis, the Gosha, and the British in Pre-Colonial Jubaland, 1840-1895" is primarily a background chapter designed to situate the three actors—the British, Somalis, and the Gosha—prior to colonial rule. Accordingly, I reconstruct a historical narrative for Somali subjugation of the interior, the settlement of the Juba River valley by the escaped and manumitted slaves who later are known as the "Gosha," and British involvement in the region starting with the defunct Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). The goal of this reconstruction is to demonstrate how Somali and Gosha identity in pre-colonial Jubaland was highly fractured, conditional, and multifaceted. The chapter highlights, in particular, how Somali clan structures and institutions in pre-colonial Jubaland were fluid, porous, and easily accessible for outsiders.

Chapter two, "Benign Neglect: Early Colonial Policy and Perceptions, and their Impact on Identity in Jubaland Province, 1895 to 1910" tackles what I characterize as the scattered and ineffective nature of early British rule in Jubaland. From 1895 to 1910, the British struggled to administer Jubaland and policy underwent several significant changes—culminating in the abandonment of the province's hinterland in 1902. Moreover, effective Somali resistance limited British activity in the province to the coastal region and Gosha district. I argue this resistance coupled with racial biases shaped the perceptions of British officials, as well as the subsequent treatment of each group. From the outset, the British marked the Gosha as a population to be exploited, while Somalis were mostly left alone, and even respected. Lacking primary source material from which to evaluate the internalization of British policy and perceptions during this period, I instead highlight how the introduction of race, British perceptions, and the treatment of each group impacted identity in Jubaland.

My final chapter, "Somali v. Gosha: Colonial Policy, the Coalescing of a Somali Identity, and the 'Othering' of the Gosha – 1910 to 1925" evaluates the later period of colonial rule. I argue that the enactment of the forward policy led to increased proximity and interaction between British officials and

Somalis. The result of this interaction was the propagation of what I call Somali exceptionalism, whereby British officials understood and treated Somalis as a distinct and superior race. Meanwhile, these same officials lumped the various riverine communities into a single inferior and exploitable racial category. Beyond examining British policy, this chapter also investigates how different colonial perceptions and policies shaped, altered, and legitimized a Somali identity constructed in opposition to the Gosha. As larger numbers of agricultural former slaves settled in Jubaland, Somali identity became steadily more rigid and excluded the Gosha as the “other.”

## Chapter 1

### Fluid Identities: Somalis, the Gosha, and the British in Pre-Colonial Jubaland, 1840 to 1895

*The country is admirably adapted for cultivation and European enterprise, in the Gusha [sic] district, the ground being very fertile and the people glad and willing to receive Europeans and trade with them.*

- F.G. Dundas, 1893<sup>1</sup>

The region that came to encompass Jubaland province was a vast territory, stretching from the Western bank of the Juba River to roughly the equivalent of modern-day Somalia's border with Kenya.<sup>2</sup> Like much of the Horn of Africa, the province consists primarily of semi-arid and arid desert; rains are highly unpredictable from year to year, with some regions receiving as little as 30 mm per year.<sup>3</sup> Much of it is a harsh environment incapable of supporting agriculture but, given the sporadic locations of wells, suitable for pastoral living. The Juba represents the only perennial river in southern Somalia and thus is one of the only reliable sources of water in the region.<sup>4</sup> The area immediately around the Juba, especially the middle and lower Juba River valley, is fertile, well watered, and, during most of the nineteenth century, covered by a dense and largely uninhabited forest region known as Gosha.<sup>5</sup>

Prior to the early 1800s, the inhabitants of the Jubaland were predominately ethnic Somalis.<sup>6</sup>

While other peoples could be found within the province, such as Boni hunter-gatherers and Oromo

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<sup>1</sup> Dundas, F.G. "Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa," *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3, March 1893, 222.

<sup>2</sup> Please see the map of Jubaland in Appendix 1 for greater detail.

<sup>3</sup> Cassanelli, Lee V. *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> The Shebelle River in Southern Somalia does not free flow for its entirety and ends in swamp land to the east of the Juba. Thus, the Juba River is a critical source of water in an otherwise barren environment. In the years following independence, control of the Juba River valley became a source of contention as the government attempted to appropriate land for agricultural development. For more information please see, Besteman, Catherine Lowe, and Lee V. Cassanelli. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War Behind the War*. (London, U.K.: Haan Pub, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Besteman, Catherine Lowe. *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Violence, and the Legacy of Slavery*. The Ethnography of Political Violence Series. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 61-62.

<sup>6</sup> There is some conjecture over the origin of the term "Somali." Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 15-16 points out that the word "Somali" first appeared in an Ethiopic hymn during the early fifteenth century and that "the word Somali itself does not appear in any Arabic documents before the sixteenth century, but references to *Somali* clans appear occasionally in Arabic literature after 1300." While, I.M. Lewis argues that the term Somali is an ethnonym for Samaale, an Arab through which many Somali clans claim descent. See Lewis, I.M. *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. 4th ed.

pastoralists, the region was primarily populated by Darood Somalis. However, over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a large community of agricultural Bantu ex-slaves grew within Gosha as these people settled in the area after escaping or being manumitted from plantations along the Shebelle River. The influx of these refugees, later known as the Gosha, and the creation of their maroon-like communities along the Juba River started to change, challenge, and alter the social and political dynamics in the region.<sup>7</sup> As a growing ethnic minority in a Somali-dominated region, the Gosha faced pressure to assimilate with and adopt Somali social structures, institutions, and aspects of Somali identity. However, this assimilation did not come without contestation amongst segments of the Gosha, as groups within the community attempted to retain, define, and construct their own identity.

This chapter explores these dynamics between the Somali and the Gosha to demonstrate the porous nature of identity in pre-colonial Jubaland. My goal is to chronicle the condition of the three primary actors in Jubaland—the Somali, Gosha, and British—prior to the foundation of the British East African Protectorate in 1895.<sup>8</sup> Doing so not only historically situates the three actors' involvement in the province, it illustrates the evolving relationships between them and the fluid nature of Somali identity that later changes during British rule.

### ***Clans and Warriors: Somali Clan Structure and the Somali Western Expansion of the Nineteenth Century***

In any study of Somalis, it is important to understand the role of clan structure in the social and political makeup of the Somali people. This section concentrates heavily on evaluating clan dynamics

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Eastern African studies. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 5-6. Thus, the term Somali suggests close ties to Arabic and Islam, although its precise origin is unknown.

<sup>7</sup> My use of the term maroon here is a direct connection with the term used to describe ex-slave communities set up in the Americas. I find that the use of this term goes a long way in explaining the pressures and issues faced by the conglomeration of peoples that came to be called the Gosha. This concept will be further developed later in the chapter.

<sup>8</sup> Arabs were present in Jubaland province before and during the colonial period. According to I.M. Lewis, Arabs set up trade centers along the coast of Somaliland as early as the ninth century, see Lewis, I.M., *A Modern History of the Somali*, 20-21. And Cassanelli argues that Somali lineages trace their supposed Arab ancestry back to the eighth century, see Cassanelli, Lee, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 16-17. However, this study will not concentrate on Arab involvement in Jubaland province per se. Instead, I only concentrate on Arab influence inasmuch as it shapes Somali identity—through a supposed ancestry and Islam. This being said, Arabs did own some of the plantations that developed along the Somali coast and Arabs were heavily engaged in trade with the Somalis before and throughout the colonial period.

and their relationship to group identity and societal organization. Being a member of a clan meant protection and access to the resources enjoyed by that clan—such as grazing lands, watering rights, and territory. In such a sparse landscape clan affiliation was a necessity for individual survival; for outsiders like the Goshu, affiliating with a Somali clan was essential for security and assimilation. Consequently, this section analyzes clan adoptive systems and the potential for social mobility in order to explain how outsiders could become members of a Somali clan. However, in order to highlight social mobility one must also consider the Somalis pastoral and semi-nomadic lifestyle and how this affected their views of non-pastoral groups.

To properly situate Somali society and identity prior to the establishment of the British East Africa Protectorate, it is also necessary to assess the expansionist nature of the nineteenth century Somali. Because of their semi-nomadic and pastoral way of life, the Somali were highly susceptible to climatic change. They were in constant search of additional grazing land and livestock to offset losses, and to further increase their herds—their measure of wealth.<sup>9</sup> As such, Somalis developed a culture of raiding and expansion that gradually pushed their western neighbors further to the west and left the Somalis in control of most of the Horn. The relative success of this expansion shaped Somali perceptions of other people and of themselves.

### *Me, my Brother, and my Clan: Somali Clan Structure and Social Organization*

Somalis are of Cushitic heritage, sharing a common ancestry with most of their fellow inhabitants of the Horn of Africa.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the Somali share several commonalities with their neighbors with regards to their pastoral lifestyle and certain cultural aspects. However, unlike their fellow Cushitic neighbors, the Somali claim partial Arab ancestry, which, along with their linguistic differences and their adherence to Islam, formed important markers of modern Somali social and political identity. Pre-

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<sup>9</sup> Lewis, I.M. "Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa." *The Journal of African History*, Vol.1, No. 2 (1960), 220.

<sup>10</sup> Kelly, Hilarie. "Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, University of Hamburg, August 1-6, 1983*, (1983), 15.

colonial—before 1895—Somalis, while perhaps not fully united as an ethnic group, must have noticed such differences between themselves and other groups. And for a group that was successfully conquering the people around them, these differences supported beliefs of superiority that carried over into later interactions with other peoples.

Socially and politically the Somali are organized into clans, which are patrilineal groupings that claim descent from a common Arab founder.<sup>11</sup> Based on linguistic and cultural differences, there are two major clan families living in the Horn—the *Sab*, who are agro-pastoralists, and the *Samaale*, who are nomadic pastoralists.<sup>12</sup> These two clan-families are further broken down into six main clans and sub clans, including the Darod clan of the *Samaale* who are virtually the sole Somali occupants of Jubaland.<sup>13</sup> At the most basic level Somali society is organized into small familial lineage-groups, where members are usually closely related to one another. Additionally, two or more of these small lineage-groups are typically organized into what are called diya-paying groups, in which lineages enter into binding agreements that pledge common defense and support for one another. In pre-colonial Somaliland, this pledge frequently meant the payment of blood money by all members of one group to another.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> What follows is a brief analysis of Somali clan structure, for a more intensive survey of Somali clan dynamics see Lewis, I.M. "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, I," in *Africa* 28, no. 3 (Jul., 1958), 244-250, Lewis, I. M. *A Modern History of the Somali*, 4-12, whose extensive survey of Somali clan structure is still the most concise analysis of clan dynamics and the segmentary model.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis, I.M. "Visible and Invisible Differences: The Somali Paradox." *Africa* 74, no. 4 (2004): 495.

<sup>13</sup> I would like to point out that for this study any reference to Somali interactions in colonial Jubaland is a reference Darod Somali interactions. As such, my study takes care to avoid prescribing values and the actions of this clan as indicative of other Somalis in the Horn. The Darod are a unique case in that they were perhaps the most aggressive and expansionist Somali clan—making them an extreme example from which to study Somali identity in relation to other groups. See Lewis, I.M. *A Modern History of the Somali*, 22-23, 29-30. This being said, there are some obvious parallels between the Darod and the rest of the Somali, which can be made. Beyond this study, however additional research must be done to study to examine whether individual clans experienced assimilation and differently during the colonial period. As for the breakdown of the Darod clan, there are two major sub-clans: the Herti and Ogaden. While Somalis from other clans could be found within BEAP and across the Juba River in Italian Somaliland, Jubaland province was almost exclusively populated by the Darod. The Herti occupied the coastal region around Kismayu, while the Ogaden occupied the interior of the province. In addition, the Ogaden Somalis were further divided into several sub-clans who frequently acted independently from one another, as well as the orders of the Ogaden "sultan."

<sup>14</sup> Hence the name diya, which translates to blood wealth; or money paid from one group to another to reconcile the killing of a person from that other group. However, diya-paying groups were not strictly for the payment of blood money; they were primarily formal contracts or treaties in which parties pledge loyalty to one another for common defense and support. For more information please see, Lewis, "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland." 248.

Theoretically the hierarchical organization of Somali clan structure determines an individual's primary loyalties and personal affiliation. Thus a Somali in the nineteenth century would first and foremost identify with himself and his family. Beyond this his primary loyalty would have been his diya-paying group, then his sub-clan, and so on. In practice, this meant that conflicts between any one of these divisions had the potential to produce multiple fractures, as competing loyalties shaped actions and pitted Somalis amongst one another. A popularly cited Somali proverb confirms this:

I and my clan against the world.  
I and my brother against the clan.  
I against my brother.<sup>15</sup>

This segmentary model of social and political organization was once the dominant interpretation of Somali society.<sup>16</sup> However, this model has been criticized as overly simplistic and supportive of a myth of Somali homogeneity. Such critique drew strength from the model's failure to explain the disintegration of Somalia following the Somali Civil War.<sup>17</sup> Ties to locality, kinship, and economic bonds are just as important, if not more, to Somali identity. Not to mention, the model largely ignores other ethnic minorities and does not adequately explain cleavages in Somali society.

Despite the problems of the segmentary model it does have *some* value. During the colonial period clan affiliation did influence the actions of Somali sub-clans. Perhaps more importantly, British administrators supported—and propagated—the model, as evidenced by P.C. Harold Kittermaster's comments in 1931 on his experiences with Somalis:

Somali house will fight against house or street against street or town against town but strictly on blood lines. No matter how bitter a vendetta may be inside a family once that family is menaced by another family the ranks are closed and the vendetta forgotten, for the moment.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> See Lewis, I. M. "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa." *The Journal of African History* 1, no. 2 (1960): 213-230. And Lewis, I. M. *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. London: Longman, 1980.

<sup>17</sup> See Ahmed, Ali Jimale, ed. *The Invention of Somalia*. (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1995); Lewis, I. M. "Visible and Invisible Differences: The Somali Paradox.", and Webersik, Christian. "Differences that Matter: The Struggle of the Marginalized in Somalia." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 74, no.4 (2004): 516-533.

<sup>18</sup> Kittermaster, Harold. "Paper on the Somalis and other tribes of the Somaliland Protectorate," in RH: MSS.Afr.s.2341, 6.

In pre-colonial Jubaland clan affiliation was also important; it shaped one's identity and loyalty, and gave to access the clan resources. Nevertheless, clans were not the only means through which Somali society was organized. Somali political and social identity— especially prior to British colonial rule— was multifaceted, situational, and fluid.

Given the fragmented nature of clan structure and its tendency to pit Somalis more often than not against one another, Islam gave Somalis a supra-clan point of commonality.<sup>19</sup> Islam was a unifying force for the Somalis and it helped to separate them from their “pagan” neighbors. Islam first entered the Horn of Africa through Arab traders who slowly set up trade centers along the Somali coast between the seventh and tenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> Through these interactions, Islam was slowly adopted by the surrounding coastal Somali peoples whose trading ties drew them to these trade centers. However, conversion of the Somali interior remained incomplete, until the fifteenth century when Islamic holy men started to travel the countryside and worked to spread Islam. The importance of saints in the spread of Islam amongst the Somalis cannot be overstated and today numerous tombs of saints dot the Somali interior and are venerated for their role in bringing Islam to the Somalis.<sup>21</sup> Through the work of saints, in conjunction with the later developments of Sufi brotherhoods, hinterland Somali groups were steadily converted in the ensuing centuries. Unlike clan identification, which tended to fragment Somali loyalties, Islam was a unifying force; it was a shared religion that differentiated them from other groups. In addition, their practice of religion gave credence to claims of Arab ancestry and was used in combination with genealogies to link Somalis as descents of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>22</sup> For pre-colonial Somalis, Islam was an important and obvious marker of a shared heritage and was used to support notions of their superiority over other non-Muslim peoples in the Horn. The practice of Islam was an

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<sup>19</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, pp 24.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis, “The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa,” 217-218.

<sup>21</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 120-122.

<sup>22</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 5.



indicator of Somaliness: one could not be considered a “true” or “pure” Somali unless *he* was a Muslim.<sup>23</sup>

Aside from Islam, another important Somali identifier was their pastoral and nomadic lifestyle. Although the Somali were not the only pastoral group in the region—Oromos to the west and southwest also practiced pastoral lifestyles—Somali culture and economy was defined by their livestock. Beyond the Juba and Shebelle Rivers the land in southern Somalia is so desolate, there is little else people could do to sustain a living.<sup>24</sup> The lack of consistent rainfall and vegetation necessitated mobility in order for survival.<sup>25</sup> Growing crops and being tied to particular plots of land was not an option for most Somalis, and even in the areas where agriculture was possible Somalis still practiced some pastoralism. The refusal to completely adopt an agricultural lifestyle exhibits how Somali viewed agriculture negatively in comparison to pastoralism. For the Somali there were practical reasons for this aversion; agriculturalists were dependent on rainfall in a region prone to drought, while livestock and its accumulation was a signifier of wealth. However, much of the Somali disdain towards agriculture can also be attributed to perceptions of farming the work of slaves or inferior peoples—it bound people to the land and was labor intensive. Pastoralism, on the other hand, was viewed as a freer, nobler, and superior way of life.<sup>26</sup> These conceptions were further developed and reinforced—as will be shown in greater detail in later sections—as Somali groups expanded westward along the coast of the Indian Ocean and encountered sedentary agricultural and hunter-gatherer societies who were subsequently conquered and subjugated. Like clan membership and the practice of Islam, pastoral and nomadic lifestyles were pre-colonial markers of Somaliness.

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<sup>23</sup> I use the masculine “he” here, and throughout, to denote that there was inequality amongst sexes in Somali society.

<sup>24</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 7-8.

<sup>25</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 42.

<sup>26</sup> Cassanelli, Lee. “Social construction on the Somali Frontier: Bantu Former Slave Communities in the Nineteenth Century,” in Igor Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier-The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies*. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 216-217.

Somalis may have had certain pre-colonial identifiers, but that does not mean that Somali society and clans were impermeable institutions. Patron-client relations and adoptive systems that gave outsiders—displaced Somalis from other clans and lineages, the conquered, and the enslaved—potential access to clan structure. In a Somali dominated space, clientism and adoption gave the unattached protection, land on which to live, and, in time, an opportunity to become assimilated into a Somali clan society.<sup>27</sup> For the Somalis, creating and absorbing other groups was a way to augment their power. Clients were expected to participate in the common defense of the clan, to pay *diya*, and to participate in the religious ceremonies of their Somali patrons.<sup>28</sup>

Still, Somalis did not give equal access of their structures to other groups, the time and extent to which outsiders could integrate was limited by their way of life and their cultural proximity to pre-colonial notions of Somaliness. Some groups faced more difficulties than others, but pre-colonial Somali identity was porous enough to incorporate outsider groups into Somali social and political structures. The conquered sedentary farmer would typically be absorbed into the clan as a client-cultivator and placed into an occupational caste performing functions that most Somalis considered inferior.<sup>29</sup> The incorporation of agriculturalists into Somali society—as the Shebelle River was conquered and its inhabitants subjugated—created a precedent for the later absorption and treatment of the Gosha as they were brought to work on the plantations along the Benadir coast.<sup>30</sup>

Pastoral and agro-pastoral peoples of the region could more easily be absorbed into Somali society than could agriculturalists. The Orma whose culture was similar to the Somali provide a good example of this practice.<sup>31</sup> As the Somali pushed westward throughout the nineteenth century, Orma people were captured and enslaved by their Somali conquerors. Enslaved Orma became Warday client-

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<sup>27</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 163-165.

<sup>28</sup> See Luling, Virginia. "The Social Structure of Southern Somali Tribes" University of London, 1971, 47-48 and 117-123.

<sup>29</sup> Luling, "The other Somali-Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society." *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Somali Studies, University of Hamburg, August 1-6, 1983* (1983): 40-42.

<sup>30</sup> Cassanelli, "Social Construction on the Somali Frontier," 218-219.

<sup>31</sup> The Orma were an Oromo people who occupied the Juba-Tana region of the Horn of Africa. For more information on the similarities between the Somali and the Orma please see, Kelly, "Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region."

pastoralists whose chief responsibility was herding their patron's livestock.<sup>32</sup> Unlike agricultural peoples, the Warday, through marriage and developing kinship networks, could be more fully integrated into Somali society. As far as culture is concerned, they were Somali. However, even generations of incorporation did not make the Warday completely Somali, nor did the Somali accept them as such. For the Somalis, the Warday remained a subject people.<sup>33</sup> Still it is presumable that given continual intermarriage, outsiders could become accepted as Somali. A Warday individual might become Somali, and their slave ancestry obscured, erased, or at least left unacknowledged. The contested ancestry history of the Rahanweyn clan in southern Somalia supports this. While accepted as full Somali there is evidence that the Rahanweyn contain significant numbers of individuals with Bantu and/or Oromo origins.<sup>34</sup> Thus, there was a potential for mobility and acceptance within Somali society, which coupled with the advantages gained through clientism, encouraged assimilation of non-Somali peoples into Somali social and political hierarchies.

### *A Warrior Tradition: Somali Expansion and the Culture of Raiding*

In the decades preceding the establishment of the East African Protectorate, the Somali people had come to occupy most of the Horn of Africa and were pushing into the Tana River region of modern-day northeast Kenya. The occupation of this region came after the Somali had successfully pushed westward, having broken the defense of the Orma people who had previously occupied the region between the Juba and Tana Rivers.<sup>35</sup> This latest movement was only part of a greater westward expansion of the Somalis, which had taken the greater part of the millennium to accomplish. Expansion

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<sup>32</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 58. The Warday have an interesting history and relationship with Somalis in colonial and post-independent Somalia. The Warday, conquered primarily in the 1860s and onwards, became subjugated clients of the Somali. For more information on the Warday see Kelly, "Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region," and Turton, E. R. "Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political Activity in Kenya 1893-1960." *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972): 119-143.

<sup>33</sup> Kelly, "Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region," 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 12-13 suggests while the primary ancestry of the Rahanweyn is predominately Somali; there are elements that suggest the Rahanweyn may also have Bantu and Oromo origins.

<sup>35</sup> Kelly, "Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region," 28.

affected the social and political makeup of Somali structure as well as their understanding of other peoples.

The Somalis have a long history of expansion, which can be traced to numerous factors and pressures. As a pastoral and nomadic group Somalis were already predisposed to use large tracts of land and to travel over far distances. The scarcity of resources in the hinterland of the Somali Peninsula could vary greatly from year to year, further encouraging Somali to migrate, to occupy land, and to augment livestock numbers as hedges against the harsh environment.<sup>36</sup> Economic factors also affected the Somali demand for land. Much of Somali wealth was tied to livestock, and the more livestock an individual owned the richer he could be. The richer the Somali man, the greater number of wives and clients that could be brought under his control, thus increasing his prestige. Therefore the accumulation of livestock, wives, and clients represented the accumulation of wealth and status.

The economic importance of livestock encouraged the practice of raiding. Interclan raiding could replenish herds, help a Somali to accumulate power, and weaken rival clans and groups. Accordingly a culture of raiding and counter raiding developed in pre-colonial Somaliland. It was not only commonplace for raiding to occur; it was part of being Somali. Under the constant threat of raids and the need for self-defense, Darod Somalis in pre-colonial Jubaland organized themselves into an aggressive society that lauded the deeds of warriors against a clan's enemies. In fact, each new generation of Somali men were not recognized as true warriors, and thus true Somalis, until they had achieved success on the battlefield and bloodied their spears.<sup>37</sup> The primacy placed on warfare, together with the scarcity of resources and a culture of raiding, were the prime reasons behind Somali migration and expansion. These factors were mutually reinforcing and encouraged the Somali to make war against, and seize livestock and slaves from, their neighbors. More importantly, the success of these

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<sup>36</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 50-53.

<sup>37</sup> Hardinge, Arthur Henry, Sir. *A Diplomat in the East*. London: Jonathan Cape Limited, 1928. 217-220, "Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908" NA: WO 276/502, *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya: Jubaland and District*, author unknown, 0004/37, "Treasury's Report." NA: FO 2/448, *Africa: East Coast, From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, No. 130-170, 21 May to 13 June 1901*, Author unknown, Decipher 7/81, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 193-194.

raids shaped Somali perceptions of superiority, as well as how they viewed the groups in which they raided.

Somalis were not always the dominant group in Jubaland, as prior to the nineteenth century most of the land on the west bank of the Juba River was held by Oromo peoples. The westward expansion of the Darod Somali was not a rapid advance. Instead, it was a gradual process that occurred in phases as environmental and intra-clan pressures along with opportunity fueled Somali migration.<sup>38</sup> The presence of the Orma with their herds tempted the Somalis to raid them, while the constant threat of raids by rival clans and neighboring peoples displaced and encouraged Somali migration as a means of defense.<sup>39</sup> By the 1890s Darod Somalis had successfully conquered the territory that was to later become Jubaland province and were continuing to advance to the west.<sup>40</sup> Religion, however, was not the prime motivation behind expansion.

In the course of this expansion, the Somali encountered and subjugated numerous peoples, which in the process altered how outsiders were assimilated into Somali society and shaped the way Somalis viewed others, and ultimately—I argue—how they came to view themselves. Typically the conquered were incorporated as clients, but all clients were not treated equally. As argued earlier, the degree to which a conquered people could be assimilated largely depended on how similar they were to Somali characteristics —pastoralism, Islam, and ancestry. It was much easier for the Orma to be accepted as pastoral-clients than it was for agricultural Bantus and the Boni, who became locked into occupational castes.<sup>41</sup> Still, for the Somalis none of these groups were seen as their equal. Besides distinctions based on religion, societal organization, and their ways of life, these groups were seen as

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<sup>38</sup> Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," 218-226.

<sup>39</sup> There was a slight religious aspect to Somali expansion, especially with regards to the call for a jihad against the Christian state of Abyssinia during the sixteenth century. But, the main reasons behind the continued migration of Somali peoples were from political and environmental pressures associated with their way of life. See *Ibid*, 222-224.

<sup>40</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 57-58.

<sup>41</sup> Luling, "The other Somali-Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society," 42-47.

inferior because they had been enslaved and subjugated by the Somali.<sup>42</sup> This appears to be especially true with regards to Bantu and other Africans. Bantu agriculturalists—not those who would later become the Goshu/Somali-Bantu—had been the original occupants of the Shebelle River valley and were some of the first people to be conquered and enslaved by waves of Somali expansion.<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly in subsequent years, the Somali vehemently opposed any attempt to classify themselves as African.<sup>44</sup> I argue that this position stems primarily from the earlier conquering of Bantu peoples in which Somali perceptions of African—as opposed to the Arab descent claimed by Somalis—peoples became tied to notions of inferiority and agricultural servitude to Somali masters.

Before 1895, there were certainly differences between the Darod Somalis and other groups who lived within Jubaland. Clan structure, Islam, pastoralism and nomadism, and a warrior tradition differentiated the Somalis from other groups and were used by Somalis to support notions of superiority. At the same time, the recent success of Somali expansion to the West, culminating in the subjugation and defeat of the Orma, probably helped to accelerate and coalesce pre-colonial Somali identity in Jubaland. As Somalis conquered surrounding peoples, Somaliness was increasingly defined in opposition to other peoples. However, these differences did not automatically exclude subjugated peoples from accessing of Somali identity and being incorporated—to varying degrees—into clan hierarchies. Bantu, Oromo, and other non-Somali peoples could not be “pure” Somalis, and be viewed as equals, but Somali identity and institutions were not inaccessible to these groups. Outsiders could become clients and affiliate with a clan, and gain access to protection and the resources held by that clan. But as the Somali advanced further to the west, and as Western influence started to enter the

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<sup>42</sup> Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 216-217. Also, see Menkhaus, Kenneth. “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia's lower Jubba Valley.” University of South Carolina, 1989. (Inclusive pages numbers unknown, will be added later).

<sup>43</sup> Turton, E.R. “Bantu, Galla, and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/Tana Area,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1975), 523-528.

<sup>44</sup> See, Castagno, A.A. “The Somali-Kenyan Controversy; Implications for the Future,” *The Journal of Modern Africa Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1964), 169-173 and Turton, E. R. “Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political Activity in Kenya 1893-1960.” *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972): 119-143.

Horn, the relationship between the Somali and outsiders started to change. It was precisely during this period that the earliest ex-slaves started to set up communities in the Gosha region along the Juba River.

### ***From Slaves to Maroons: The Bantu Settlement of Gosha***

Starting in the 1840s, while Darod Somalis were defeating Oromo pastoralists and incorporating them as the Warday, the maroon population of Gosha slowly grew as a continuous stream of ex-slaves made their way to the Juba River valley. Throughout the nineteenth century the Gosha population continued to grow occupying much of the lower and middle Juba River valley and reaching an estimated 20,000 ex-slaves before 1895.<sup>45</sup> These maroons were an orphaned people: unattached and thousands of miles from their ancestral homelands. To make matters even more difficult, the “Gosha” were not one people; they were a hodgepodge of at least five, and possibly up to a dozen, different Bantu peoples from southeastern Africa.<sup>46</sup> Beyond a shared experience of enslavement, the practice of agriculture, and in a few cases a similar or shared languages; the Gosha lacked a substantial unifying feature among them. Thus, when maroons set up new agricultural communities along the banks of the Juba River, they were often forced to forge new identities, not unlike maroon settlements found in the Americas.<sup>47</sup>

Due to a lack of primary source material, it is difficult to reconstruct the pre-colonial history of the “Gosha” and their relationship with Somali groups. Oral histories of the Gosha tend to minimize differences between the two groups, while there little recorded by the British and other European

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<sup>45</sup> I accept the estimates of Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila’s lower Jubba Valley,” 110. And Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 63, which take into account multiple primary and secondary sources to reach their number. However, these estimates are for both the east and west banks of the river. For the estimate of the population of Jubaland—which was on the west bank—the best figure I could find was Cashmore’s estimate of 12,000 in 1897, from Cashmore, T.H.R. “Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918,” 200-201. This number is based on colonial documents, but given that the Gosha community on the west bank of the Juba was historically smaller than that on the east, this number is probably incorrect. However, Cashmore’s number cannot be any be any more than a few thousand off.

<sup>46</sup> Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 217 and Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 51.

<sup>47</sup> Price, Richard ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books), 3-7. and Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 68.

powers during this period because they had yet to infiltrate the region.<sup>48</sup> There are, however, a few recollections of British explorers from which some information can be gleaned.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, I rely on secondary source literature, based on oral sources, to evaluate the pre-colonial “Gosha” and their relationship with Somali groups.<sup>50</sup> This section will attempt to reconstruct a historical narrative for the Gosha and highlight what I argue was a porous relationship with Somalis. In addition, it will be shown that the Gosha did not simply adopt and assimilate Somali culture wholesale. There were sections within the “Gosha community” who attempted to maintain and forge their own unique identity in a Somali dominated region.

### *A Lost People: Gosha Ancestry*

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century plantations started to develop along the Benadir Coast and Shebelle Rivers in southern Somaliland.<sup>51</sup> Previously slavery in the region had been limited to domestic service and client slavery common in many parts of Africa.<sup>52</sup> But, as a result of Zanzibar’s integration into Indian Ocean and European trade markets, plantation slavery developed along the Swahili and East African coast to supply cloves, cotton, grains, and other products in high demand.<sup>53</sup> Zanzibar’s power grew from the 1840s to the 1870s, and corresponding commercial activity developed and expanded along East Africa tied to Zanzibar’s trade networks. One result was an increasing demand for slaves to supply the labor required to produce goods for Zanzibar’s markets. For

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<sup>48</sup> Besteman, “Public History and Private Knowledge,” 574-577. According to Besteman, the Gosha frequently minimized and ignored past abuses in an attempt to gain equality and respect as Somali citizens in post-colonial Somalia.

<sup>49</sup> See Christopher, Lt. W. “Extract from a Journal by Lieut. W. Christopher, Commanding the H.C. Brig. of War ‘Tigris’ on the East Coast of Africa. Dated 8 May 1843.” *Journal of Royal Geographic Society of London*, 14:76-103., Cruttenden, C. J. “Memoir on the Western or Edoor Tribes, Inhabiting the Somali Coast of N.-E. Africa, with the Southern Branches of the Family of Darrood, Resident on the Banks of the Webbe Shebeyli, Commonly Called the River Webbe.” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 19 (1849): 49-76., and Dundas, F.G. “Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa.” *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1893), 209-223.

<sup>50</sup> Menkhaus, Cassanelli, Besteman, and Declich are the only authors I have found who have written extensively on the pre-colonial Gosha. These authors have collected oral histories from both Somalis and the Gosha to reconstruct Gosha settlement and the relationship between the two groups.

<sup>51</sup> I use the term Somaliland to denote pre-colonial and colonial Somalia, which was split into multiple colonial possessions.

<sup>52</sup> Besteman, Catherine Lowe. “Public History and Private Knowledge: On Disputed History in Southern Somalia.” *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 4 (Autumn 1993), 568.

<sup>53</sup> Cooper, Frederick. *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)



centuries there had been an east African slave trade, which had carried hundreds of thousands of slaves from East Africa, along and through the Horn, to ports in Arabia.<sup>54</sup> With the rise of Zanzibar, the east African slave trade gained renewed significance and stocked the developing plantations with cheap labor necessary for production.<sup>55</sup> Southern Somaliland was no exception. During the nineteenth century, the region absorbed an estimated 50,000 slaves to labor on plantations of sesame, cotton, grain, and orchella—a lichen used to make dye.<sup>56</sup> It was from among these slaves—primarily from modern-day Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia—that the later settlers of Gosha came.

It is hard to trace the history of these people prior to enslavement. They can be best described by what they were not. First and foremost they were non-Muslim, which for Somalis helped to justify enslavement and their inferiority. Muslims could not enslave other Muslims, but non-Muslims were seen as infidels whose subjugation was permitted by the Qu’ran.<sup>57</sup> Thus, religion became an important ideological prop for slavery because Muslim masters—Arab and Somali—saw themselves as transmitters of Islam, and thus duty-bound to convert their pagan slaves.<sup>58</sup> Unlike their masters, the slaves brought to Somali plantations had not practiced pastoralism. Instead, the Gosha consisted predominately of agricultural peoples some of whom were lured into slavery by promises of wage labor from Omani slave traders.<sup>59</sup> As a group, they fit neatly within Somalis’ preexisting understandings of agriculturalists and their place in Somali social hierarchy. Finally, and most importantly, these slaves were not Somali; they were “black Africans.” The Gosha could not claim Arab descent and shared little to no ethnic features

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<sup>54</sup> Bessis, Sophie. *Under Western Eyes: The Triumph of an Idea?* Translated by Patrick Camiller, (London: Zed Books, 2003), pp.18.

<sup>55</sup> Besteman, Catherine Lowe. “The Invention of Gosha: Slavery, Colonialism, and Stigma in Somali History.” In *The Invention of Somalia*, 45.

<sup>56</sup> Cassanelli, “The Ending of Slavery in Italian Somalia,” 313.

<sup>57</sup> Eno, Omar A. “The Abolition of slavery and the aftermath stigma: The case of the Bantu/Jareer people on the Benadir coast of southern Somalia,” in *Abolition and its Aftermath Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, Gwyn Campbell ed., New York City: Routledge, 2005. 87.

<sup>58</sup> Besteman, “The Invention of Gosha,” 49.

<sup>59</sup> Webersik, “Differences that Matter,” 525-526, argues that drought conditions and the introduction of a cash economy in southeastern Africa broke down Bantu social and economic networks. In reaction, several Bantus “accepted promises of wage labor” only to be sold into slavery.

with “pure” Somalis. These slaves had distinctly black physical features: hard hair, broad noses, and darker skin complexion that marked them as non-Somali.<sup>60</sup>

Like much of the work on the Gosha, there simply has not been enough scholarship on the plantation slavery that developed along the Benadir Coast and Shebelle River. Few primary sources are available to evaluate its harshness and scope, but the evidence suggests that the plantation slavery in this region bore significant resemblance to that of plantation slavery in the Americas. Slavery in much of Africa historically has been characterized by its connection to kinship, where a slave was viewed less as capital and more as a client from which the master-patron could draw support and allegiance.<sup>61</sup> In this system, the client-slave had more freedom to engage in his or her own activities, while the master-patron would have to take care not to abuse or ask too much of their slaves. Slavery in pre-colonial Somaliland appears to resemble Frederick Cooper’s analysis of plantations around Malindi on the Swahili Coast, which also developed during the early and middle nineteenth century and were tied to the same Zanzibar trade networks.<sup>62</sup> The Bantu slaves imported to the Somali coast during the nineteenth century entered a society that devalued them as human beings. Slaves in nineteenth century southern Somaliland were viewed as property and had little to no legal rights.<sup>63</sup> Whereas in preceding centuries conquered Bantus were viewed as clients and had access to Somali clan institutions; these slaves were never viewed as such, which would had a profound effect on the Gosha’s later attempts to integrate and assimilate into Somali society and their subsequent marginalization during the colonial period.

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<sup>60</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 52

<sup>61</sup> See Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, whose work along the Swahili Coast exhibits that master-slave relationships did not necessarily mean the dehumanization of the slave. In fact, slavery in much of Africa was more of a patron-client relationship whereby the master/patron depended heavily on his slave/client, who could make demands of his master and rise in social, political, and economic status. See also Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*; Lovejoy, *Slavery on the frontiers of Islam*; Manning, *The African Diaspora*; Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*; Miers and Roberts, *The End of Slavery in Africa*.

<sup>62</sup> Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, 117, 145.

<sup>63</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 170.

Somali plantation slavery was—barring several large plantations—typically small in nature as Somali masters never fully maximized its potential.<sup>64</sup> Instead, the cultivation of commercial crops was more of a side venture for Somalis who saw in plantations an opportunity for easy profit with which to purchase additional livestock, which was the true marker of wealth and status.<sup>65</sup> In fact, the average slaveholder typically owned no more than ten to fifteen slaves who were engaged in several activities beyond cultivation.<sup>66</sup> Somali plantations appear to have been primarily a response to coastal merchants' demand for raw materials, to which Somali and Arab traders in the hinterland responded.<sup>67</sup>

Despite their relatively small size, Somali plantations were not any less exploitive than their counterparts in the Americas. Slaves lived a rough life. They were bound to the land and viewed primarily as property. Furthermore, they were afforded no legal rights and viewed as inferior by their Somali masters. Slaves were subjected to harsh living and working conditions, as one British traveler along the Shebelle in the 1840s remarked:

There were many thousands of men employed in cultivation here; their only shelter is formed by loose stalks of the common millet piled up in conical shape, and allowing three or four persons to sit together in the interior. They are thus screened from the sun, but exposed, of course, to the rain, and whole families thus pass their lives.<sup>68</sup>

Following a meal of mutton with a Somali host and slave master, he continues that:

...the slaves, seated at some distance, were eager to receive the bones picked by their masters, which underwent a second, third, and fourth gnawing from successive hungry mouths before they were finally scattered as useless.<sup>69</sup>

Unlike previous indigenous Bantu client-cultivators who were absorbed into Somali clan structures and thus were afforded some protection and access to clan resources, the slaves brought to work these plantations had no such ties to the region; they were unattached and outsiders. Instead, they were

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<sup>64</sup> Eno, "The Abolition of slavery and the aftermath stigma," 85.

<sup>65</sup> Besteman, "Public History and Private Knowledge," 569.

<sup>66</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 173.

<sup>67</sup> Eno, "The Abolition of slavery and the aftermath stigma," 84.

<sup>68</sup> Christopher, Lt. W. "Extract from a Journal by Lieut. W. Christopher, Commanding the H.C. Brig. of War 'Tigris' on the East Coast of Africa. Dated 8 May 1843." in *Journal of Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 14 (1844), 85.

<sup>69</sup> Christopher, "Extract from a Journal," 79.

frequently mistreated and denied admission into the greater Somali society. Given the harsh conditions in which they lived and the lack of social mobility; it is not surprisingly that many slaves chose to attempt escape rather than continued enslavement.

Around 1840 the first groups of ex-slaves started to arrive in the Gosha region along the lower Juba River valley, which at the time was largely uninhabited—with Boni hunter-gatherers being the sole occupants.<sup>70</sup> While the plains surrounding the river were used by Somali pastoralists, the dense forest along the river was avoided by Somalis for fear of the tsetse fly, which could devastate herds of livestock.<sup>71</sup> For the Bantu slaves, Gosha became a refuge where they could gain freedom and be incorporated into communities where they were equals. However, escape was not a venture to be taken lightly and recovered fugitives were often subjected to years of harsh punishment. Lt. W. Christopher travelling through Somaliland in 1843 remarked:

... I saw an instance of the severity with which a runaway slave is treated. One who had thus offended was fettered with shackles on his legs, and had been so for three years. He could advance only 10 inches at a time, and condemned in that state to carry water to the labourers at a distance of 4 miles from the well.<sup>72</sup>

Still, from 1840 until the turn of the twentieth century waves of ex-slaves successfully reached Gosha and the size of the ex-slave communities grew steady—knowledge of the shelter the Juba provided only encouraged further fugitives to escape to the region.<sup>73</sup> These numbers were supplemented in future years by manumitted slaves, whose number was increasing as Somali masters, reacting to British

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<sup>70</sup> See, Menkhaus, "Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley," 107-110, which recounts the oral tradition behind the Gosha's initial escape and settlement of the lower Juba forest. And Cassanelli, "Social Construction on the Somali Frontier," 219. The Boni did not welcome the influx of refugees in Gosha and according to oral traditions fought against ex-slave encroachment for several years before they were eventually defeated.

<sup>71</sup> Besteman, "Public History and Private Knowledge," 571.

<sup>72</sup> Christopher, "Extract from a Journal," 85.

<sup>73</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 63.

pressure on the east African slave trade, freed their slaves.<sup>74</sup> Slavery was not legally abolished along the Shebelle River until 1905, and even then slavery continued for several years thereafter.<sup>75</sup>

As a continual stream of fugitive slaves settled along the Juba, they set up small agricultural communities. The first communities were only a few miles above the mouth of the Juba River, just beyond territory controlled by the Somali and where the environment turned into dense forests teeming with tsetse fly. Later as successive waves of slaves fled to the region, each one settled a further north of previous settlements. By 1875 the ex-slave communities stretched along both banks of the Juba for dozens of miles—occupying most of the lower and parts of the middle Juba River valley.<sup>76</sup> Initially, ex-slaves tried to create and settle in villages with people who shared the their language and a place of similar origin, so that Yaos would set up a Yao village or Nyasas a Nyasa village, as evidenced by village names in lower Gosha.<sup>77</sup> However in later waves, Gosha villages took on Somali names and contained a hodgepodge of many different peoples. This suggests that later migrations of ex-slaves, ones who had spent more time in captivity, were progressively more “Somalized.” Many had been slaves since childhood, or had been born into slavery and had never had the opportunity to learn their “own” ancestral culture. Others in time through immersion, and perhaps under pressure by Somalis to assimilate as a minority people, had lost aspects of their pre-enslavement culture and, in many ways, became more Somali.<sup>78</sup> The longer these slaves were held in captivity, the more they seem to have adapted to and adopted aspects of Somali culture, including: religion and language. Most of these

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<sup>74</sup> According to Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 190-192, the British through the Sultan of Zanzibar attempted to slowly end the slave trade and slavery in the region. The campaign was particularly effect and by 1875 British antislavery naval patrols had forced the majority of the East African slave trade to take overland routes.

<sup>75</sup> Eno, “The Abolition of slavery and the aftermath stigma,” 86-87. The Italian government who occupied the region continued to struggle to abolish slavery along the Shebelle. However, their conscription of Bantu ex-slaves and cultivators to work on Italian plantations and work projects was not far from slavery itself, see: Declich, Francesca. “Unfree labor, forced labor and resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba, Southern Somalia”, in Edward Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman (eds.), *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. London: Routledge, 2006. 24-39.

<sup>76</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 64.

<sup>77</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 116-118 and Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 222 who examine the origin of names for these communities to makes this determination.

<sup>78</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 67.

peoples shared more in common with Somalis than earlier Gosha settlers, who despite a similar experience in the plantations along the Shebelle, retained more aspects of their pre-enslavement heritage than later Gosha. Thus even within the Gosha population there were divisions which made for unique social and political dynamics, not only between the Somali and the Gosha; but also within Gosha communities.

Thousands of miles from ancestral homelands, orphaned, lacking a common language, and viewed as inferior by surrounding Somalis; the Gosha shared several similarities. The subordinate role these ex-slaves occupied was perhaps the greatest commonality between the various peoples that came to comprise the Gosha. For the Zegua, Yao, Nyasa, Makua, Ngindu, and Nyika people who spoke different languages and had different culture, the shared experience of being enslaved was something that drew them together. While all of these people were of Bantu descent, there was little else beyond their shared subjugation from which they could reconstruct and forge a new common identity. Like other peoples who have been enslaved, the Gosha were a lost people. Lacking social ties, these slaves faced a decision to retain aspects of their culture, create new identities, or assimilate with the Somali. Given their situation it is not surprising that many of these slaves chose the last, however many others despite the problems associated with doing so—also attempted to resist assimilation and create their own path.

### *Gosha Social Dynamics and Mobility in Somali Society*

The earliest ex-slave settlers of Gosha were predominately of Zigua origin from present-day southern Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, and northern Mozambique. According to Cassanelli, they fled from famine and unknowingly sold themselves to slave traders along the Tanzanian coast.<sup>79</sup> Unlike other groups of slaves this initial group of Zigua seems to have been sold into slavery as families. According to oral traditions, these Zigua escaped en mass shortly after their arrival in Somaliland, 1838 to 1840,

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<sup>79</sup> Cassanelli, "Social Construction on the Somali Frontier," 220-221.

settling in Gosha after an exhaustive journey fraught with attacks from Somalis and the Boni.<sup>80</sup> Originally the group had planned to return to their ancestral homeland in Tanzania, but upon encountering the largely uninhabited Juba River and following a prophecy that foretold of future disaster; the Zigua settled in lower Gosha.<sup>81</sup> For a people on the run, the forest must have provided much need security and sustenance. In succeeding years additional fugitive slaves—following the success of the Zigua—reached Gosha and settled along ethnic lines. These first communities, while initially ethnically homogenous, organized themselves along previous and similar East African social and political hierarchies. This, coupled with environmental disturbances and the constant threat of Somali raids, forced frequent migrations and intermixing; so that by the 1890s, an independent and diverse Gosha community and culture started to form.<sup>82</sup> Still, a united Gosha “identity” never materialized during the pre-colonial period; identity remained multilayered and fragmented.

The first Gosha villages were ethnically distinct communities, which retained a high degree of pre-enslavement social and political arrangements. Each village was led by an elected headman with a council of elders—typically founders of the community and other respected men— who controlled the allocation of resources and dispensed justice in that village. There was usually friction between original and early inhabitants of a village—*gamas*—and later arrivals—*majoro*—who wanted access to land.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the headman and council of elders held all political power, and tended to limit the influence and access of *majoro*. Compounding these issues were the size of the villages, which, according to an 1892 traveler, in lower Gosha could number between several hundred to a thousand people.<sup>84</sup> This

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<sup>80</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 106. Unfortunately, Menkhaus does not provide an estimate of the numbers involved in this migration, but Cassanelli points out that an expedition along the Juba in 1865 discovered six Zigua villages, numbering perhaps 4,000 people. See, Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 221.

<sup>81</sup> Declich, Francesca. “‘Gendered Narratives,’ History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigula and Shanbara,” *History in Africa*, Vol 22. (1995), 104-107.

<sup>82</sup> I use the term Goshaland here to refer to the growing independence and strength of the Gosha ex-slave communities and to suggest as Cassanelli does, that during the 1800s the Gosha had created their own entity along the Juba.

<sup>83</sup> Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 224.

<sup>84</sup> Dundas, F.G. “Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa.” *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1893), 213.

exclusion encouraged later arrivals to migrate further north and found other settlements. In time the continual movement north led to the colonization of most of the Gosha region with villages at the northernmost limits of Gosha territory being little more than thirty person hamlets.<sup>85</sup>

While Zigua, Yaos, and others were initially inclined to settle with people of similar origin this did not mean that there was little interaction between villages. In fact, from 1870 onwards these groups were more cooperative with and reliant on one another. Gosha villages alone could not thwart Somali raids and provide a common defense against any sustained Somali attack. As such they needed protection, which encouraged ethnically distinct villages to assist one another. Further unity was encouraged by intercommunal trade networks within Gosha, their shared experience of being enslaved, and a knowledge of Swahili, the lingua franca of their East Coast African homes.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, there was often a high degree of intermarriage between the various ethnic groups due to a general shortage of refugee women as potential mates.<sup>87</sup> Thus, despite the foundation of ethnically distinct villages, there was a high degree of cohesion amongst the various communities within Gosha. In fact, by the latter nineteenth the Gosha had organized themselves into a loose confederation headed by Nassib Bunda whose leadership led to the successful defeat of the surrounding Boni and Ogaden Somalis and partial Gosha autonomy.<sup>88</sup> Still these communities were never truly unified, nor was there a singular “Gosha” identity. Instead, loyalties and perceptions of what it meant to be “Gosha” were fragmented at best—and non-existent, at worst—which the early Zigua communities demonstrate all too clearly.

Unlike any other ethnic group that settled along the Juba, the first Zigua came as a group and were not long removed from their initial enslavement in the 1840s. Thus, they were able to establish families more easily, while also retaining many aspects of their East African heritage. The Zigua were also some of the earliest ex-slave inhabitants of the lower Juba, which enabled them to settle in close

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<sup>85</sup> Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 223.

<sup>86</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 153.

<sup>87</sup> Cassanelli, “Social Construction on the Somali Frontier,” 225.

<sup>88</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 65.



proximity to one another and resist assimilation with other groups—Somali and Gosha.<sup>89</sup> It was the Zigua who had initially defeated the Boni and Ogaden Somalis and secured the region as a refuge. When subsequent waves of ex-slaves moved through the Juba River valley, many of the earlier homogenous ethnic villages broke down and started to adopt more Somali culture.<sup>90</sup> The early Zigua communities however, clung to their identity, which separated them from not only the Somali, but from the other inhabitants of Gosha as well. Because of their adherence to their East African language and culture, and the group's distinctness as opposed to other groups in Gosha; they came to be called *Mushunguli*. The term is a bastardization of the singular Swahili MZigua, which refers to an individual of Zigua descent.<sup>91</sup> Thus, despite interaction and similarities between the inhabitants of Gosha, there were also still distinct divisions within these communities. Members of these pre-colonial ethnic villages may not have seen themselves as anything more than members of that village or as a member of a certain ethnicity. No Gosha identity unified the various Bantu ex-slaves that inhabited the region.

The continuous stream of fugitive and manumitted slaves seemed to have inhibited further cohesion amongst the Gosha. Later ex-slaves, especially those who arrived in the 1890s, retained little to no connection with their East African pasts. These slaves for the most part had been kidnapped and sold into slavery as children and as such never internalized their previous culture. They tended to speak Somali Maay and practice Islam, and had adopted many aspects of Somali culture.<sup>92</sup> Not surprisingly, these later groups had little in common with the earlier settlers of lower Gosha who were organized into

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<sup>89</sup> Declich, "Gendered Narratives," 99-101.

<sup>90</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 66-67.

<sup>91</sup> In keeping with the work of Francesca Declich in "Gendered Narratives;" in "Fostering Ethnic Reinvention: Gender Impact of Forced Migration on Bantu Somali Refugees in Kenya (Invention de l'ethnicité et modification des rapports de genre chez les réfugiés somali du Kenya)." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 40, no. 157 (2000): 25-53; and in "Unfree labor, forced labor and resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba, Southern Somalia", in Edward Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman (eds.), *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. London: Routledge, 2006. 24-39, I treat the *Mushunguli* as a separate people and entity in and of themselves. Because of their claimed differences, my use of the term *Mushunguli* throughout the rest of my study refers explicitly to this group of early Zigua settlers who were neither Gosha, nor Somali. Historically this group—because they claim difference—has experienced even more marginalization than the Gosha themselves. As such my study will exclude further evaluation of the *Mushunguli* and concentrate on the actual "Gosha," or the Bantu ex-slaves of the region who did not claim to be *Mushunguli*.

<sup>92</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 66-67. Somali Maay is one of three regional dialects of the Somali language; Maay is predominately spoken by the Sab clan group in Southern Somalia.

ethnically distinct communities and who were often hostile to newcomers and unwilling to share land.<sup>93</sup> Accordingly later settlers were forced to migrate further north in order to secure land and set up their own communities, often in territory that was controlled by Somalis. Lacking connections with the earlier settlers and their previous East African origins, these new communities were set up using the only bonds that they did have—Somali clan affiliation. While in captivity many slaves adopted the culture, to include clan identities of their Somali masters. For these settlers of upper Gosha, “their point of orientation was Somali culture and society, of which they saw themselves as firmly a part.”<sup>94</sup> Villages to the north were founded along clan lines with inhabitants settling in a particular village based on Somali kinship and clan affiliation.

By the 1890s, there was an estimated ex-slave population of twenty to thirty thousand occupying the lower and middle Juba River valleys.<sup>95</sup> While perceived by outsiders and future colonial administrators as a united group, there were substantial divisions that prevented any kind of singular identity. Some ex-slaves saw themselves more as Somalis, whereas others saw themselves as Zigua, Yao, or another ethnic group and retained aspects of their East African heritage. The Gosha region was in flux for most of the nineteenth century as successive waves of ex-slaves tried to forge new identities and communities thousands of miles from ancestral homelands. Nevertheless, some of these ex-slaves did share a similar language, culture, and religion, and—amongst the more ethnically divided lower Gosha—organized themselves into a loose confederation. The homogeneity of early villages was disappearing as internal and external pressures encouraged cooperation with later settlers and communities beyond their borders. Still, by the time the East African Protectorate was declared in 1895, there was no such thing as a “Gosha” identity per se. There were simply too many cleavages for these ex-slaves to see themselves as one people. One thing is clear however, while the Gosha might not have seen each other

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<sup>93</sup> Besteman, “Public History and Private Knowledge,” 572.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 573.

<sup>95</sup> Cassanelli, “Bantu Former Slave Communities,” 223 and Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 56-57.

as such, the Somali certainly did. The possibility of a united Gosha community was a substantial challenge to Somali hegemony in the region. The very presence of a large and self sufficient former slave community could undermine Somali self-perceptions of superiority. Raids on the Gosha were frequent. Gosha settlers who had entered into clans as clients were not afforded the same protection as would have previously been the case.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, perceptions of what it meant to be Somali were forming, and doing so in opposition to what Somalis were not—Gosha. Into this complex relationship entered the British and the Imperial British East African Company, which started to govern the region in the late 1880s.

### ***The Imperial British East African Company: British Expansion in East Africa and its Relationship to Jubaland Province***

The first European involvement in Somalia can be traced to the Portuguese who established trading post on the Somali coast during the sixteenth century.<sup>97</sup> The Portuguese never occupied ports along the Benadir Coast, although their influence was significant enough to shift trade away from ports in southern Somaliland.<sup>98</sup> Only during the nineteenth century with the emergence of Zanzibar did the southern Somali coast and the region become more integrated into the East African trade network. The Sultan of Zanzibar claimed sovereignty over the Somali coast in 1860s, but his authority was only nominal.<sup>99</sup> Real power lay in the hands of Somali clan leaders and Arab traders who controlled the hinterland and port towns along the coast, and were fiercely independent.

In the eighteenth century the British government took an interest in East Africa and the profitability of trade in the region. Ivory had long been a lucrative export, but it was the rise of plantation economies that created surpluses and stimulated increased regional trade. With a keen eye

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 575.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 21.

<sup>98</sup> Alpers, Edward A. "Muqdishu in the Nineteenth Century: A Regional Perspective." *Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, 442.

<sup>99</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 197-199. Not only was Zanzibari control weak their influence was limited to a few forts and garrisons, which were under constant siege from the 1870s. In fact, there were several cases of Zanzibari *askaris* being murdered and a massive uprising that left the Zanzibari governor dead in 1876.

in controlling that trade, the British established a Consulate at Zanzibar and made treaties and trade agreements with the Sultan.<sup>100</sup> Prior to this though, the British were already involved in the region because of anti-slavery patrols. There had also been several British-led geographic expeditions to survey and explore East Africa, including the potentially ivory-rich Juba and Somali peninsula.<sup>101</sup>

In 1888, the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) was chartered with similar purposes: monopolizing trade with and extracting wealth from the interior. The IBEAC slowly built up its influence in the region. While the company claimed to govern Jubaland, their control was nominal, at best, and primarily restricted to the port of Kismayu and the coast. Throughout its existence, the IBEAC struggled to turn a profit and nearly went bankrupt building a railway to Lake Victoria requiring the British government to intervene and buy its assets in 1895. This section explores the early relationships between the British, Somali, and the Goshu to show how each group was perceived by the British prior to colonial rule.

### *Creeping colonialism: Early British Influence in East Africa and Indirect Rule*

Control of trade and the opportunity for profit were the main reasons for expanded British control over East Africa. However, competition from other European powers and improved British involvement in Zanzibari affairs were significant factors for British expeditions in the region. Previously the British had had little interest in colonizing East Africa. So long as trade remained undisturbed, the British took little action. In fact, the British government had declined on the opportunity to make the region a protectorate after a British naval officer declared one in 1824, instead allowing the Sultanate to

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<sup>100</sup> Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, pp.

<sup>101</sup> See, Kirk, John. 1873. "Visit to the coast of Somali-Land." *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1873), 340-343.; Dundas, F.G. "Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa." *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1893), 209-223.; Hopley, C. W. "People, Places, and Prospects in British East Africa." *The Geographical Journal* 4, no. 2 (August 1894): 97-123.; and later MacDonald's failed expedition of 1897 see "MacDonald's Report to the Marquis of Salisbury," NA: FO 2/430. *Africa: Special Mission to the Juba River, Major R.L. MacDonald, 1899-1990*. MacDonald, R.L. 31 July 1899, 95-148.

retain control.<sup>102</sup> When trade was disrupted or when violence was committed against them, the British were willing to engage in “punitive” measures to restore order. For example, when Somalis attacked and plundered a British naval ship in 1825, the British responded with a blockade until compensation was received in 1833.<sup>103</sup> The British also took an active role in combating slavery in the region, which required an increase in naval patrols and diplomatic pressure on the Sultan of Zanzibar.<sup>104</sup> Still, the British balked at actually annexing parts of East Africa. Doing so would require not only additional governance, it also meant raised expenses.<sup>105</sup>

Before moving on to discuss the IBEAC, I would like to take a moment to elaborate on the structure of British indirect rule. Overall control and policy formation over Britain’s colonies was left to British governmental departments in London—the Foreign Office (F.O.) and Colonial Office (C.O.)—headed by a secretary appointed by the Prime Minister.<sup>106</sup> Under these departments were the governors of each colony who were charged with ensuring that F.O. and C.O. policy was properly implemented and that budgets were balanced. Beneath the governor-generals were the provincial commissioners (P.C.s). Provinces were then further divided into districts under district commissioners (D.C.s) and their subordinates. Beyond the British officials existed an apparatus of African agents: chiefs, headmen, and elders, who were expected to command and control the African masses.<sup>107</sup> Day to Day administration also relied on numerous other departments and technocrats within a colony, and an entire bureaucracy of African and other colonial clerks, linguists, and police who carried out the day-to-day administration of a colony.

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<sup>102</sup> Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali*, 37-38.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>104</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 190-191.

<sup>105</sup> British obsession with administrative costs is a reoccurring theme regarding their governance of Jubaland.

<sup>106</sup> See T.H.R. Cashmore’s introduction in his dissertation: “Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918,” 1-11 for more information on the structure of colonial rule in the EAP.

<sup>107</sup> I use the terms chiefs loosely because of well known issues regarding the creation of tribes in Africa, which in many cases was arbitrary and not reflective of actual political and social hierarchies in African societies. For more information on tribalism please see, Bravman, Bill. *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800-1950*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1998); Vail, Leroy, ed. *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1989); Hobsbawm, E.J. and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1993).

In theory colonial bureaucracy created a direct hierarchy between the Secretary all the way down to D.C.s through which policy could be easily implemented. As to be expected, the truth was much different. Communication between the F.O. and C.O. could take weeks to reach a governor and even longer to reach P.C.s and then eventually D.C.s. Because of this, officials were often self-reliant and took authority into their own hands.<sup>108</sup> However, even this was complicated as D.C.s relied heavily on a cadre of translators and bureaucrats to govern. Complicating matters even further was the fact that “employees” often had a great deal of autonomy within this system and could use it to their advantage. In fact, British officials only had power inasmuch as translators and other native agents were willing to communicate and work for the British.<sup>109</sup> Aside from Britons’ lack of linguistic and cultural knowledge, there were simply too few officials to effectively regulate vast expanses of land and large numbers of Africans. Cashmore points out that in the British East African Protectorate:

The Provincial Administration—the P.C.s and [D.C.s]—numbered 22 in 1897. By 1918 in had expanded to 141. These figures represented the authorised establishment; actual strength was much smaller, as a result of sickness, leave, secondments or unfilled vacancies. Under the most favourable circumstances, the staff averaged out at 1 administrator for every 10,000 square miles and 150,000 people in 1897; and 1 for every 2,000 square miles and 21,000 people in 1918.<sup>110</sup>

British indirect rule was fragmented and limited in several ways. On the frontiers, such as Jubaland, these issues were further exacerbated.

### *The IBEAC and the Creation of Jubaland*

The Berlin Conference of 1885 laid out the rules by which European powers could claim sovereignty over African territory. Over the next decade, various European powers attempted to stake claims in what were becoming decreasingly fewer, “unclaimed” regions of Africa. East Africa was no exception. After the 1870s Zanzibari control over the region started to wane and the Germans, French,

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<sup>108</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918,” 44-49.

<sup>109</sup> Newbury, Catharine. *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

<sup>110</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918,” 14-15.

and Italians all successfully staked claims in the region.<sup>111</sup> In reaction, the British reversed their policy of noninvolvement and turned East Africa into a sphere of influence, granting the IBEAC a charter in 1888.

Following the granting of a charter in 1888, the IBEAC wasted no time in formalizing a concession with the Zanzibar Sultan Seyyid Khalifa, which secured for the IBEAC the coast from Vanga to Kismayu.<sup>112</sup> The IBEAC itself was a joint venture company supported primarily by a group of private investors, which freed the British government from the responsibility and cost of administering the land. The company created its own police force, divided the territory under its command into provinces, hired officials and administrators, and even taxed municipalities under their control.<sup>113</sup> The ultimate goal of the IBEAC was extracting wealth from the region, which the company's 1893 annual report makes clear:

The expedition of the Rivers Tana and Juba reflect much credit on Capt. Dundas, R.N., and it is hoped that the result of these voyages will ensure substantial benefits in the future, by opening a navigable waterway for commerce in the region known to be rich in ivory and supposed to contain mineral wealth.<sup>114</sup>

The company had a legal and moral obligation to combat slavery, and yet their interest in revenue, at times, trumped this responsibility.<sup>115</sup> Despite the best efforts of its investors, the IBEAC struggled to turn a profit and proved to be unsustainable, prompting the British government to intervene and buy out the company in 1895. For the entirety of the IBEAC Jubaland was never more than an undeveloped backwater. The region itself did not show as much potential in the eyes of IBEAC officials as other parts of British controlled East Africa. The company's main interest was in securing trade from the Ugandan

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<sup>111</sup> The French formed French Somaliland—modern-day Djibouti—and were thwarted in further advancement by the growing strength of Ethiopia and claims made by the Italians and British. The Germans formed German East African—modern-day Tanzania—please see, Glassman, Jonathon. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995. The Italians claimed Italian Somaliland, encompassing the land to the east of the Juba River up to the tip of the Somali peninsula.

<sup>112</sup> "Supplementary Agreement concluded between His Highness Seyyid Ali, G.C.S.I., Sultan of Zanzibar, and Mr. George S. Mackenzie, Director and Acting Administrator-in-chief of the Imperial East Africa Company," NA: FO 2/57. *Africa: Imperial British East Africa Co., January to May 1893*. Le Poer Trench, P., date unknown, 37-38, the original concession came to define the coastal boundaries of the East African Protectorate. And after the cession of Jubaland to Italy; it marked the boundaries of modern-day Kenya.

<sup>113</sup> "The Imperial British East Africa Company: Report of the Court of Directors to the Shareholders," NA: FO 2/57. *Africa: Imperial British East Africa Co., January to May 1893*. Author unknown, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1893 293-297.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 293.

<sup>115</sup> "Jubaland Log Book, 23 August, 1895" in RH: MSS Afr.s.583. *Collection of Major C.P. Chevenix-Trench, Jubaland Bundle 1*, 29, in which the acting P.C. of Jubaland is encouraged to abolish slavery because the IBEAC failed to do so. In fact, this entry points out that the IBEAC returned fugitive slaves to their owners on numerous occasions.

frontier and building a railway to better facilitate this process.<sup>116</sup> As far as Jubaland was concerned, the IBEAC concentrated on the coastal region and the port town of Kismayu through which trade filtered. Still the period of IBEAC control in Jubaland shaped perceptions, policies, and established precedents that would carry over into the colonial period.

The coastal region and its immediate vicinity was controlled by Ogaden and Herti Somali, both of whom had repeatedly proved to be difficult to administer and openly hostile to British rule.<sup>117</sup> In fact, in February 1893 the IBEAC administrator of Kismayu was nearly killed during an altercation while mediating a dispute between these two Somali sub-clans.<sup>118</sup> Only the timely intervention of military forces prevented an uprising against the British, and the IBEAC was forced temporarily to abandonment of the town.<sup>119</sup> Later in August of the same year, Somalis succeeded in seizing and destroying a British garrison at Turki Hill near Kismayu, killing 30 askaris and the Superintendent of the askaris W.G. Hamilton, dead with a bullet through the heart.<sup>120</sup> The British debacle at Turki Hill marks the beginning of a familiar trend in Jubaland's history: the defeat of a British military force and the death of its commander.<sup>121</sup> This event and Somali resistance in general shaped early policy towards Somalis, which itself is indicative of a larger British policy that favored the "noble savage." The "unruly" nature and fighting prowess of the Somalis—instead of becoming negative traits—became markers of their superiority over other African peoples. Thus the British, while critical of Somalis' adherence to independence and the difficulty of governing them, retained a degree of admiration toward the Somali.

<sup>116</sup> "The Imperial British East Africa Company: Report of the Court of Directors to the Shareholders," NA: FO 2/57, 293-297, repeatedly mentions Uganda and a railway scheme to Lake Victoria in Uganda.

<sup>117</sup> *Operations in Jubaland, 1900-1901: The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*. NA: FO 881/7936. By Lt. Colonel A. W. Money (R.F.A.), compiled in Intelligence Division, War Office, January 1903, 8-9, 11.

<sup>118</sup> "Acting Superintendent J. Ross Todd to the Acting Administrator, Mombasa from Kismayu," NA: FO 2/57. *Africa: Imperial British East Africa Co., January to May 1893*. Todd, Ross J., 9 February 1893 in. 137-140

<sup>119</sup> "A. Alexander (Accountant) to J.K.W. Pigott Esq., Acting Administrator," NA: FO 2/57. *Africa: Imperial British East Africa Co., January to May 1893*. Alexander, A. date unknown, 141-143.

<sup>120</sup> "Jubaland Logbook," RH: MSS.Afr.s.583, 28, 30.

<sup>121</sup> As will be shown in subsequent chapters, two other British officials were killed by Somalis while the British ruled Jubaland. Not to mention, several garrisons and askaris were ambushed and killed.



The result of such admiration played a large role in future British colonial policy in Jubaland and would have a profound effect on Somali identity.

Due to limited development and interaction in Jubaland, the IBEAC knew very little about the area. Beyond Dundas' expedition in 1893, the company did little to investigate the land and people. Thus, it is from Dundas' expedition that the earliest British perceptions and interactions towards the Gosha emerge, which portrayed the population as a united group and speaks highly of their skill as farmers.<sup>122</sup> This source and other earlier colonial reports on the Gosha never fail to mention their slave legacy, their fear of Somalis, and their supposed docility.<sup>123</sup> The Gosha—despite all their differences and divisions—were perceived as a united and passive group and were more actively integrated into the colonial apparatus than their Somali counterparts. Perhaps this viewpoint stemmed from British opinions on agriculturalists, who they assumed to be easier to subjugate by nature and consequently more accepting of British rule.<sup>124</sup> Whatever the reason, these viewpoints tended to favor Somalis—at the expense of the Gosha—and supported beliefs of their alleged superiority over other groups. Thus, even before the British established a protectorate in East Africa, officials were strengthening and altering conceptions of identity in Jubaland.

### ***Conclusion***

Before annexation, Jubaland was a territory in flux socially and politically, with Somalis, the Gosha, and the British all having recently arrived in the province. The Darod Somalis were undergoing a rapid and successful expansion westward into the territory that was to become Jubaland. In the process, the Somali were subjugating the previous inhabitants and fighting amongst themselves as well for consolidation of the newly conquered land between the Tana and Juba Rivers. Despite clan rivalries and

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<sup>122</sup> Dundas, "Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa," 213-217.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. and F.O. 881/7936, *Operations in Jubaland*, 6, 9-10.

<sup>124</sup> Hodgson, Dorothy Louise. *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

other divisions amongst them, Somalis shared several commonalities that exhibit a pre-colonial Somaliness. A greater “Somali” had not yet coalesced. Clan structures and Somali institutions were relatively malleable and open to outsiders.

At the same time, streams of Bantu ex-slaves were fleeing from plantations along the Shebelle River and settling in the river region of Gosha along the Juba River. These refugees, fractured by internal divisions and lacking a singular “Gosha-wide” identity, established numerous ethnically distinct and self-sufficient communities. In time, as later waves of more thoroughly Somalitized ex-slaves arrived, these communities started to become more heterogeneous. Many “Gosha,” taking advantage of fluid patron-client relationships with Somali groups, had by 1895 started to align themselves with Somalis and attempted to assimilate with and enter Somali clan structures.

The growing size of the Gosha communities coupled with their self-sufficiency made them a challenge to Somali hegemony in the region, as well as Somali perceptions of superiority. In response to this perceived threat, Somali identity gradually became more exclusive. Whereas the borders of Somali identity were previously porous and afforded non-Somalis protection and access to clan resources, Somali groups increasingly marginalized and “othered” these groups.

When the British formally established the British East African Protectorate on 1 July 1895, the British government inherited a largely underdeveloped and unexplored colony. Jubaland province with its sparse environment, massive size, and its location at the northeast frontier of the protectorate was among the least well-known areas. It was perhaps the most extreme example of the IBEAC’s benign neglect in British East Africa.<sup>125</sup> While theoretically the province extended all the way to Ethiopian territory, the British commanded little to no authority in the interior of Jubaland—nor did they try to do so in the pre-colonial era. British officials knew little about the native inhabitants of the region and, as

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<sup>125</sup> Menkaus has described colonial rule from the 1940s to the 1960s as a period of “benign neglect.” I have reappropriated the term to describe early British colonial policy in Jubaland. See, Menkaus “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia’s lower Jubba Valley,” Chapters 6 and 7.

will be shown in the next chapter, treated the Somali and Gosha as two distinct groups. In the process, these administrators further and promoted divisions between the Gosha and Somali.

## Chapter 2

### Benign Neglect: Early Colonial Policy and Perceptions, and Their Impact on Identity in Jubaland Province, 1895 to 1910

*The Future of the Somali race is to my mind one of the most interesting and difficult of those problems presented by East Africa. For the present I advise that we leave them alone, or at least avoid as far as possible the task of attacking them. They are naturally isolated, and if our officers will only avoid getting killed, can do little harm by quarrelling with one another in Jubaland.*

- Sir Charles Eliot, 1905<sup>1</sup>

On a map Jubaland neatly defined the northeastern border of the British East African Protectorate, but actual control and governance of the province could hardly be characterized as effective. For the entire thirty years that the British claimed the province, their rule can best be characterized as scattered and unsuccessful. This is especially true for the first years of colonial governance when there was little change in policy from the IBEAC to the Foreign Office. In fact, there was much continuity; the province remained understaffed, largely ignored, and unincorporated with the rest of the BEAP. British officials never considered Jubaland of much importance; they did not believe it could be profitable.<sup>2</sup> As one official commented, “[Jubaland] has been cause of continual expense with practically no return, which is not encouraging to further development.”<sup>3</sup> For the entirety that the British administered Jubaland it was amongst the most neglected and least developed provinces in the protectorate.<sup>4</sup> This neglect goes beyond British apathy towards the region for the land itself made administration difficult. In 1895 Jubaland was a vast expanse of inhospitable territory. Watering points were few and far between, which severely restricted movement in the interior. There were no roads for

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Eliot, quoted in Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” pp.380. Unfortunately, I was unable to find the original source of this quote, but Eliot’s remarks are indicative of British views towards Somalis in the early period of colonial rule.

<sup>2</sup> These sentiments are expressed in several colonial documents, especially in the dispatches of Sir Charles Eliot whose remarks on the unprofitability of Jubaland can be found in “Decypher No. 67.” NA: FO 2/456. Sir C. Eliot, 29 April, 1901, 149.; “Elliot’s remarks on Province.” March 1902. Rhodes House: RH: MSS Afr.s.583 - Collection of Major C.P. Chevenix-Trench, Jubaland Bundle IV, 46.; see also “Harrison to Elliot.” 8 July 1902. Rhodes House: RH: MSS Afr.s.583 - Collection of Major C.P. Chevenix-Trench, Jubaland Bundle IV, 46.

<sup>3</sup> “Harrison to Elliot.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 237, 392-396.

transport over a broken and uneven terrain.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the prevalence of the tsetse fly limited travel during wet months and along the Juba River, which itself was too shallow and unnavigable for large portions of the year.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the terrain and environment inhibited effective governance of Jubaland as administrators found travel difficult and hazardous.

The disposition of the indigenous population further hampered British control over the province. British officials found the various Somali sub-clans of the interior to be unruly, uncooperative, and “untrustworthy.”<sup>7</sup> British officials in Jubaland were at a loss on how to effectively deal with the nomadic and supposedly warlike nature of Somalis, whose culture of raiding led to repeated clashes between neighboring sub-clans and other inhabitants of the region. Whereas British indirect rule typically leaned heavily on utilizing African agents and elites as collaborators, colonial officials in Jubaland found few reliable agents. Somali sultans frequently ignored British orders.<sup>8</sup> For their part, the British misunderstood Somali customs, as well as the extent to which raiding and counter-raiding were integral components of Somali society, culture, and economy. British perceptions of Jubaland’s lack of profitability coupled with the harsh terrain and an inability to effectively govern Somalis stunted policy formation and economic development in the province.

Facing these difficulties, British rule in Jubaland was in a constant state of flux. Troubled by varying degrees of Somali resistance during the early colonial period—1895 to 1910—the British switched the province from a civilian government to military rule, only to return back to civil

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<sup>5</sup> Several expeditions lament the harshness of the terrain and go into great detail documenting watering points and routes of travel. See, “Staff Diary of Juba Expedition from July 22 to August 16, 1897.” NA: FO 881/6470. E.M. Woodward, Captain. August 31, 1897. 1-3.; And Aylmer, L. “The Country between the Juba River and Lake Rudolf.” *The Geographical Journal* 38, no. 3 (September 1911): 289-296.

<sup>6</sup> Not to mention that the British lacked available and serviced steamers who could make the trip upriver on a regular basis.

<sup>7</sup> “Short Account of the Tribes in Jubaland.” NA: WO 276/502. Author unknown, undated, 146 (4).

<sup>8</sup> Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 86, points out that leadership in Somali society was a fluid and informal concept. Often Somali leaders’ power and prominence was only temporary and nominal in nature, and the degree to which a Somali leader could exercise authority ultimately came down to the respect and character of that individual. Somali “sultans” appear to have had little control over their fellow clansmen who acted independently from their decisions. This exhibits the fractured nature of Somali allegiance and identity—Somalis were more likely to align by kinship ties before they saw themselves as a member of a sub-clan, a clan, and so on. Thus, a supposed hereditary sultan of a particular Somali sub-clan might have little to no influence over a particular diya-paying group within that sub-clan.

administration. Reoccurring Somali uprisings and raids pushed the British to maintain several garrisons and use military expeditions to counteract the actions of Somalis. These attempts to force Somalis to accept British authority were ineffective and expensive. Thus in 1902 active operations in the interior the province ended. Only in 1910 did British officials reestablish a “forward policy” with regards the interior, largely motivated by a need to guarantee protection for development plans along the lower Juba.<sup>9</sup>

The first section of this chapter analyzes the early period of colonial rule, 1895 to 1910, to better understand the early colonial experiences of the Gosha and Somali. Policy towards the two varied greatly. During these initial years, British rule was dominated by its neglect of Jubaland, a failure to establish efficient control over the region, and an ever-increasing reliance on military intervention and administration. Aside from “punitive expeditions,” the British could claim only limited administration over the Somali groups who occupied the interior of the province.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the riverine communities of Bantu ex-slaves along the Juba were exploited by the British for labor and revenue. This chapter concentrates on British policy-making in Jubaland to determine its effectiveness, nature, and intensity. It also unveils the points at which policies towards the Somalis and Gosha deviated, which helps to illuminate the underlying British perceptions that shaped the treatment of each group.

Beyond simply analyzing the variances of British policy in Jubaland, this chapter examines why and how these policies differed. The second section of this chapter argues that British perceptions directly affected policy and that these perceptions themselves were shaped by British theories on race

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<sup>9</sup> My use of the term “forward policy” is borrowed from T.H.R. Cashmore’s use of the term, which he uses to describe an “active” British policy that stationed garrisons throughout northern Jubaland as a means of better regulating, controlling, and pacifying the Somali. As opposed to the policy of abandonment and left British influence absent from the interior of the province. See Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 416-418.

<sup>10</sup> By “interior” I am referencing the part of Jubaland immediately beyond the coastal regions of Kismayu and the fertile Gosha district along the Juba River—both of which were continuously occupied by the British throughout the thirty year period of British rule in the province. See Appendix 1 for more details.

and racial hierarchies essential to colonial rule.<sup>11</sup> Instead, this chapter seeks to examine how the two groups were treated differently by colonial administrators with the goal of helping the reader to better understand the coalescing of a Somali identity, in opposition to the Gosha, discussed in chapter three.

***Punitive Expeditions, Abandonment, and Forward Policy: Colonial Rule and the Early Administration of Jubaland***

For the early British administrators, Jubaland showed little promise. It was a frontier province with a harsh climate and terrain. The environment, along with constant unrest among the Somali sub-clans, was difficult if not impossible to govern. British rule of Jubaland from 1895 to 1910 can be characterized as one of benign neglect, in which the British initially restricted and later even temporarily suspended its civil administration.<sup>12</sup> However, Somali disturbances constantly forced the hand of the British and pushed officials in Mombasa<sup>13</sup> and Kismayu to take a more active role in mediating disputes and punishing those who committed crimes and defied administrators. Thus, evaluation of British early colonial policy reveals several contradictions regarding the administration of Jubaland. An analysis of colonial documents clearly illustrates the desire of British officials to avoid hostilities, leave Somalis alone, and abandon the interior of the province.<sup>14</sup> And yet, when confronted by pressure to preserve prestige and the need to maintain security, administrators repeatedly sent expeditions to punish

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<sup>11</sup> An analysis of colonial documents during this period illustrates that British officials used the term “race” to denote what we would know recognize as ethnic, as well as racial classifications. For this project though, my analysis and use of race refers to instances in which race refers to supposed biological, physiological, and cultural difference. Accordingly, I argue that British officials understood the Somali and Gosha to be of two distinct races based primarily on the ex-slave and on the African or black heritage of the Gosha, versus the Arab descent and altogether “noble” background of Somalis. Furthermore—which will be pointed out later—there was a hierarchy attached to race that supported notions of European—and white—superiority that classified other peoples based on their proximity to European characteristics, such as intelligence, disposition, and physical features.

<sup>12</sup> I use the term benign neglect to describe what I characterize as a hands-off and passive approach taken by British colonial officials in the administration of Jubaland. I do recognize that the use of the term “benign” to describe the imposition of colonial rule can be somewhat problematic. However, I believe the term is relatively useful to evaluate the degree to which British rule in Jubaland engaged with Somalis and the Gosha, especially when one considers how this engagement changed after 1910.

<sup>13</sup> From 1895 to 1905 Mombasa was the capital of the BEAP, only in 1905 was the capital switched to Nairobi. My reference to Mombasa, and later Nairobi, here refers to views of the colony’s Commissioner/Governor and that of the Foreign or Colonial Office, as opposed to the views of P.C.s, D.C.s, and other officials.

<sup>14</sup> “17<sup>th</sup> June 1910: Hope to General Secretary, Nairobi.” RH: MSS Afr.s. 583, 75.; “Elliot’s remarks on Province.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 46.; and “Decypher No. 67.” NA: FO 2/456. Sir C. Eliot, 29 April, 1901, 149.

Somalis and force their submission to British authority.<sup>15</sup> The British struggled to formulate effective governance for the province. In the first fifteen years of British rule, colonial officials introduced an array of different policies for the administration of Jubaland. From 1902 to 1910, the British removed and reestablished a civil government, placed the province under military administration, abandoned the interior in favor of concentration on the coast, only to later reenact a forward policy that reinstated garrisons in northern Jubaland.

British policy towards Jubaland changed very little when the F.O. superseded the IBEAC. As T.H.R. Cashmore points out, the first government officials throughout BEAP were little more than recycled former IBEAC administrators.<sup>16</sup> From 1895 to 1901 Jubaland had three civilian provincial commissioners, all of whom were former IBEAC officials.<sup>17</sup> As had the directors of the IBEAC, British EAP officials largely ignored and left understaffed the supposedly unprofitable Jubaland province. Their initial policies were limited to the coastal region, where the previously destroyed garrison at Turki Hill near Gobweyn was rebuilt in 1895, and along the Juba where the riverine Wa-Gosha were brought under British control.<sup>18</sup> Beyond a few explorative expeditions to inspect the terrain and health of the region, advancement into the interior was undertaken slowly.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See RH: MSS Afr.s.583 - Collection of Major C.P. Chevenix-Trench, Jubaland Bundle I. 27-35., which contains a logbook and other entries for the years 1895 to 1917.

<sup>16</sup> The decision to retain and use former IBEAC officials was a practical one. IBEAC officials were experienced in the region and the Foreign Office lacked trained personnel capable of filling the vacancies. Once the decision was made to retain these officials, they tended to monopolize senior level positions and promotions for many years due to seniority. See Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," 33.

<sup>17</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate." Appendix: Principal Office Holders – 1895-1918. ii.

<sup>18</sup> "MB 112," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, Jubaland Logbook, 30. Recall that the garrison at Turki Hill was destroyed by Herti Somalis in 1893 following the near insurrection caused by Superintendent J. Ross Todd mentioned in chapter 1. The Gosha previously had accepted the "protection" of the IBEAC in 1891 when they signed "Treaty No. 78," and gave up all their sovereign rights in the process; it appears that BEAP officials had this treaty reaffirmed in 1895, see RH: MSS.Afr.s.583, 29. It is doubtful however, that all of Gosha reaffirmed this "pledge," and even more unlikely that the Gosha willingly gave all their rights to the British. More than likely the sample treaty was understood to be one of mutual support and protection. Although a sample British treaty from the period clearly shows that the signees would indeed be forfeiting all rights when they agreed to the treaty's terms. See "Treaty with Chiefs of...," NA: FO 2/144, 41-43.

<sup>19</sup> "Staff Diary of Juba Expedition from July 22 to August 16, 1897." NA: FO 881/6470, 1-3. And Lt. Col. Macdonald's failed expedition in 1897 see NA: FO 2/144. *Africa: Special Mission to the Juba River, 1899-1900.*, and NA: FO 2/430. *Africa: Special Mission to the Juba River, 1899-1900.*



British policy towards Somali sub-clans focused on forging treaties, establishing commercial ties, and mediating disputes. To these ends—despite the small staff—the British were initially successful. In 1895, they established friendly relations with both Somali clans inhabiting Jubaland, the Herti Somalis around Kismayu and the Ogaden Somalis who lived further inland. However, these peaceful relations were short lived. After the death of the Ogaden sultan Margan Yusef in 1897, his successor Ahmed Margan, “lacking in personal influence,” proved incapable of controlling Ogaden sub-clans.<sup>20</sup> Despite warnings from the provincial sub-commissioner Arthur Jenner not to do so, a group of Ogaden Somalis carried out a largely unsuccessful raid on neighboring Gallas to seize cattle and slaves. A few months later at Mfudo,<sup>21</sup> two Ogaden Somalis—who had been arrested on suspicion of spying—murdered two Wa-Gosha police officers.<sup>22</sup> Only the pledge by Ahmed Margan to pay *diya* resolved the situation and allowed the British to avoid further punitive actions. However, the following year saw additional unrest. In April of 1898, an escaped Oromo slave, who had fled enslavement and been given refuge amongst the British, was killed by his former master. In response, British officials seized cattle and relatives of the Somali master, prompting Ogaden Somalis to conduct a raid in retaliation that pushed all the way to Kismayu and led to the death of two Arab traders on the outskirts of town.<sup>23</sup>

This was the last straw for Commissioner Hardinge in Mombasa. British prestige had been violated and authority needed to be restored.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly he organized a “punitive” expedition that was carried out that same year. Under the command of Major W. Quentin, the expedition brought in

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<sup>20</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 393. Ahmed Margan appears to have been the leader of the Muhammad Zubeir sub-clan, who occupied the hinterland beyond Kismayu to Afmadu and were considered to be the “most powerful and richest of all the Jubaland tribe.” See “Short Account of the Tribes in Jubaland,” NA: W) 276/502, 28 June, 1918, 146(3)-146(4).

<sup>21</sup> Mfudo is a Gosha village at the northern fringes of Gosha district and later served as the furthest extent of British influence when after colonial officials abandoned the interior of the country. See Appendix 2.

<sup>22</sup> “MB 113, 1897,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, *Jubaland Logbook*, 34. The fact that the Ogaden Somalis killed Gosha police officers who arrested them raises interesting questions regarding motive behind the murder. Were the Somalis simply trying to escape, or were there greater ethnic motives behind the crime? Unfortunately there is a lack of evidence to investigate the matter further. Still this incident sets a precedence that is seen repeatedly in early colonial documents: murder and violence committed against the Wa-Gosha by Somalis.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Operations in Jubaland, 1900-1901: The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*. NA: FO 881/7936. By Lt. Colonel A. W. Money (R.F.A.), compiled in Intelligence Division, War Office, January 1903, 11.

several hundred sepoys, three companies of the East African Rifles, and African irregulars that totaled 1,000 men.<sup>25</sup> The expedition itself was largely ineffective, extremely costly for the British, and was marred by several embarrassing setbacks that only emboldened the Somalis. During the expedition a garrison at Yonte<sup>26</sup> was captured and destroyed with 15 askaris killed. The following month 27 sepoys were killed and their weapons taken during an ambush. Finally Ogaden raiders successfully seized an unknown number of government cattle near Kismayu.<sup>27</sup> Not until late August of 1898 did the expedition force the surrender of the Ogaden Somalis, and this was only after British forces successfully raided their villages and seized large numbers of livestock.<sup>28</sup>

The British ultimately succeeded in “punishing” the Somalis, but, as Cashmore points out, the campaign itself was costly and largely ineffective.<sup>29</sup> Despite Hardinge’s desire to restore prestige, the British had experienced several setbacks that would shape their perceptions of and policy towards the Somalis for years to come. As Jenner’s comments following the expedition illustrate, “I have never met natives of Africa who show higher qualities than they do!”<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, the Ogaden had bested and shown the vulnerability of the British, which emboldened the Ogaden Somalis, a fact made all the more apparent when they rebelled again two years later.

Following the 1898 expedition, P.C. Jenner confidently proclaimed “Ogaden, found friendly. All quiet.”<sup>31</sup> The optimism was short lived. The next two years witnessed frequent “acts of violence against the Wa Gosha,” culminating in the murders of several Wa-Gosha by Ogadens in the summer of 1900.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

<sup>26</sup> Yonte was a Somali village just to the south of the Gosha district and about twenty kilometers from the mouth of the Juba River. It was in close proximity to Kismayu and Gobweyn, the two major British outposts in Jubaland. See Appendix 2.

<sup>27</sup> “MB 114, 1898.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 34.

<sup>28</sup> *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*. NA: FO 881/7936, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 393.

<sup>30</sup> “Dispatch 180,” Jubaland Log Book, RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 35.

<sup>31</sup> “MB 114, 1898.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 34

<sup>32</sup> *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*. NA: FO 881/7936, 12. This document suggests that violence between the Somalis and Gosha from 1898 to 1900 was frequent. Unfortunately, I found only one colonial document that elaborates further on the nature of this violence, which can be found in the following footnote. More than likely, the frequent acts of violence against the Gosha were Somali raids conducted against Gosha villages. However, this does not discount the fact that violence certainly occurred outside of Somali raids. If this violence did occur primary through raids, which villages were targeted—those in upper Gosha or

According to Commissioner of the Protectorate Charles Eliot, the death of these Wa-Gosha occurred because the Gosha refused to give the Ogaden Somalis the ivory tusks from some elephants that they had Gosha killed.<sup>33</sup> Jenner's attempts to bring the offenders to justice led to the imprisonment of a Somali leader and a fine of 1,000 rupees to the offending sub-clan.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently this same Ogaden sub-clan—the Rir Abdillahs—attacked an expedition led by Jenner in November of 1900, resulting in the death of Jenner and thirty one troops.<sup>35</sup> Following Jenner's death a second punitive expedition was hastily organized under the command of Colonel C.M.G. Ternan. Like the expedition of 1898, the Second Ogaden Punitive Expedition was a large and expensive undertaking that struggled to defeat the Somalis. The British repeatedly failed to bring the Ogaden to battle. The Ogadens successfully raided a government garrison at Bua in northern Gosha district on 18 January 1901, and attacked a British force at Samase in northern Jubaland on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February killing 17 and wounding 22.<sup>36</sup> Even more disturbing, most of the Ogaden clan—an estimated 4,000 men—opposed the British, as well as several hundred Gosha who sided with the Ogaden.<sup>37</sup>

During the unrest, it appears that several villages in northern Gosha district sided with the Ogaden Somalis, while Gosha villages in the southern portion of the district sided with and fought for

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lower? Were all Gosha attacked indiscriminately, or did Somalis only attack certain Gosha villages? Without additional evidence, it is impossible to know for sure, but the alleged frequency of violence raises interesting questions regarding Somali and Gosha relationships and identity during this period. However, given Luling's work examining the integration of slaves into Somali society, Besteman's and Menkhaus' argument for the Somalization of upper Gosha, and the likelihood that these Somalis were from the Muhammad Zubeir sub-clan, it is highly probable that these raids were occurring along the lower and middle of the Juba River valley. See Luling Virginia, "The Social Structure of Somali Tribes;" Besteman, Catherine, "Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia;" and Menkhaus, Kenneth, "Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley."

<sup>33</sup> "Eliot to the Marques of Landsdowne," in *Africa (East Coast)*, from *Sir C.N.E. Eliot (Mainland Series)*, No. 1-40, January to 14 March 1901, March 8<sup>th</sup> 1901, 324. According to Eliot this was in spite of the fact that it was "custom" for the Wa-Gosha to do so. Eliot's goes on to state that the Gosha "are only tolerated on the condition that when they kill game they must hand over the valuable parts, e.g. the tusks of elephants to the Somalis." Obviously Eliot believed Somalis had subjugated the Gosha, however this instance obviously questions the degree to which the Gosha obeyed and accepted mistreatment at the hands of Somalis. More importantly, it illustrates competition and offers a glimpse of identity and interaction between Somalis and Gosha at the turn of the nineteenth century. The murdered Wa-Gosha evidently refused to acknowledge a subservient status/relationship with these Somalis. While the Somalis obviously felt that they could take from the Gosha, which demonstrates how Somalis viewed the Gosha in relation to themselves. However— like the previous footnote— no additional information is given, thus we do not know who these Gosha and Somalis are or where these acts occurred.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 324-325.

<sup>35</sup> Dispatch 180." RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 35.

<sup>36</sup> See, *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*." NA: FO 881/7936, 18, 22.

<sup>37</sup> See *Ibid*, 29-31.

the British. Large numbers of northern Gosha participated in the successful attack on the garrison at Bua, and all villages to the north of Bua, as well as some in Italian territory, supposedly sided with and supported the Ogaden.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, several Gosha participated as irregulars, porters, and scouts for Col. Ternan's expedition.<sup>39</sup> This exhibits clearly the fractured nature of Gosha identity and loyalty during this period. The fact that the northern Gosha villages decided to support the Ogadens suggests that these Gosha identified with Somalis. This also confirms Besteman's stance that newly arriving ex-slaves during the late 1890s were increasingly more Somalitized and settled at the northern limits of the Gosha district.<sup>40</sup> In the early years of colonial rule, identity between the Gosha and Somali was still malleable.

In June of 1901, with progress going slow, Commissioner Eliot called a stop to the expedition after Col. Ternan successfully forced the capitulation of the northern Gosha villages and reestablished control over Gosha district.<sup>41</sup> Eliot's decision to halt the advance of Ternan's force at the limits of Gosha district speaks volumes about the changing British perceptions regarding the Somalis and the interior of the province; it also marks a turning point in the early colonial administration of Jubaland. Eliot apparently felt that further operations in Ogaden territory only extended an already expensive operation, and for him the retaking of Gosha sufficiently weakened the influence of the Ogaden.<sup>42</sup> But in stopping Ternan at Mfudo, it signaled that Eliot believed Gosha district was worth retaining and showed potential for future development. Unlike the rest of the province, Gosha was still seen as salvageable and exploitable.

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<sup>38</sup> "Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir C. Eliot," NA: FO 2/447, Col. Trevor Ternan, Yonte, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1901, 183; "Intelligence Diary from March 13 to April 17, 1901," NA: FO 2/447, W.J. Monson, 184.; and also NA: WO 276/502, 0004/51-00004/52, which mentions how Gosha villages are friendly with the Ogaden and ferry them over to the Italian side of the river to avoid punishment.

<sup>39</sup> "The Ogaden Punitive Expedition," 29-31; and "Intelligence Diary from March 13 to April 17, 1901," NA: FO 2/447, W.J. Monson, 184-185.

<sup>40</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 66-68.

<sup>41</sup> *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> Decypher No. 59." NA: FO 2/456. *Africa: East Coast, From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, Telegrams Paraphrase, 1901*. C. Eliot, 18 April 1901, 129.

Like the previous expedition, the second punitive expedition was expensive yet failed to achieve its desired goals. With two failed expeditions and an “unruly” population of Somalis in need of pacification, Mombasa was ready for a change policy in Jubaland. Eliot’s decision to halt the expedition at Mfudo signaled that the Foreign Office was no longer interested in pacifying the Somali. Debate now shifted towards how to establish a new and more effective policy in Jubaland. For Eliot this meant the complete abandonment of the interior. The stubborn resistance by the Ogaden, as well as the potential expense of governing the hinterland, convinced Commissioner Eliot to withdraw from the interior of the province and effectively limit British rule to the coast. “I do not think,” Eliot informed the Foreign Office Secretary the Marques of Landsdowne,

that Jubaland is worth the money spent on it. It is mostly a desert of sand and scrub. Gosha is the only fertile district, but I believe it is not superior to the banks of the [River] Tana. Unless H.M.G. are ready to expend much more money on this Protectorate, I am strongly in favour of devoting our attention to the profitable and accessible parts and leaving the deserts to themselves for the present. I am therefore quite willing to abandon Mfudu and all posts in interior and hold only Kismayu and Yonte. Of course this means that we must let the Somalis quarrel among themselves and that no one must travel in the interior without a sufficient escort.<sup>43</sup>

As this excerpt illustrates, Eliot supported a complete withdrawal from the interior of Jubaland, to including the Gosha district. Burdened with the potential costs of governing what he considered an unprofitable province, Eliot argued that the British administration should be limited to only the coast and the mouth of the Juba River. His intentions are clear: future policy should ignore Somalis and concentrate on insuring trade continued to flow through Kismayu. The following year, Eliot reiterated his thoughts on the future policy in Jubaland, adding that:

Recent events have not altered my conviction that the worry is not worth the money spent on it. It is true that the strip with Gosha on the Juba [R]iver is fairly fertile and that Kismayu does a considerable trade in exporting cloth and coffee, but these advantages cannot be seriously set against the enormous military expenditure. The real danger and importance of the Somali seems to me to lie not in

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<sup>43</sup> “Decypher No. 87.” NA: FO 2/456. *Africa: East Coast, From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, Telegrams Paraphrase, 1901*. C. Eliot, 29 April 1901, 149.

anything that he may do in Jubaland, but in the menace which they periodically offer to the fertile literal of Tanaland.<sup>44</sup>

Here Eliot takes his views on Jubaland a step further, questioning the reason for maintaining any semblance of British governance in the province. As his comment suggests, Eliot was in favor of abandoning the province altogether—trade flowing through Kismayu and the fertility of the Gosha district meant little in comparison to expenses. He believed that the British could not effectively govern Somalis; it was simply too costly and there was no return for the investment. Future policy towards the Somali would instead consist of “punitive” expeditions and punishments. As long as the security of the rest of the province and colony was not threatened, and British prestige not undermined, Eliot argued the interior could be ignored.

In the following months Eliot’s proposed policy changes conflicted with British administrators in Jubaland who advocated that Gosha district should not be abandoned. Colonel Ternan was especially vocal in his opposition.<sup>45</sup> He stated:

I would strongly urge that a small civil staff be placed in charge of Gosha and that its administration be energetically taken in hand. The country is thickly populated and next year when the district has recuperated itself from its late troubles, the natives will be glad to pay a small hut-tax which can go towards maintenance of a definite and reliable system of protection and administration of justice.<sup>46</sup>

Ternan felt that the development potential of the Gosha district and the need to secure revenue for the province demanded the British retain the area. For Ternan, the district was fertile and its inhabitants were welcoming of British rule and authority. However, given the fact that Ternan had only months before forced the capitulation of several Gosha villages in the north, one should question Ternan’s the alleged “friendliness” of the Gosha. Nonetheless, Eliot relented. The British remained in Jubaland, but

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<sup>44</sup> “March 1902 - Eliot’s Remarks on Province.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 46.

<sup>45</sup> Ternan and Eliot appeared to have butted heads for most of 1901 and 1902 regarding future British policy in Jubaland. Ternan during this period maintained his stance that the British should not abandon the Gosha district. He even went so far as to suggest arming the WaGosha with rifles to cut down on defense costs of maintaining garrisons in Gosha. Eliot meanwhile, maintained that the expenses did not warrant retaining control over Gosha. See, “Eliot to the Marquis of Landsdowne,” NA: FO 2/447, May 20<sup>th</sup> 1901, 309-312 and “Ternan to Eliot,” NA: FO 2/447, May 14<sup>th</sup> 1901, 313-317, which chronicle these exchanges between the two officials.

<sup>46</sup> “Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir Eliot.” NA: FO 2/447. Trevor Ternan. Yonte, April 16 1901, 2.

only in the coastal region and Gosha district. However, Eliot made it clear that garrisons in the interior should remain in place for six months following the decision to withdrawal simply to dispel rumors that the British were retreating and to save face amongst the Somali—prestige was at stake.<sup>47</sup>

In 1902, Eliot undertook additional policy reform in Jubaland. “I do not think it worthwhile” he argued,

to maintain both a military and civil administration in Jubaland and therefore see no objection to the withdrawal of the latter, but at the same time, it is clear that the somewhat irregular expeditions so ably carried out by Mr. Rogers and Mr. McDougal against [the Ogaden] can prove far more efficacious than the costly and cumbersome methods of regular warfare. It therefore appears to me that this style of operations should be imitated in future.<sup>48</sup>

Given the fact that there was a large military presence in the province, the decision to strip away the civil administration was probably easy to make, especially given Eliot’s desire to cut costs. From 1902 to 1906 there was little in the way of policy change in the province. When the Colonial Office took over control of the Protectorate in 1905, British officials briefly flirted with forward policy—reoccupying the interior of Jubaland—only to shelve the idea when Brigadier General Manning, who was assigned to review the proposal, asserted that the time was not yet ripe.<sup>49</sup> Even the reestablishment of a civil administration in November failed to bring a change in the administration of the province.<sup>50</sup>

In the following years, pressure to enact a forward policy continued to build primarily due to three reasons. The first was fear of a popular Islamist revolt spilling over from neighboring British Somaliland, which forced colonial officials to be vigilant against any such movements in Jubaland.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “Decypher No. 67,” NA: FO 2/456, 149.

<sup>48</sup> “Eliot’s remarks on Province.” March 1902. Rhodes House: RH: MSS Afr.s.583 - Collection of Major C.P. Chevenix-Trench, Jubaland Bundle IV, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 398-399.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 400.

<sup>51</sup> While not the focus of this project, a popular rebellion in British Somaliland by Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan—or the Mad Mullah to the British—engulfed much of the Horn of Africa from 1900 to 1920. For more information see Kakwenzire, Patrick K. *Colonial Rule in the British Somaliland Protectorate, 1905-1939*, (London: University of London Press, 1976). While little activity was undertaken in Jubaland by Hassan and the Protectorate there was a constant fear of subversive activity spilling over and intelligence and colonial reports frequently mention concerns over the Mullah’s influence in the region. See “Intelligence Diary.” NA: FO 2/446. *Africa: East Coast, From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, No. 41-79, 15 March to 11 April, 1901*. W. Morison, Intelligence Officer, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1901, 283; “Memorandum on the Administration of Jubaland,” KNA:

Second, interest in the economic potential of the Juba River valley grew, culminating in the establishment of a cotton plantation in 1908.<sup>52</sup> In order to encourage additional European settlement and development, colonial officers argued that security from Somali raids needed to be guaranteed.<sup>53</sup> Finally, and most importantly, the British were facing pressure from the Abyssinians and Italians to effectively regulate their respective territorial borders and the movement of peoples between them.<sup>54</sup> In 1910, the new Governor of the BEAP, E.P.C. Girouard, finally enacted a forward policy that saw the occupation of Afmadu the “capital” of the Ogaden<sup>55</sup> and the establishment of military garrisons in northern Jubaland.<sup>56</sup> British policy in Jubaland had moved from its passive confinement of the coast to a more active involvement and regulation of the interior.

### ***Perceptions and Race: British Views and Treatment of Somalis and Gosha in Jubaland***

From 1895 to 1910, the British administration of Jubaland underwent several policy changes, many of which can be attributed to fears over expense and security. However, these fears and changes in policy-making were greatly influenced by British perceptions of Somalis and the “Gosha.” Colonial officials did not view or administer Somalis and the Bantu riverine peoples the same way, which led to markedly different colonial experiences for each group. This section examines British perceptions of the Gosha and Somali, and argues that they greatly impacted policy and treatment of the two groups. The perceptions of colonial officials were shaped by notions of race, which were essential for the functioning of the British colonial apparatus. British perceptions were rooted in tangible differences between the

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MC/Coast/470, Capt. H. D. Tupper Carey, 28-29; “Letter by Hope at a Baraza,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 70.; And “Report by Hope 17<sup>th</sup> June 1910,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 75. See also, Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 400, for two instances in which this fear prompted swift British intervention.

<sup>52</sup> “European Settlers on Juba River.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73.

<sup>53</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 400-401.

<sup>54</sup> “An Extract from a letter from Sir P. Girouard to S. of St. Crewe dated 6 VIII 10.” NA: WO 106/251. pp.46-49.

<sup>55</sup> Afmadu was a major watering point for the Ogaden Somalis. Given its importance it was widely considered at the time to be the “capital” of the Ogaden.

<sup>56</sup> “An Extract from a letter from Sir P. Girouard to S. of St. Crewe,” NA: WO 106/251. pp.48.



Somali and the Gosha—differing ways of life, social organization, and reactions to colonial rule—that confirmed British views on race and shaped future administration of the two groups.

### *British Perceptions and their Impact on Policy in Jubaland*

An examination of British colonial documents reveals that officials viewed Somali groups and the Bantu ex-slave communities along the Juba as two distinct peoples who could be characterized not only by social, political, and cultural differences, but also by certain innate traits. Frequently British officials describe the Somali and the “Gosha” in opposite terms. Whereas the Somali were seen by administrators as a motley collection of pastoral clans and sub-clans to be administered independently, the Gosha were viewed as a united confederation of agriculturalists.<sup>57</sup> Whereas the Somali were warlike and independent, the Gosha were docile and welcoming of British rule. Whereas Somalis were perceived to be highly intelligent, the Gosha were seen as lazy and incompetent.

Such perceptions ignored finer intricacies regarding the two groups in favor of sweeping generalizations. For example, colonial documents repeatedly refer to Nassib Bunda as the leader of the Gosha, despite the fact that Bunda never exercised control over the entire Gosha district, nor was his confederation ever united.<sup>58</sup> Several villages within the territory controlled by Bunda were autonomous, while other villages to the south were either *Mushunguli* or controlled by rival headmen who never recognized Bunda’s authority.<sup>59</sup> Even more problematic, British officials understood the “Gosha” to be a singular people. As the previous chapter highlighted, pre-colonial Goshaland was highly fragmented, composed of several different ethnic groups and independent villages. Identity in pre-colonial Jubaland was contentious and complex. As unattached and newly free individuals, ex-slaves forged their own

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<sup>57</sup> “Short Account of tribes in Jubaland.” NA: WO 276/502, 146(2), and “Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908” NA: WO 276/502, *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya: Jubaland and District*, author unknown, 0004/17.

<sup>58</sup> “Sub-commissioner MacDougall to Sir C. Eliot from Kismayu, August 7, 1901.” In F.O. 2/450, *Africa from Sir C.N.E. Eliot (Mainland Series)*, No. 221-291, 23 July to 10 October 1901, 121.; Dundas, F.G. “Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa.” *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (March 1893), 214.

<sup>59</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 138-140 and Cassanelli, “Bantu Former Slave Communities,” 227.

identities—some along ethnic lines, some along territorial and locale, and others through Somali clan structures. To portray these communities as a larger category of Gosha ignored the riverine peoples understanding of their own identity and relationship to other inhabitants of the region. Nonetheless, British officials marked the Gosha off as separate and distinct people, ones who were to be administered accordingly.

Administrators could call upon practical reasons to justify the different governance and categorization for Somali and Gosha. Somalis were pastoral people whose way of life required large expanses of territory and expansionist tendencies to support it. Somalis were thus much harder for British officials to control and obviously could not be administered in the same manner as stationary communities. Furthermore, there was little reason to consider economic exploitation of Somalis; for the most part, they inhabited inhospitable regions that the British saw as unprofitable.<sup>60</sup> The Gosha, however, were agricultural communities who lived in fixed villages and occupied the most fertile land in the province. Moreover, British colonial rule was built on a strategy of divide and rule in order to more easily govern indigenous populations. Still, these factors alone fail to explain why British officials used opposing traits to describe Somalis and the Gosha. British administrators in Jubaland firmly believed that Somalis and Gosha were two distinct peoples with particular innate characteristics. These perceptions affected and justified different treatment and policy—marking the Gosha as a people to be exploited and the Somalis as a people to be respected.

British officials frequently refer to the untrustworthy nature of Somalis. However, such remarks are usually in reference to the supposed cunningness of Somalis, which, while derogatory, also illustrate a level of respect for Somalis. One colonial official writing in 1908, described the Somali as:

They are a nomadic stock owning race, who follow their grazing over large areas. They produce but little and are given to raiding. They are fanatical but ignorant Mohamdans

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<sup>60</sup> As the earlier comments by Commissioner Eliot, Col. Ternan, and MacDougall exhibit. See “Eliot to Marques of Lansdowne,” NA: FO 2/447, 309-312; “Ternan to Sir Charles Eliot,” NA: FO 2/447, 313-317; “MacDougall to Sir Charles Eliot.” NA: FO 2/448, *Africa: From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, No. 130-170, 21 May to 13 June, 1901*, K. MacDougall, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1901, 15-17.

[sic] with an intense distrust of Europeans. They are treacherous but capable of fighting most bravely if they think it necessary and are difficult enemies to tackle owing to their country and mobility.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the criticism leveled against the Somalis as fanatical, ignorant, and treacherous, this colonial official lauds the fighting prowess of Somalis. His recognition of Somali resistance is indicative of larger British attitudes towards the Somalis, which I argue was largely shaped by previous conflict between Somalis and the British. Starting with their destruction of Turki Hill in 1893 and their success against the 1898 and 1902 “punitive expeditions,” Somalis had effectively fought off the British with an intensity that altered how the British viewed them. Somali military success fostered admiration amongst British officials who came to define Somalis as independent and as warriors.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike other peoples in the Horn, the protectorate, and Africa in general, the British often praised Somalis and describe them as intelligent and industrialist. A colonial report from 1902 describes the Somali as “exceedingly intelligent: when they visit towns they show a remarkable adaptability to the conditions of civilized life: they are not only traders but engage in large cattle transactions.”<sup>63</sup> For British officials, not only did Somalis have the mental ability to acclimate themselves to “civilized life,” Somalis could understand and engage in market transactions beyond the mental capacity of other peoples. British perceptions of Somalis encompassed more than intelligence, for colonial officials also respected Somalis as great warriors. “As fighting men,” Lt. Col. A.W. Money remarked “the Ogadens are by no means contemptible foes: of fine physique, they are very wiry and able to cover long distances without water.” “They are,” he concludes, “exceedingly cunning.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> “Notes on Province of Jubaland,” NA: WO 276/502, Author unknown, Dated May 1908, 0004/17.

<sup>62</sup> An evaluation of colonial documents throughout the early colonial period exhibits that Somalis are repeatedly defined by their military prowess and supposed independence. In fact, few of the documents I examined failed to do so, and the majority of these deal with other provincial and colony happenings. See “Notes on Somali Customs,” RH: MSS.Afr.s.583, R.E. Salkeld, 45; *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*, NA:FO 881/7936, 8-9; “Treasurers Report,” NA: FO 2/448, Author unknown, Decipher 7/81, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 193-194.; “Eliot to Marques of Lansdowne,” NA: FO 2/445, 324-326; and “Intelligence Report,” NA: FO 2/446, 251.

<sup>63</sup> “Treasurers Report,” NA: FO 2/448, 193.

<sup>64</sup> *Ogaden Punitive Expedition*, NA: FO 881/7936, 9.

If Somalis possessed numerous positive qualities, the riverine ex-slave communities had few. Whereas the British perceived Somalis to be clever, industrialist, and great warriors; the Gosha were seen as unintelligent, lazy, and docile. These attitudes are on display in one report, “Short Account of Tribes in Jubaland.” The Wa-Gosha,” the author writes,

are a confederacy of several tribes bound together for mutual protection against the Somali. They consist of fugitive slaves from the Somali, who have taken refuge from their masters in the thick bush along the bank of the Juba. They have always left a forest belt between themselves and the Somalis whome they fear. The tribe include a mixture of Swahili, M’wezi, Yao, and many other tribes, and are quite harmless and law abiding.<sup>65</sup>

British officials were aware of the heterogeneous composition of the “Gosha,” yet ignored it; instead, administrators chose to categorize the various “tribes” as a singular group. The Gosha are understood to be meek, welcoming of colonial rule, and accustomed to mistreatment. Meanwhile, the official’s not so subtle reference to the slave past and fear of Somalis marks the Gosha as inferior, while simultaneously highlighting their continued subjugation to Somalis. The Gosha are described as “fugitive slaves” and as taking “refuge,” which implies that the Gosha are still perceived as slaves, and that there is a clear hierarchy and relationship between Somalis and the Gosha.

When the author turns to the Somali, the imagery and language are very different.

He is a Mohammedan and in his own way very religious, in appearance he is tall and slightly built, but lithe, wiry, and capable of supporting considerable exertion. In his features he is an Arab and frequently a very handsome Arab. He has several advantages namely he is clean, intelligent, cheerful, does not lack courage, and is able to stand great exertion. [...] As a warrior he is by no means contemptible, being very cunning and experienced in bush fighting [...] In attack, they are very formidable, being able to thread their way through thick bush with wonderful speed, while they make their thrusts with lightening celerity, inflicting very serious wounds with their spears and knives.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “Short Account of tribes in Jubaland.” NA: WO 276/502, 146(2). Unfortunately the precise date of this document is unknown because it is an extract from a larger intelligence report written on Jubaland. Given the location of this document within a larger War Office packet on Jubaland, the date can be placed as somewhere between 1902 and 1918. Thus, the actual date of this document may actually be beyond the scope of the early administration of Jubaland. However, the perceptions and viewpoints held toward the Gosha are enlightening, especially when contrasted against those held towards Somalis.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 146(4).

The War Office official writing this report defines Somalis as a distinctive people, who can be differentiated from others based on physical characteristics, their adherence to Islam, and intelligence. Additionally, the “Arabness” of Somalis is used as a distinguishing quality that highlights the Somalis supposed non-African ancestry.<sup>67</sup> Beyond these qualities, the official dwells on the fighting prowess of Somalis, describing their tactics in language that borders on infatuation. Unlike the Goshu, British perceived the Somalis as an advanced and superior people.

Other administrators; such as the author of this logbook, depict the Goshu as foreign, uncivilized, and inferior.

Wagosha notorious for witchcraft, some issue orders to crocodiles to take messages and cause death of enemy. It is a fact that many Wagosha own crocodiles and that each individual crocodile knows its own master and answers to its call. [...] It is reported that when a man wishes to kill another, he gets the spittle of his intended victim, mixes it with sand and puts it into the crocodile’s food, who by that means knows the victim’s scent, waits at the watering place, seizes the victim and takes him to his master who gives the body to the crocodile in payment.<sup>68</sup>

The entry goes on to record additional forms of witchcraft and practices utilized by the Goshu to harm enemies. These comments, while not explicitly derogatory, describe Goshu customs as bizarre and foreign. In highlighting Goshu beliefs and traditions in this manner, it demonstrates that the British understood the Goshu to be pagan, backwards, and uncivilized. Additional British commentary concentrates on the alleged docility, ignorance, and laziness of the Goshu. “The Goshu [...] are friendly to the Government and are all cultivators but lazy. [...] Their country is rich, but they own no stock except a few goats. They are the only supply of labourers in Jubaland.”<sup>69</sup> These remarks, more so than previous examples, clearly exhibit the motives shaping British perceptions and the negative portrayal of the

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<sup>67</sup> The document goes on to examine several other inhabitants of Jubaland, to include: the Boran (an Ethiopian people), the Warday, and other peoples. However, none of these other descriptions assign Arab qualities to those being evaluated. Thus, what we see in this comment is a clear understanding of the Somali as different from other peoples in the Horn based on race. I will return to this point later in the chapter.

<sup>68</sup> “Gobwyn Record Book” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, author and date unrecorded, 72. The document goes on the list several additional customs of the Goshu. All of which recount several “bizarre” and “odd” practices, such as transmitting gonorrhoea through chickens, causing sexual incompetency, and inflicting paralysis. The inclusion of such “backward” behavior marks the Goshu as inferior and vis-à-vis can be used to justify their mistreatment as part of a process to civilize the Goshu.

<sup>69</sup> “Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908” NA: WO 276/502, *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya: Jubaland and District*, author unknown, 0004/17.

Gosha. Unlike Somalis, the Gosha could be exploited and mobilized to develop Jubaland—if the British could overcome the Gosha’s “innate” idleness.

British perceptions translated directly into policy formation in Jubaland, which meant different policies and colonial experiences for the Somali and for the Gosha. Somalis, who the British viewed more favorably, were lightly administered and treated some level of deference. British policy never seriously attempted to change Somali institutions or traditions. In fact, from 1895 to 1910, the only policy that could be considered as altering or a challenge to Somalis’ way of life, were British attempts to curtail the culture of raiding. Somalis, by and large, were left alone during the early colonial period. British encounters with the Ogaden certainly resulted in violence, but such violence came only after the British failed to settle grievances using Somali customs and institutions. For example, the British accepted the payment of *diya* to resolve the transgressions of Ogadens prior to the punitive expedition of 1898 and attempted to resolve the murder of Wa-Gosha in 1901 through fines.<sup>70</sup> After, the British withdrew from the interior of the province in 1902 the Somalis were largely left alone. No attempt was made by colonial officials to tax Somalis during this period, not even among the Hertis who inhabited the coastal regions of Jubaland.<sup>71</sup>

The Gosha were more intensively governed than Somalis. Whereas the Somali were largely ignored, the Gosha were exploited, taxed, and designated as a source of labor by British administrators. Practical considerations could justify this exploitation, for the Gosha were not only a sedentary group, but they occupied the most fertile portions of Jubaland. However, British perceptions played a much larger role in shaping policy and treatment of the Gosha. Colonial officials were keenly aware of the Gosha’s slave past. In fact, colonial documents repeatedly, and almost exclusively, define the Gosha by

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<sup>70</sup> “Jubaland Log Book,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, pp.34 records Jenner’s attempts to resolve the murder of two WaGosha police by having Ahmad Margan who paid some an installment before conditions worsened. And “*The Ogaden Punitive Expedition*,” 12, highlights Jenner’s attempts to resolve the murder of several WaGosha in 1900.

<sup>71</sup> See, “Jubaland – Personal and Secret.” RH: MSS Afr. s. 633, Sir Robert T Coryndon, *Papers of Sir Robert T. Coryndon, 1921-1924*, 38; and Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 422.

their slave ancestry.<sup>72</sup> Tied closely to this legacy were British views that regarded the Gosha as “docile” and law-abiding. As a recently enslaved people who were supposedly “living in fear” of Somalis, the British believed the Gosha were welcoming of their rule.<sup>73</sup> As a recent enslaved and supposedly docile people, the Gosha could easily be exploited. Thus when British officials looked to develop agriculture or procure labor in the province, they turned to the Gosha.<sup>74</sup> When porters were needed for expeditions, British administrators in Jubaland exclusively made use of the Gosha.<sup>75</sup> Alone among the inhabitants of Jubaland, the Gosha suffered the imposition of a hut tax after the Second Ogaden Punitive Expedition.<sup>76</sup> Unlike the Somalis, the Gosha were more actively integrated and exploited by the British colonial apparatus. In the provincial hierarchy, the Gosha occupied a position at the bottom.

### *The Introduction of Race and Racial Hierarchies*

Why did the British hold remarkably different perceptions towards the Somali and Gosha? Ultimately, I argue that these perceptions rested on British understanding of race and its role in creating and sustaining British colonial rule in Africa. Race as a concept was foreign to African societies before colonialism. While groups certainly recognized differences amongst one another, they would not have seen one another as part of a larger categorization such as “Somali,” “Gosha,” or “African.” Instead, these groups were more likely to identify themselves by kinship or the territory in which they lived.<sup>77</sup> Pre-colonial Somali peoples may have viewed the riverine Bantu communities as inferior, but such

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<sup>72</sup> In nearly every source that I have encountered, the British mention the slave legacy of the Gosha. It appears that the British defined and stigmatized the Gosha based on this legacy. Interestingly Somalis also mobilized the slave legacy of the Gosha to define their own identity. This point will be explored further in chapter three, but it highlights a point at which the British perceptions may have contributed to Somali perceptions, or vice versa.

<sup>73</sup> “Short Account of Tribes in Jubaland,” NA: WO 276/502, pp.3-4.

<sup>74</sup> “Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908” NA: WO 276/502, *Colony and Protectorate of Kenya: Jubaland and District*, author unknown, 0004/17. This is a reoccurring theme in British interaction with the Gosha, especially as British efforts to develop agriculture in Jubaland expanded during the 1910s. Chapter three will explore this point in much greater detail.

<sup>75</sup> “Intelligence Diary from March 13 to April 17, 1901,” NA: FO 2/447. 189; and “Report on the Road from Yonte to Mubungu-Kisungu,” NA: FO 2/447, by H.P. Versturme Bunbury, date unknown, 191-192.

<sup>76</sup> “Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir C. Eliot,” FO 2/447 183.; and Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 400 and Appendix I.

<sup>77</sup> Ambler, Charles H. *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). and Bravman, *Making Ethnic Ways*, 21-30.

perceptions were not based on racial ideology. Instead, these notions stemmed from tangible differences between the two groups, such as a pastoral versus an agricultural way of life, the practice of “proper” Islam, and the history of subjugation of one group to another. The pre-colonial relationship between the Somalis and the riverine communities was fluid with some ex-slaves entering into patron-client relationships that placed them firmly within Somali clan structures and gave them access to privileges afforded to clan members.

When the British established the East African Protectorate, they brought with them a model of governance and a colonial apparatus that could not function without the concept of race. Race justified the hierarchical organization of colonial rule, in which a white administration ruled over Africans.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, colonial rule was permeated by racism; in fact colonialism, as a system, could not function without it. Race ideology was the foundation on which colonialism was built, and it was validated by European systems of knowledge. Racial categorization supported notions of Western and white superiority, while also legitimizing the domination of other non-white peoples.<sup>79</sup> Skin mattered; the lighter and whiter the skin, the more advanced and closer to European a group was viewed by the British. Those with darker skin were seen as inherently brutish, animal-like, and primitive.<sup>80</sup> These perceptions carried over into colonial policy, as European governments tended to favor indigenous peoples with lighter skin tones and those who shared physical features and attributes that Europeans themselves supposedly possessed.<sup>81</sup>

Such was the case with British policy towards Somali groups in Jubaland, who were viewed as more intelligent and treated as a non-African racial category superior to the “black” races with which they lived. As one colonial official put it, the Somali were “the most intelligent race on the East Coast [of

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<sup>78</sup> See Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 72-90; Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 10-16; and Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 208-217.

<sup>79</sup> Bessis, Sophie. *Western Supremacy: Triumph of an Idea?* Translated by Patrick Camiller, (New York: Zed Books, 2003), 14-21.

<sup>80</sup> Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 8-16.

<sup>81</sup> Bessis, *Western Supremacy*, 29-31.



Africa].”<sup>82</sup> Another senior official supported this notion, pointing out that the Somalis were “probably one of the most intelligent natives anywhere in Africa.”<sup>83</sup> While these views were certainly colored by the perceived differences of pre-colonial Somalis, I argue that British favoritism toward Somali groups was ultimately rooted in the belief that Somalis shared attributes that the British admired and, supposedly, also held.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the British colonial government viewed the riverine Gosha in opposite terms and treated them as a different, African, racial category. Accordingly, these policies and the concept of race transformed pre-colonial identity in Jubaland.

The introduction of colonial rule in Jubaland brought with it hierarchies and policies through which racial categorization was transmitted and irrevocably changed dynamics between Somalis and the Gosha. From the outset, colonial administrators understood the various riverine peoples and the surrounding Somali groups to be two distinct racial categories and the British colonial government enacted policy and forged their perceptions along racial lines. Despite the numerous conflicts between the Somali and British, or perhaps because of them, colonial documents illustrate that many administrators respected Somalis.<sup>85</sup> Recall Sub-Commissioner Jenner’s comments following the defeat of the Ogaden in the 1898 expedition, in which he professed that he had “never met natives of Africa who show higher qualities than they do!”<sup>86</sup> Such comments are laced with racial undertones and exhibit how British officials understood and defined the Somali based on their proximity to “white” attributes.

For the British, Somalis were the embodiment of the noble savage: a group of people with lighter skin, a high degree of intelligence, and supposed European-like features and traits who had successfully conquered surrounding people of lower racial stock. This is not an uncommon theme with

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<sup>82</sup> Kittermaster, Sir Harold. “Paper on the Somalis and other tribes of the Somaliland Protectorate,” c. 1930 in RH: MSS.Afr.s.2341 at Rhodes House: Oxford.

<sup>83</sup> Horne, H. Hastings. “Letter to the Chief Native Commissioner: Tribal Councils,” dated 5 September 1922. KNA, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Reel 2804, Roll 8. Bird Library, Syracuse University.

<sup>84</sup> “Dispatch 180.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 35. Recall P.C. Jenner’s early exclamation that the no “natives” shared higher qualities than the Somali.

<sup>85</sup> See Kittermaster, “Paper on the Somalis and other tribes of the Somaliland Protectorate,” RH: MSS.Afr.s.2341; and “Correspondence from Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi,” KNA: MC/Coast/470. Hastings Horne, 30 October 1922;

<sup>86</sup> “Dispatch 180,” Jubaland Log Book, RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 35.

British colonialism and its interaction with those over whom they ruled. The British understood African societies to be naturally divided into racial hierarchies. Expansionist pastoral groups like the Masai, Oromo, and Somali occupied the top of these hierarchies and were seen as more advanced civilizations and superior “races” by virtue of their dominance over other sedentary peoples.<sup>87</sup> As Commissioner Eliot noted in a dispatch, these races often had “helot or slave tribes who have long since accepted the position of dependents,” who “are timid and low in scale of civilization and do such work as hunting and manufacturing weapons for the superior race.”<sup>88</sup> Beyond this, the British supported Somali claims of Arabic, not African, descent. Sub-Commissioner Jenner in his dealings with Sultan Ahmed Margan highlights his supposedly “refined Arabic features.”<sup>89</sup> Colonial official Sir Harold Kittermaster argued as late as 1930 that Somalis represented a distinctive race and that “has probably resulted from the inter-marriage of Arab sailors and traders with the indigenous women of Galla stock.”<sup>90</sup> Somalis were different than “black” Africans; they were allegedly more intelligent, more civilized, adhered strongly to Islam, and did not look like other Africans. In addition, the British believed, owing to a legacy of effective colonial resistance, that Somalis were fiercely independent and great warriors. These alleged innate characteristics of Somalis distinguished them from other peoples in the region. For the British, Somalis were different, unique, and superior, and Somalis were viewed and governed accordingly.

Given British views on Somalis, the policy of non-interference makes more sense. Instead, colonial officials attempted to maintain and work with previous Somali clan hierarchies. Ahmed Martan and the sultans of Ogaden sub-clans were used as intermediaries and *diya* was accepted in the mediation of disputes. The British also recognized and were willing to work individually with the various

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<sup>87</sup> Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors*, 48-50, 108.

<sup>88</sup> “Report on East Africa,” FN from FO 2/448, by Sir C. Eliot, Dispatch No. 157, June 10 1901, 269.

<sup>89</sup> “Sultan Ahmed Margan,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, *Jubaland Logbook*, 33.

<sup>90</sup> Kittermaster, “Paper on the Somalis and other tribes of the Somaliland Protectorate,” in RH: MSS.Afr.s.2341, 2-3. The term “Galla” refers to people of Oromo descent. However, the term is now considered to be derogatory by Oromo. Therefore, I have not the term other than when directing quoting a colonial official.

Somali sub-clans; differences amongst the groups were not ignored as they were for the Gosha.<sup>91</sup> And unlike the Gosha, Somalis in Jubaland were never taxed by the British.<sup>92</sup> Somalis, because of their different racial stock and their alleged intelligence were seen as highly adaptive to “civilized life.”<sup>93</sup>

Colonial policy towards the Gosha was altogether different and more destructive to the riverine communities than their Somali counterparts. In the racialized colonial hierarchy, the Gosha’s “Negroid” features and black skin placed them on the bottom. Unlike the Somali, the British understood the Gosha to be an African people, which labeled the Gosha as lazy, childlike, and intellectually inferior. In reference to a proposal to have the Gosha harvest rubber, Sub-Commissioner K. MacDougall in 1901 noted that:

One fact I am aware of respecting the Wa-Gosha themselves is that they are absolutely incapable of undertaking the working of this or any other kind of industry, owing, in a great measure, to their lack of ordinary intelligence as well as their grievous indolence.<sup>94</sup>

For MacDougall, the Gosha lacked the mental capacity to engage in any kind of British development scheme. He goes on to add that the Gosha “do not want to earn a single pice[sic] beyond their bare subsistence.”<sup>95</sup> Not only were the Gosha intellectually “incapable” of such schemes, they had no desire to do so. To colonial officials the Gosha were not an industrious people; it was not in the Gosha’s nature. Such opinions go beyond British perceptions and tangible differences; they are biological and immutable. Whereas Somalis were seen as intelligent and adaptable to British civilization, the Gosha were seen in opposite terms solely based on their “race.” Captain R.E. Salkeld, Sub-Commissioner of Jubaland from 1902 through 1914, made a comment in 1902 which highlights how British administrators understood the Gosha. He asserted that:

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<sup>91</sup> Several colonial documents from the early period list the sub-clans of the Ogaden with each sub-clan described at length. Interestingly several of these documents also describe the Gosha, but usually in much less detail. See “Intelligence Report,” NA: FO 2/446, 249-256.; “Notes on Jubaland,” NA: WO 276/504, pp.0002/8-0002/10.; and “Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908,” NA: WO 276/504, 0004/17-0004/33.

<sup>92</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 400.

<sup>93</sup> Treasurers Report,” NA: FO 2/448, Author unknown, Decipher 7/81, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 193.

<sup>94</sup> MacDougall, K. “Sub-commissioner MacDougall to Sir C. Eliot from Kismayu, August 7, 1901.” In F.O. 2/450, *Africa from Sir C.N.E. Eliot (Mainland Series), No. 221-291, 23 July to 10 October 1901*, 121.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

The Wagosha present the ordinary characteristics of the negro. They are an increasing population, and are on the whole friendly towards the Government, disliking Somalis. They are mostly agriculturalists though a few are hunters, they are lazy and not very warlike.<sup>96</sup>

Unlike MacDougall, Salkeld makes a direct connection between skin tone and the supposedly predisposed characteristics of the Gosha. As black Africans, the Gosha exhibit innate qualities—laziness, docility, and acceptance of British rule—that can be found among any “negro” population. Salkeld’s comments are more significant when one considers that he served as both the military and civil administrator of Jubaland for 12 years. Thus, his perceptions of the Gosha played a large role in policy formation in the province.

The British could call on practical reasons to treat the riverine people differently. Gosha was one of the only profitable regions in Jubaland and had enormous agricultural potential if the region could be properly developed and its inhabitants convinced to grow cash crops.<sup>97</sup> As Col. Ternan pointed out in “If however, traders be encouraged to exploit Gosha, I feel convinced a very considerable revenue, comparatively speaking, is to be obtained.”<sup>98</sup> Doing so though, would require coercion of the Gosha, of which race played a large part in legitimizing.

Race made it easier for British officials to justify the mistreatment and forced labor of the Gosha population, which was, the British argued, in their “best interests.” Accordingly, British colonial policy exercised greater control over the Gosha than Somalis. The Gosha were required to pay an annual hut tax and were continually conscripted as laborers and porters for the province.<sup>99</sup> Whenever colonial administrators ran into difficulty securing Gosha labor or in encouraging them to engage in colonial activities, the Gosha were labeled as lazy, unintelligent, and uncooperative. However, British comments

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<sup>96</sup> “Notes on Jubaland” NA: WO 276/502, R.E. Salkeld, Capt. 3 K.A.R., 13 Nov. 1902, 0002/11.

<sup>97</sup> “The Juba River,” KNA: MC/Coast/461. McGregor, Ross W., 9 June 1914.

<sup>98</sup> “Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir C. Eliot,” FO 4/447, 188.

<sup>99</sup> “Treasurer’s Report and Appropriation Account for Year Ende 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1909,” in NA: CO 533/064, *East Africa Protectorate 1909, Vol. VIII*. Author unknown.

regarding the difficulty finding laborers, their desire to continue farming in previous fashions, and the Gosha's general laziness suggest that the Gosha felt otherwise.<sup>100</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The first fifteen years of British governance in Jubaland can be characterized as scattered, ineffective, and unengaged. The British struggled to administer what was largely considered an unprofitable province. Frequent conflict with Somali sub-clans resulted in two large scale punitive expeditions and a withdrawal from the interior of Jubaland in 1902. However, the British did opt to retain control over the fertile Gosha district, which was seen as a potential site of development and revenue. The result of this policy was two remarkably different colonial experiences—as well as distinct policies—for Somalis and the Gosha. While the abandonment of the interior largely left Somalis to themselves, the decision to hold on to the Gosha district resulted in the exploitation of the Wa-Gosha. In 1910, colonial officials finally reoccupied the interior of Jubaland marking a turning point in the British administration of the province. Policy in Jubaland moved into a more active phase. Somalis previously ignored were better governed, the Gosha district was to become a site of agriculture schemes, and its inhabitants were to become ever more marginalized in the subsequent years.

British rule in Jubaland created new colonial hierarchies and institutions, and transferred Western concepts that altered the way Somali peoples and the riverine communities of Gosha came to view one another. Although I lack the evidence to substantiate how the Gosha and Somali internalized British perceptions, policies, and racial theories during the early colonial period. Pre-colonial institutions were changing and identity was coalescing in reaction to colonial rule and the increased migration of Bantu ex-slaves into northern Gosha after 1890. In the subsequent years of colonial rule, 1910 to 1925, the British government took more active steps to develop and exploit Jubaland province. The second

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<sup>100</sup> Van Zwanenburg, R.M.A with Anne King. *An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda, 1800-1970*. (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1975), 33-43; and Clayton, Anthony and Donald C. Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963*, (London: Frank Cass, 1974), xiv-xvii. Unfortunately there is no primary source material to collaborate this claim.

phase of British rule saw the establishment white land concessions, additional Somali “punitive expeditions,” and the strengthening of Somali identity at the expense of the marginalization and the “othering” of the Gosha. Racialized British colonial policies altered the fluidity that characterized identity and Somali-Gosha interactions in the pre-colonial Jubaland, as both Somalis and the Gosha reacted to the introduction of racial categorization and colonial rule.

### Chapter 3

#### **Somali v. Gosha: Colonial Policy, the Coalescing of a Somali Identity, and the ‘Othering’ of the Gosha – 1910 to 1925**

*About 800 or 900 years ago the Horn of Africa was politically and commercially more closely related to Arabia than it is at the present day, and it was at that date that the Somali race was first formed by numerous emigrants from southern Arabia intermingling with, intermarrying with, and proselytizing indigenous tribes, who were probably of Galla stock.*

- L. Alymer, 1911<sup>1</sup>

During the early period of British rule in Jubaland, the Somali and Gosha had altogether different colonial experiences—Somalis were largely ignored while the Gosha were exploited. Colonial administrators perceived each group differently. The Gosha were seen as unintelligent, lazy and were conscripted as laborers, while Somalis were viewed as intelligent, civilized and were respected. As chapter two highlighted, the concept of race, introduced under British rule, reinforced new hierarchies that started to alter how Somalis viewed themselves as well as how they understood non-Somalis. This chapter argues that the later colonial period, 1910 to 1925, represents the continuation and acceleration of these trends. Somali identity became more exclusive, while the Gosha were increasingly marginalized from the dominant Somali society and institutions. In this chapter I examine the nature of British colonial rule from 1910 to 1925 and evaluate how British policy contributed to the coalescence of a racialized Somali identity in Jubaland. This identity, I argue, was formed in opposition to the “Gosha,” the Somalis’ inferior “other.”

Nineteen ten marked an important year for colonial rule in Jubaland; the British reoccupied the interior of the province and enacted a more active policy towards the Ogaden Somalis. While in the previous fifteen years there was little contact between the British and Somalis, the subsequent fifteen is

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<sup>1</sup> Alymer, L. “The Country between the Juba River and Lake Rudolf.” *The Geographical Journal* 38, no. 3 (September 1911), 296. While much of what Alymer says in this quote is inaccurate, his perceptions regarding Somali ancestry is indicative of the ways in which British officials viewed Somalis in relation to other peoples and their use of race to do so. This chapter explores these views and examines how they shaped identity in Jubaland.

highlighted by enhanced cooperation and interaction between the two groups.<sup>2</sup> Whereas previously little effort was made to regulate and control the hinterland Ogaden Somalis, the British began to actively engage and effectively govern them. These efforts ultimately resulted in the coalescing of a “Somali” identity that incorporated race while building itself upon pre-colonial characteristics that distinguished Somali groups from the region’s other inhabitants.

The first section of this chapter is devoted to evaluating British rule during this later period and its effect on the formation of a Somali identity. As the British attempted to better regulate and control the Ogaden sub-clans, colonial officials continually encountered difficulties and met stiff Somali resistance. Ogaden sub-clans frequently raided and counter-raided one another for cattle, and clans moved freely beyond the provincial borders of the EAP—much to the displeasure of colonial officials.<sup>3</sup> For the British, the uninhibited movement of Somalis represented not only a provincial problem, but a challenge to the security of the protectorate. British policy towards Somalis focused on two interrelated goals: curtailing Somali expansion and restricting Somali clans to defined regions of the BEAP. Meanwhile, British policy towards the Goshu consisted of attempts to exploit their labor and expand agricultural development along the lower Juba River valley. This section demonstrates that the British’s increased interaction with Somalis culminated in an internal debate amongst colonial officials over the racial categorization of Somalis. An evaluation of this debate illuminates how British officials understood and utilized race and, more importantly, how Somalis in Jubaland understood themselves in relation to others.

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<sup>2</sup> I call this new phase of British governance in Jubaland the “later colonial period.” My decision to label this period as such is bracketed by two events. 1910 marks the year that Governor Girouard implemented a forward policy in Jubaland, while 1925 was the year that Jubaland was ceded to Italy as a concession for their involvement in World War I. Following its cession to Italy Jubaland province was incorporated into Italian Somaliland and today still forms the modern boundary between Kenya and Somalia.

<sup>3</sup> British officials appear to be obsessed with curtailing the movement of Somali groups. During this period Somalis had pushed across the Tana River into Tanaland Province and British officials were concerned that continued Somali advanced could destabilize the entire colony. See Turton, E. R. “Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/Tana Area.” *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975): 519-537.



The second section of this chapter concentrates on the changing relationship between Somalis and the Gosha and colonialism's influence on this process. This section will examine how identity was constructed in Jubaland after 1910 and how it effected interactions between the British, Somali, and Gosha. I argue that previously malleable, multilayered Somali and Gosha identities became steadily consolidated into a binary of Somali versus Gosha. Somali identity coalesced in opposition to the Gosha, whose slave legacy, non-Somali heritage, and lifestyle were used by Somalis to erect barriers between the two. Additionally, this section evaluates the Somali response to British native policy and their disapproval at being racially classified as a "Native" or "African" group. This evaluation is critical to understanding how Somalis internalized colonial perceptions and utilized them to claim racial superiority over other non-Somali groups. The result is that by 1925 the relationship between the Somali and Gosha was remarkably different than in pre-colonial Jubaland, with the Gosha progressively more marginalized and "othered."<sup>4</sup>

### ***From Reengagement to Cession: British Colonial Policy in Jubaland from 1910 to 1925***

Until the British ceded Jubaland to the Italians in 1925, colonial policy towards Somalis was consumed by two strategies: inhibiting the migration of Somalis and disarming them.<sup>5</sup> These policies came at a substantial price, not just financially, as the British faced the familiar position of procuring funds to administer the region, but also amongst the Ogaden Somalis. Improved British control and intervention led to two uprisings that required "punitive expeditions" to suppress. These expeditions ultimately brought the British into closer contact with and gave them greater control over Somali sub-clans, which I argue shaped British perceptions and treatment towards Somalis. At the same time, the British introduced new agricultural development plans in the fertile Gosha district. Nineteen eleven saw

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<sup>4</sup> So that what it meant to be Somali was gradually formed in opposition to this "other." A Somali was partially, if not predominately, defined by what he was not.

<sup>5</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," 419-421, 452-453.

the establishment of the East African (Jubaland) Cotton Growers Associated Limited.<sup>6</sup> In subsequent years, several additional land concessions were granted to Europeans accompanied by irrigation projects and surveys the along the Juba River.<sup>7</sup> The creation of these development schemes played a critical role in shaping Gosha identity. As with policy and perceptions during the early period, the Gosha were gradually marked off as exploitable and were treated as an inferior people by British officials.

The later period of colonial rule brought with it closer proximity and greater interaction between the British and Somalis, which I argue helped to promote notions of Somali exceptionalism.<sup>8</sup> Somalis were viewed as a unique race “with the most advanced brain on the East Coast.”<sup>9</sup> As British officials administered Somalis, the supposed racial distinctions of Somalis became all the more real, culminating in a debate over the racial pedigree of Somalis and the establishment of a separate administration that would unify Somalis in EAP under one rule. In short, improved British control over Somalis helped to foster a more cohesive Somali identity.

*‘Forward’ Administration in Jubaland: Disarmament, Migration, and Development Schemes*

Governor Girouard’s forward policy was enacted under the assumption that pacification of the hinterland Somalis would not only bring peace to the province, it would also lead to more economic activity that would underwrite the cost of occupying the interior. For Girouard, “it [was] only by opening up Jubaland and its trade to the perfectly willing Somali that we shall find absolute peace and witness their advancement and civilization.”<sup>10</sup> In light of the previous fifteen years of British rule, Girouard’s comments may seem uncharacteristically optimistic and completely counter to those of Governor Eliot

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<sup>6</sup> “Company No: 118615; East African (Jubaland) Cotton Growers Association Ltd.” NA: BT 34/2381/118615, prepared by Field Rescoe.

<sup>7</sup> RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73; and “The Juba River,” KNA: MC/Coast/461. McGregor, Ross W., 9 June 1914.

<sup>8</sup> In using the term Somali exceptionalism, I am arguing that British officials understood Somalis to be a unique population. Unlike other “natives,” the British officials believed that Somalis possessed noble qualities that made them innately superior to other Africans. I argue that such perceptions themselves are laced with racial prejudice that favored the lighter skinned and more “European” Somali over other darker skinned peoples.

<sup>9</sup> “Correspondence from Senior Commissioner H. Hastings Horne at Kismayu to the Chief Native Commissioner at Nairobi,” KNA: MC/Coast/470. Hastings Horne, 30 October 1922.

<sup>10</sup> “An Extract from a letter from Sir P. Girouard to S. of St. Crewe dated 6 VIII 10.” NA: WO 106/251, P. Girouard, 49.

in 1902.<sup>11</sup> In 1910, though, the British were facing pressure from the Italian and Ethiopian governments to secure the province's borders, as well as from Colonial Office officials in Nairobi who wanted to prevent further westward expansion of Somalis, which was destabilizing neighboring Tanaland province. There was also a growing demand amongst British officials in Jubaland and European planters to stimulate greater agricultural development along the lower Juba River, which was viewed as a site of great economic potential.<sup>12</sup>

Girouard's enactment of a forward policy proved to be a double-edged sword that necessitated increased and sustained British involvement in Jubaland. As Cashmore points out:

if a policy of disarmament was imposed, then the situation demanded the protection of the disarmed tribes against their enemies over the frontier. The whole forward policy proved to be a greedy quick sands, not content with an arm or a leg, it must swallow all. More and more men and money had to be committed to the Frontier region straining the limited resources of the Protectorate.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, far from easing the financial difficulties of the EAP, the forward policy actually put further strain on the British. Garrisons had to be maintained and several expeditions undertaken to suppress Somali opposition to British policy. P.C. Salkeld, writing to the Chief Secretary in Nairobi three years after the enactment of a forward policy, expressed his concerns regarding the new policy:

[The] main problem checking movement by Somalis and eventual disarmament [is that it is] absolutely impossible to stand still in country like Jubaland where there is no such thing as a separate issue. Every point that crops up is dependent on another and we must either get more and more involved or retire. The latter of course is impossible.<sup>14</sup>

Still, the initial British occupation of the interior was swift and without incident. In 1910 British forces easily occupied Afmadu, prompting the acting Provincial Commissioner J.O.W. Hope to remark that "all the chiefs expressed their delight at the idea of British occupation of the country with the exception of

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<sup>11</sup> Recall that Sir Eliot questioned whether Jubaland could ever become profitable. See "Decypher No. 87." NA: FO 2/456. *Africa: East Coast, From Sir C.N.E. Eliot, Mainland Series, Telegrams Paraphrase, 1901*. C. Eliot, 29 April 1901, 149; and "March 1902 - Eliot's Remarks on Province." RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 46.

<sup>12</sup> "European Settlers on Juba River." RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73.

<sup>13</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," 421.

<sup>14</sup> "P.C. Jubaland to Chief Secretary," RH: MSS. Afr.583, R.E. Salkeld, 77.

the [Mohamed Zobeir]. They are all for a quiet life.”<sup>15</sup> However, Somali enthusiasm towards British occupation—real or not—was short-lived. British attempts to disarm Somalis and curtail raids were met with opposition that required coercion to suppress.

When the British reoccupied the interior after seven years of abandonment, colonial officials found themselves in a quandary regarding the Marehan sub-clan.<sup>16</sup> Previous contact between British administrators and the Marehan was minimal at best—the British never exercised control over the northern frontier region in which the sub-clan lived. After the British withdrew from the interior of Jubaland, the Marehan had steadily augmented their strength by raiding their neighbors, procuring rifles, and absorbing newly immigrated Marehan from neighboring Ethiopian and Italian territory.<sup>17</sup> As the interior was reoccupied, colonial officers were immediately confronted by the strength of the Marehan. Pleas from neighboring Somali sub-clans for the British to stop Marehan raids only exacerbated the problem. For P.C. Hope, subduing the Marehan was the central issue in Jubaland. He argued to Nairobi that:

There are 3 questions which will have to be dealt with. First and most important now is the question of the Marehan which if taken in hand at once will not be a very difficult matter. Until this is done, the position of the political officers on the frontier will be almost impossible. Gurrah and the Gowen are continually complaining of raids made by Marehan and the Political Officer has not been in a position to do anything. His only answer is telling them to wait.<sup>18</sup>

In order to effectively assert control over Jubaland, Hope felt that the Marehan needed to be disarmed; British intelligence established that the Marehan were supposedly in contact with and had some of the “Mullah’s” men in their mists.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Hope to General Secretary, Nairobi,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, J.O.W. Hope, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1910, pp.75. Hope appears to have temporary from 1909 to 1910, shared the role of P.C. with R.E. Salkeld. Later from 1914 to 1916, Hope would again become the P.C. of Jubaland. See Cashmore “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” Appendix: Principal Office Holders, 1895 -1918.

<sup>16</sup> The Marehan were an Ogaden sub-clan that occupied the northeastern portion of Jubaland. See Appendix 1 for the layout of Jubaland province and its districts.

<sup>17</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 419, 422.

<sup>18</sup> “Hope to General Secretary, Nairobi,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, J.O.W. Hope, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1910, 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid; Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 400; and “Memorandum on the Administration of Jubaland,” KNA: MC/Coast/470, Capt. H. D. Tupper Carey.

Despite the apparent crisis posed by the Marehan, measures against them did not garner much support in Nairobi until 1912. In that year, the British finally installed garrisons in the region and started patrols in an effort to counter Marehan raids.<sup>20</sup> There was still reluctance among British administrators to commit themselves to an expensive “punitive expedition.” Events in Serenli, however, forced the British hand. In early 1913 a sub-section of the Marehan, the Fareh Ugan, abducted a neighboring group of Aulihan called the Rer Ali and refused British demands to free them.<sup>21</sup> In response, the British called for a general disarmament of the Marehan. A 1914 campaign did succeed in the near complete disarmament of the Marehan, although they remained unconquered.<sup>22</sup> However, the campaign and the two years spent combating the Marehan had committed the British to a slippery—and costly—slope of intervention and occupation in Jubaland. After the Marehan expedition, the British were increasingly drawn into closer contact with the Somalis as they struggled to effectively govern Jubaland. Beyond this, the British disarmament of the Marehan created a power shift in northern Jubaland that culminated in an uprising by the Aulihan sub-clan two years later.

Since the turn of the twentieth century, growing numbers of Aulihan had crossed the Juba River and joined with the Aulihan sultan Abdurrahman Mursaal.<sup>23</sup> The growing population of Aulihan created friction between neighboring Ogaden sub-clans as the Aulihan pushed into their territory. With Marehan power reduced after British disarmament of them, the Aulihan took to raiding the Marehan. The Marehan inevitably counter-raided. In August 1915, the Serenli District Commissioner F.E. Elliott attempted to mediate the dispute between the two resulted in an order for the Aulihan to cease their raids against the Marehan. However, in January of the following year, the Aulihan defied Elliott and

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<sup>20</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 424.

<sup>21</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 425; and Memorandum on the Administration of Jubaland, KNA: MC/Coast/470.

<sup>22</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 425-428.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 439. The Aulihan were a Darod sub-clan that settled along the northern fringes of the Gosha district. After 1910, large numbers of Aulihan from Italian territory entered Jubaland and joined the Jubaland Aulihan at the request of Mursaal.

again raided the Marehan, taking 700 camels and killing 9 men.<sup>24</sup> D.C. Elliott attempted to intervene and demanded the return of the stolen stock, compensation for the Marehan, and the punishment of those involved in the raid. But Abdurrahman Mursaal preempted British intrusion by leading a successful night attack of 1,000 men on the British garrison at Serenli on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. During the assault, Elliott was killed along with 65 askaris, the town was burned down and ammunition, 60 rifles, a maxim gun, and the government safe were seized.<sup>25</sup> The Aulihan attack on Serenli was the worst defeat suffered by the British during their thirty-year rule of Jubaland, and its success threw the British government in Nairobi into a panic.

British troops were withdrawn from Serenli and colonial officials worried that additional Somali sub-clans would join the Aulihan, leading to a general revolt.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, the Aulihan followed up their successful attack on Serenli by raiding the Gosha on 21 February, 1916, soliciting other Ogadens to join them and seeking aid from Sayyid Muhammad Abdullah Hassan, who was revolting in nearby British Somaliland.<sup>27</sup> Because British attention was primarily devoted to fighting World War I and the Germans in East Africa, and because there was a fear that the uprising could become widespread, colonial officials did not attempt to seek immediate reprisal.<sup>28</sup> Instead, British officials waited until September 1917 to reoccupy Serenli and conduct an expedition against the Aulihan.<sup>29</sup> Active operations continued against

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<sup>24</sup> "Precis for the week ending for Saturday, February 26th," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, Author unknown, 109.

<sup>25</sup> "The Somali Unrest in the Northern Territories," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1916, T.S. Thomas, 103.

<sup>26</sup> "Report on Unrest in Jubaland." KNA: MC/Coast/452, E. Power, 29<sup>th</sup> February 1916; and "Precis for the week ending for Saturday, February 26th," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, Author unknown, 109-111.

<sup>27</sup> "Precis for the week ending for Saturday, February 26th" RH: MSS Afr.s.583 and "Precis for May 20<sup>th</sup>," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, Author Unknown. The former document mentions that the Aulihan go on to raid the Gosha after their attack on Serenli. Unfortunately the document does not go into further detail as the extent or the aftermath of this raid. However, this raid is representative of a larger pattern of raids conducted against the Gosha. As the previous chapters point out, the Gosha were constantly under threat from Somali raids against their territory. Additionally, the Aulihan occupied the region directly to the north of Gosha district, which suggests that the Gosha victims of this raid were more than likely those who lived along the border between Gosha and Aulihan territory. Besteman in her oral histories collected during her field work in Somalia notes that the Gosha "vividly" recalled these Aulihan raids, which apparently continued until the British reestablished control over the region, see Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 87.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson, George L., "British Perspectives on Aulihan Somali Unrest in the East Africa Protectorate, 1915–1918." *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1-2 (1999), 26-27.

<sup>29</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," 441-442.

the Aulihan until March 1918, when Abdurrahman Mursaal fled into Italian territory and the remaining Aulihan capitulated, surrendered their rifles, and paid a substantial fine to the British government.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike previous campaigns, this expedition against the Aulihan was immensely successful, prompting the commander of the expedition Major Porcelli to state that:

The general effect of the recent operations against the Aulihan on the remaining Somali tribes in Jubaland, would appear excellent. No tribe had previously received such punishment at the hands of the Government, nor had such a big stock fine ever been imposed and successfully collected before.<sup>31</sup>

He goes on to add that,

I would urge that all rifles, at present in the possession of the different Somali tribes in Jubaland, be confiscated at an early date. Owing to the excellent effect of the recent operations, no great difficulty in doing so should be experienced.<sup>32</sup>

For Porcelli, the success of the operation put the British into an advantageous and unfamiliar position.

The example made of the Aulihan could be used to coerce Somalis into disarmament without extended conflict, unlike the earlier disarmament of the Marehan.

The success of the Aulihan expedition also placed the British into a position that administrators had previously tried to avoid—a full, expensive occupation of the interior. Colonial officials were now more engaged than ever. Somalis were no longer at the periphery of British policies in the province; they were in the center. Disarmament and mitigation of raids and controlling migration became the primary concerns of administrators, while controlling Somali migration in particular became *the* central issue for British administrators after 1918. Such population movement destabilized the region, threatened security, and went counter to British attempts to uphold colonial boundaries. One official

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<sup>30</sup> “Report dated March 1918,” NA: WO 276/502, *Jubaland and District*, Major Porcelli from HQ 5 KAR, 106 (1) – 106 (9). Interestingly this document also mentions that when Abdurrahman Mursaal fled Jubaland he was accompanied by six family members and followers. Of the six individuals listed, a Gosha known as Ali is included. While the document fails to mention Ali any further, his flight to neighboring Italian Somaliland along with Mursaaai complicates how we should view the Gosha. While most of the preceding chapter and later portions of this chapter highlight how the Gosha were a singular people. The presence of Ali amongst the leader of the Aulihan uprising illustrates that some Gosha still identified and aligned themselves with Somalis.

<sup>31</sup> “Report dated March 1918,” NA: WO 276/502, 106 (8)-106 (9).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 106 (9).

commenting on the potential danger of unmitigated immigration from neighboring Italian and Ethiopian territory remarked, “most [of] these new-comers arrive penniless they find it necessary to rob and loot in order to get themselves up in stock.”<sup>33</sup> The increased migrations of the Marehan and the Aulihan into Jubaland and the subsequent increase in raids required British intervention. As British officials exercised more control over Somalis, both groups were brought into close proximity and interacted more frequently. I argue that this improved interaction between the two groups was critical to the consolidation of a Somali identity. British officials understood and treated Somalis differently than the other inhabitants in Jubaland, which, I claim, reinforced a Somali self-perception of exceptionalism.

Development schemes, another strategy of British policy in Jubaland during the later colonial period, also had a large impact on identity in the province. In as early as 1893, British officials were aware of the profitability of the lower Juba River Valley, in 1902, Gosha district was retained by Sir Charles Eliot primarily because of its economic potential.<sup>34</sup> While there had been efforts to exploit the fertility of the region in the early colonial period, it was not until the enactment of the forward policy that development and agricultural projects were enthusiastically pursued by the British. These projects, which were dependent on the coercion of Gosha labor, came to define British policy towards the group and reinforced earlier perceptions of their supposed laziness, lack of intelligence, and inferiority in comparison to Somalis.

Beginning in 1910 with the East African (Jubaland) Cotton Growers Association, large land concessions were doled out to European planters.<sup>35</sup> The following year several additional plantations

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<sup>33</sup> “Report from Provincial Commissioner, Kismayu,” NA: WO 276/502, *Jubaland and District*, Author unknown, 3 May 1918, 153 (2). Although the author of this report is unknown, the report is more than likely authored by J.O.W. Hope who was at the time the P.C. of Jubaland.

<sup>34</sup> On the early perceptions of the Juba’s profitability see Dundas, “Expedition up the Jub River through Somali-Land, East Africa,” 214-215; and “The Imperial British East Africa Company: Report of the Court of Directors to the Shareholders,” NA: FO 2/57, 293. On Eliot’s retention of Gosha see “Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir Eliot.” NA: FO 2/447, 2; “March 1902 - Eliot’s Remarks on Province.” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 46; “Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908” NA: WO 276/502, 0004/17; and “Eliot to the Marques of Landsdowne,” NA: FO 2/447, 309-312.

<sup>35</sup> Company No: 118615; East African (Jubaland) Cotton Growers Association Ltd.” NA: BT 34/2381/118615.



were established—three of which are listed as having over one hundred acres under cultivation.<sup>36</sup>

Primarily, these newly created plantations focused on cotton production, which is indicative of a larger process occurring throughout colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. As Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts point out:

The cotton textile industry was a central consumer production sector in all of the European nations that scrambled to control African territories in the late nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, cotton held a primary place in European colonial agricultural policies throughout Africa. Europeans' efforts to promote cotton production in Africa were linked to the development of industrial capitalism and to imperfections in the world supply of raw materials.<sup>37</sup>

Colonial officials, aware of the demand from European markets, encouraged cotton cultivation in the lands they governed. However, the production of cotton was a labor-intensive enterprise that required large numbers of workers who, because of labor shortages, often had to be forced to work on European plantations.<sup>38</sup> British-controlled Jubaland was no exception—planters relied on the local, sedentary, agricultural, and formerly enslaved Goshu to provide the labor for their plantations.<sup>39</sup> Procuring Goshu labor though, proved to be a difficult task. Plantations in Jubaland could not consistently secure adequate numbers of Goshu, which resulted in the immigration of other peoples from BEAP to supply labor.<sup>40</sup>

Facing labor and irrigation issues, the cotton plantations in Jubaland were largely unsuccessful and by 1914 many had failed. In 1912 the Jubaland Cotton Growers Association went bankrupt, while other smaller plantations and farms were deserted.<sup>41</sup> British officials, however, were not ready to give up on the profitability of cotton and other agricultural production along the Juba. McGregor-Ross, in a

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<sup>36</sup> "Notes on Gobwen Town – 1911," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73.

<sup>37</sup> Isaacman, Allen and Richard Roberts. "Introduction," in *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*. (London: James Currey, 1995), 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

<sup>39</sup> "Notes on Gobwen Town – 1911," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73.

<sup>40</sup> "European Settlers on the Juba River," RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 73 states that the local labor supply is "small" and that 60 Kikuyu had to be brought in to work a plantation in Jubaland. Unfortunately, I could not find any additional evidence to explore how the Goshu reacted to plantation labor schemes.

<sup>41</sup> Company No: 118615; East African (Jubaland) Cotton Growers Association Ltd." NA: BT 34/2381/118615; and "The Juba River," KNA: MC/Coast/461, McGregor-Ross W., 9 June 1914, 3.

1914 report to Nairobi, reiterated the agricultural potential of the region, arguing that “the conditions in the Juba valley are quite special and the Government would be justified in imposing special requirements there.”<sup>42</sup> The blame for the lack of agricultural production along the Juba McGregor argued lay primarily on European planters who were squatting on prime land:

the broad flat bank on the English side [of the river] is nevertheless an area of great potential value. It is, indeed, so valuable that European landholders should not be permitted to leave it underutilized after acquisition [sic] as they may do at present.<sup>43</sup>

McGregor-Ross’ criticism does not stop here, though; he goes on to indict the Gosha as well.

During the later colonial period the Gosha, in addition to being used as plantation laborers, became the principal targets of development schemes. British policy, influenced by perceptions of the Gosha’s supposed laziness, backwardness, and slave past, concentrated on co-opting their labor and encouraged the Gosha to produce cash crops.<sup>44</sup> In his report, McGregor-Ross disparages the Gosha for the inadequacy of their “native” cultivation methods, which he argues have failed to produce considerable trade yields.<sup>45</sup> Despite the criticism, McGregor-Ross highlights the importance of the Gosha population to future development in the region. “It is eminently to the advantage of our Administration,” he wrote, “and equally to that of white planters that the population of the river-side villages should not be evicted and removed elsewhere.”<sup>46</sup> Regarding “native irrigation and cultivation, I should be interested to see Government pressure being applied for the adoption of more advanced methods than are at present exhibited.”<sup>47</sup> For McGregor-Ross the solution to the lack of agricultural production in Jubaland was coercion and exploitation of Gosha labor, which was vital to development in the province.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 7.

<sup>45</sup> “The Juba River,” KNA: MC/Coast/461, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 5.

Despite McGregor-Ross' report, British officials appear to have had little success in co-opting the Gosha who did not fully accept British attempts to coerce their labor. Colonial documents repeatedly mention the "laziness" of the Gosha and their unwillingness to adopt "more advanced" European techniques and cultivate cash crops.<sup>48</sup> This suggests that, although the British attempted to regulate Gosha production and labor, the Gosha resisted by retaining "traditional" agricultural practices and refusing to fully participate in British schemes.<sup>49</sup> In a 1914 report, assistant D.C. Lamb's laments what he perceived as "the increasing laziness and subsequent indebtedness of the younger generation."<sup>50</sup> Four years later P.C. Hope, commenting on the need to improve production, argued that "if properly organized I am convinced that Gosha can be made a large food supply district. The Gosha are lazy, but I think only want proper supervising."<sup>51</sup> British officials like Lamb and Hope were surprised that the Gosha, when given the opportunity engage in wage labor and produce cash crops, instead adhered to previous methods of cultivation. For colonial administrators, given Gosha opposition to schemes that were supposedly in their "best interests," the only rational explanation for the Gosha's resistance was racial. The Gosha were "lazy" because it was in their *nature*; they did not extensively grow cash crops or produce surpluses because they could not understand the greater reason for doing so.

The failure of British development schemes replicated early perceptions of colonial officials regarding the Gosha. The British attempted to exploit the Gosha population in Jubaland because of their

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<sup>48</sup> MacDougall, K. "Sub-commissioner MacDougall to Sir C. Eliot from Kismayu, August 7, 1901." In F.O. 2/450, 121; "Notes on Province of Jubaland dated May 1908" NA: WO 276/502, 0004/17; "Notes on Jubaland" NA: WO 276/502, 0002/11; "The Juba River," KNA: MC/Coast/461; and "Report on native customs, Gobwen," KNA: PC/Coast/1/12/121, by Asst. DC Kismayu Lamb, 25 September 1913, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Besteman notes that these "traditional" practices were well suited for the Juba River valley and made use of three types of land that enabled the Gosha to mitigate risk of drought and crop failure. See Besteman, Catherine, "Local Land Use Strategies and Outsider Politics: Title Registration in the Middle Jubba Valley," in *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia*, 29-36.

<sup>50</sup> "Report on native customs, Gobwen," KNA: PC/Coast/1/12/121, 9. The document goes on to list several crimes and how each one is to be tried and sentenced. Surprisingly, laziness is listed as a punishable offence at Village, Divisional, and District level courts.

<sup>51</sup> "Report from Provincial Commissioner, Kismayu," WO 276/502, 153 (1). Hope's comments draw interesting parallels to Frederick Cooper's analysis of ex-slave communities along the Swahili Coast. According to Cooper, British colonial officials expected ex-slaves to readily engage in wage labor and produce goods for market. However, these communities preferred work how they wished and resisted efforts to improve production, much to the surprise of British officials. See Cooper, Frederick. *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp 3-5, 148-152.

ancestry and supposedly docility. When British expectations were not met, blame was laid on Gosha laziness, incompetence, and their inferior nature. Moreover, these schemes continued earlier British policies that administered and treated the Gosha differently than neighboring Somalis—the Gosha were treated as a distinct, and inferior, people. British development schemes propagated these perceptions and marginalized the Gosha population. Meanwhile, British policy towards Somalis during the same period consisted primarily of disarming and controlling migration. While this marked a significant difference in earlier policy towards the Somalis, the perceptions of British officials changed little. In fact, the improved interaction between the Somalis and administrators altered British views towards the Somalis, shaped the treatment of Somalis, and sustained a belief in Somali exceptionalism.

#### *Waning British Colonialism: 'Somalitis' and Somali Racial Categorization*

In Jubaland, indirect rule seemed to foster what T.H.R. Cashmore called “Somalitis” in which colonial officials were accused of becoming *too* close to the Somalis over whom they ruled.<sup>52</sup> According to Cashmore, close proximity between British officials and Somalis could lead to favoritism and inhibit governance. Given the perceptions of many colonial officials in Jubaland, it would appear that several of them had contracted “Somalitis.” British administrators understood and treated Somalis in a fundamentally different and preferential way than they did other peoples they ruled. Officials not only governed Somalis, they respected and admired them. It was this admiration that carried over and was the force behind a 1922 debate amongst British officials to redefine the racial categorization of Somalis, and ultimately to consider placing them all under one administration. An analysis of this debate, sparked by a 1922 petition from Darod elders, illustrates how British viewed the racial identity of Somalis vis-à-vis the Gosha.

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<sup>52</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 429.

Colonial officers in Africa were heavily reliant on the cooperation of local elites and colonial intermediaries to carry out the day-to-day administration of the colonial state.<sup>53</sup> In a large and expansive frontier province like Jubaland, this reliance was even more pronounced. British colonial officials in Jubaland were dependent on their relationship with subordinates and local leaders to effectively govern. Coupled with British perceptions of the Somalis, the province became a breeding ground for the corruption of the colonial official. In Jubaland, according to Cashmore,

A series of unpleasant shocks had developed a reluctant admiration for the Somali on the part of officers and some awareness of the dangers of becoming too much of a chameleon. For on the frontier, environment was stronger than the individuals, and the bug of 'somalitis' [sic] more prevalent. The danger was not that the European had too little sympathy with the Somali but that he would acquire, like Jenner, too much.<sup>54</sup>

A legacy of Somali resistance altered policy towards and perceptions of Somalis who were treated with respect by administrators. There was a risk of becoming too close to Somalis—the judgment of British officials could become clouded by their affinity for Somalis. In fact, both Jenner's death in 1901 and Lt. Elliott's death in 1916 were attributed, accordingly to other colonial officials, to their blunder of trusting Somalis.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the deaths of Jenner and Elliott, British administrators repeatedly treated Somalis with deference, and in the process created and reproduced a belief in Somali exceptionalism. Unlike the Goshu and other "African" peoples in BEAP, Somalis were perceived as intelligent, adaptable, and independent, and—owing to their supposed Arab ancestry and strict adherence to Islam—were understood to be a unique and superior people. In addition, British views of the Somali were deeply racialized, assigning European characteristics to Somalis to justify preferential treatment towards them. In 1916 Martin Mahony, serving with Somalis askaris described them as such,

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<sup>53</sup> Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*. 131-134, 165-171; and Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 52-55, 88-97.

<sup>54</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate," 429-430.

<sup>55</sup> "Jenner's Murder: Narrative of Sergeant Mohamad Egal," RH: MSS.Afr.s.583, 36; and "Intelligence," RH: MSS.Afr.s.583, 100-101.

Personally, I don't want to serve with any other brand of troops. The Somalis are not natives in any sense of the word. They are endowed with as good a brain as any European. They are inclined to be rather rogues, [and] want watching, but as soldiers they are superior to anything else out here.<sup>56</sup>

For Mahony, Somalis were more European than “native,” implying that they were not like their inferior African counterparts.

The success of the Aulihan campaign and the resulting change in proximity between the British and Somalis only strengthened British views regarding the uniqueness of Somalis. After 1918, policy towards Somalis shifted from one primarily centered on controlling Somalis to one that could solve the “Somali problem,” or how to properly govern and incorporate Somalis into the colonial apparatus.<sup>57</sup> In 1918, British officials, following a massive and successful disarmament campaign, started to consider the possibility of a Somali Reserve, whereby all hinterland Somalis in Jubaland and neighboring British provinces would be brought under a single administration.<sup>58</sup> The goal of this policy modification was simple: improving the administration of Somalis through the creation of an entity design to govern to Somalis. For colonial officials infected with Somalitis—primarily those at the district and provincial level—it was the solution for the Somali problem.<sup>59</sup> The proposed creation of a Somali Reserve was about more than just creating a separate administration that could effectively govern Somalis; it was a debate over Somali exceptionalism. It was about separating and marking the Somalis off as a distinct race that needed to be governed separately. Calls for the creation of a Somali Reserve, though, did not reach their pinnacle until 1922, when a petition signed by nine Darod elders sparked a debate between

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<sup>56</sup> “Private Letter, Martin Mahony to his father,” RH: MSS. Afr. s. 487, by Martin Mahony, 1 Feb. 1922, quoted in Simpson, George L., “British Perspectives on Aulihan Somali Unrest in the East Africa Protectorate, 1915–1918.” *Northeast African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1-2 (1999), 36, fn. 26. Unfortunately was unable to see the original of this document, but Mahony’s comments are particularly useful for highlighting the racialized perceptions of British officials.

<sup>57</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 442-444.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> KNA: MC/Coast/470, *Correspondence and memoranda re administration of Somali tribes, between and by Capt. H. D. Tupper Carey, AgDC; [T. G. ?] Jennings, AgDC; H. H. Hastings Horne, PgSC; CNC. 1 May 1921 to 30 October, 1922.*

Kismayu and Nairobi that I argue highlights the maturation of racialized perceptions in Jubaland, and one that offers a glimpse at how colonial policy shaped identity.<sup>60</sup>

The Darod petition momentarily brought the Somali problem to the forefront of colonial issues in both Kismayu and Nairobi. Exactly one week after the Darod petition reached Kismayu, D.C. Jennings sent a letter to Jubaland's P.C. H. Hastings Horne arguing that:

Under the circumstances there appears one course open [...] by that I mean introducing an Ordinance making provision for administering Somali Tribes, such Ordinance would authorize taxation, Tribal Councils, Headmen and Chiefs and define their duties and powers: the word Somali would appear in place of the word Native. Thus the Somali would be taken out of the jurisdiction of Native Authority Ordinance and placed under a similar ordinance of their own.<sup>61</sup>

Jennings is advocating the creation of a single administration strictly for the governance of Somalis. More importantly, he understands Somalis to be a separate "non-native," and thus non-African and non-Black, racial category. Given Cashmore's assessment that local level officials were prone to "Somalitis," Jennings' comments should not come as a surprise. As the D.C. for Kismayu District, Jennings interacted frequently with Darod Somalis, which likely shaped his validation of Somali exceptionalism. P.C. Horne's views regarding the Somali problem echoed Jennings. He writes,

My view is that the Darod Somali must come under one administration given this and I will stake my reputation that in a year the country will be ruled mainly through Councils. I cannot discover or fathom why the Tana River Somali was placed under a separate jurisdiction. The first principle of natives Administrations is to bring all the tribe together.<sup>62</sup>

Despite his Horne's naivety regarding the history of Somali migrations into neighboring Tanaland, his comments support Jennings' conviction that Somalis should be governed by a single administration.

Most surprisingly, though, are the comments of Governor Sir Robert Coryndon who backed Jenner's and Horne's conclusions,

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<sup>60</sup> "Letter from Darod Somali Elders," KNA: MC/Coast/470. *Correspondence re Darod Ismail tribe, between CNC; Shiek Sultan Mohamed Sherwa and other Darod Ismail leaders*, 1 August 1922. This petition is a critical document that I will investigate in much greater detail in the next section.

<sup>61</sup> "Correspondence from D.C. Jenner to P.C. H. Hastings Horne," KNA: MC/Coast/470, Jennings, 8 May 1922, 2.

<sup>62</sup> "Correspondence from P.C. H. Hastings Horne to Chief Native Commissioner, Nairobi," KNA: MC/Coast/470, H. Hastings Horne, 30 October 1922, 1-2.

The general concensus [sic] of opinion of officers who have any knowledge of the Somalis and more especially the Abdullahs is that it would be a mistake to administer the Somalis in any other way than as a whole. i.e. that all Somalis should be under one control and not separated and that the farther they can be kept away from the Tana River the better for all concerned.<sup>63</sup>

While Coryndon cites practical reasons for the creation of a separate Somali administration, he also supports Somali exceptionalism. By citing the expertise of local officers, those most prone to infatuation with Somalis, Coryndon reinforced Somali's unique racial categorization. Thus, from the district level to Nairobi, there was support throughout the British colonial administration to establish a Somali Reserve and redefine Somali racial status. Far from simply administering local peoples and instituting policies, British colonial officials—through racialized perceptions and preferential treatment—were agents in the alteration of Somali identity in Jubaland province.

The British never did create a Somali Reserve, nor did they enact a special racial classification for Somalis. Any debate regarding the merging of Somalis in Jubaland with those in other provinces ended when, after extensive negotiations, the Anglo-Italian Treaty was signed on 15 July, 1924, which formally ceded Jubaland to Italians.<sup>64</sup> However, the debate over a separate categorization for Somalis did continue in Kenya for several years thereafter.<sup>65</sup> Still, British perceptions and policies had a profound impact on identity in Jubaland; they supported and sustained a conviction that Somalis and Goshas were fundamentally different peoples. Influenced by Somali resistance and their own racial biases, the British attributed supposedly superior "European" qualities to Somalis. During the later colonial period, improved interaction between British officials and Somalis consolidated a belief of Somali

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<sup>63</sup> "Papers of Sir Robert T. Coryndon, 1921-24." RH: MSS Afr. s. 633, date unknown, box 5, folder 6, 4. The precise date of this source is unknown. The document does cite a December 1922 handing over report and the letters that follow this document all range between February and March of 1924, suggesting that this document was compiled some time in between Dec 1923 and March of 1924.

<sup>64</sup> Jubaland may have been ceded to the Italians in 1925, but the issue over the racial status of the Somalis continued on in the Northern Frontier Province of Kenya until its independence. For more information see, Turton, E. R. "Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political Activity in Kenya 1893-1960." *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972): 119-143.

<sup>65</sup> "The Work of the Jubaland Boundary Commission," NA: CO 533/374/1, L.N. King, 7 May 1918, 38-44; and "Anglo-Italian Treaty," NA: WO 181/164, *Boundary between Kenya and Italian Somaliland (Jubaland Boundary). December 1904 to April 1925*, 20-22.



exceptionalism and racial superiority amongst administrators. Somalis were administered differently than their Gosha counterparts, who were exploited for the entirety of British rule over the province. These separate experiences and treatment impacted Somali identity, which progressively became more exclusive and opposed to the “Gosha” under British colonial rule.

### ***The Somali and the Gosha: The Impact of Colonial Rule on Perceptions of Self in Jubaland Province***

Eighteen ninety-five was an important year in Jubaland’s history. Not only did the year mark the establishment of the BEAP, it signified a period of raised migration by Bantu ex-slaves into the region. According to Menkhaus in 1905, Italian officers started to gradually liberate slaves along the Shebelle River and Benadir Coasts.<sup>66</sup> Many of these newly freed slaves, instead of settling near their former masters, headed to the Juba River valley and established villages along its banks.<sup>67</sup> As was pointed out in the last chapter, these groups were more Somalized than their predecessors, and settled in the northern and frontier areas of the Gosha region in closer proximity to Somalis. During the pre-colonial period the migration of these ex-slaves helped to augment the power of surrounding Somalis who readily adopted these groups into clan structures and forged patron-client relationships with them.<sup>68</sup> However, the size—numbering at least 20,000—and rate at which these newly freed slaves arrived in Jubaland altered pre-colonial settlement patterns and interactions between the Somali and the riverine ex-slaves.<sup>69</sup> Whereas previously these Bantu ex-slaves could assimilate through porous Somali adoptive institutions, Somalis increasingly saw the riverine population as a threat.

It was during this period of fluctuation that the British established and consolidated their rule in Jubaland. Influenced by racialized perceptions, British officials in Jubaland administered and understood

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<sup>66</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 111-112.

<sup>67</sup> Besteman, “Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia,” 109.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-120.

<sup>69</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 73. Besteman notes that the newly freed slaves settling along the Juba “at the turn of the twentieth century must have at least equaled Menkhaus’s estimate of twenty thousand for the 1865-95 period.” Thus, the riverine population possibly doubled in less than a decade, which posed acute problems for Somali and Gosha dynamics.

Somalis and the Goshas in fundamentally different ways. Colonial rule became a catalyst for the alteration of identity in the province; it helped alter how the inhabitants of Jubaland viewed one another. This is particularly true for Somalis who utilized race to validate preexisting notions of their superiority and construct a “Somali” identity. British colonial policy helped the various divisions of Somali peoples in Jubaland to see one another as members of the same group. Race became the foundation for an emerging “Somali” identity based supposedly on Arab descent. Whereas previously identity was fluid, conditional, and multifaceted, colonial policy created racial barriers between the Goshas and the Somalis. As a result, Somali identity became progressively more rigid and defined in opposition to what Somalis were not—the Goshas. Meanwhile, the Goshas were marginalized from dominant Somali social and political structures and were perceived by Somalis and the British as the inferior other.

*‘We Prefer Death:’ the Coalescing of a Somali Identity in Jubaland*

Increased Bantu migration into Jubaland at the turn of the twentieth century altered previous relationships between Somalis and the riverine communities. Lacking ties with the previously established and ethnically defined villages along the Juba, these new migrants settled at the frontiers of the Goshas region in close proximity to Somali sub-clans. While in pre-colonial Jubaland these newcomers could enter fluid Somali adoptive systems, during the early twentieth century these institutions were changing. Somalis in Jubaland gradually turned inward, and ultimately started to exclude and other the “Goshas.” I argue that this inwardness amongst Somalis occurred due to two factors: internal pressures within Somali society to define Somaliness and the external influence of colonial policies to categorize and administer the Somalis as a racially superior people—both of which came together to alter and modify Somali identity.

From the late eighteenth century until 1912, the Darod Somalis slowly expanded westward from the east bank of the Juba River to occupy the territory between the Juba and Tana River; a movement

that was part of a nearly continuous migration since the 1600s that left Somalis as the dominant group in the Horn of Africa.<sup>70</sup> This successful expansion led to the subjugation of large numbers non-Somali peoples—Orma, Boran, Boni, and Bantu, among others. Frequently these groups were incorporated in occupational castes, entered—or were forced—into client relationships, and could access Somali social and political structures.<sup>71</sup> Given the recent success of Somali expansion and the increased migration of ex-slaves into Jubaland, substantial numbers of non-Somali peoples were now attempting accessing Somali clan structures. The influx of non-Somali groups blurred Somaliness—the practice of pastoralism, adherence to Islam, and an alleged Arab ancestry— and altered previous Somali clan structures and institutions. Meanwhile, several riverine communities in the lower and middle Juba River valley had become self-sufficient over the course of the late nineteenth century and were forging new identities that challenged Somali regional hegemony.<sup>72</sup> The *Mushunguli*, Nassib Bunda’s riverine confederation, and several other independent ethnically-defined villages became a challenge to Somali dominance in the region. I argue that the influx of non-Somalis, coupled with the self-sufficiency of older riverine communities posed a threat to Somali superiority. In response, to these internal pressures Somalis redefined Somaliness to exclude those perceived as outsiders.<sup>73</sup>

British colonial rule in Jubaland was established precisely when the region was most in flux. The Darod population had only recently—within the previous fifty years—conquered the region, and while the oldest riverine ex-slave communities in Gosha were established in the 1840s, new villages were

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<sup>70</sup> See Lewis, “Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa,” 225-227; Lewis, Herbert S. “The Origins of the Galla and Somali.” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1966), 36-38.; Turton, E. R. “Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa,” 529-532; and Castagno, A. A. “The Somali-Kenyan Controversy: Implications for the Future,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jul., 1964), 167-169.

<sup>71</sup> See Luling, “The other Somali-Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society” and Kelly, “Orma and Somali Culture Sharing in the Juba-Tana Region.”

<sup>72</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somaila's lower Jubba Valley,” 128-150.

<sup>73</sup> See, Bravman, Bill. *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800-1950*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), whose analysis of hilltop communities in Taita exhibits how ethnicity and identity were created, renegotiated, and altered to shape the needs of Taita elders. Moreover, Bravman highlights how identity was altered to counteract threats that might undermine the fabricated Taita identity.

being created regularly.<sup>74</sup> In 1895 Somali institutions, hierarchies, and traditions, far from entrenched, were open for negotiation and identity was fluid. However, British colonial rule, by replicating a belief of Somali exceptionalism, administering Somalis in a preferential way, and promoting a separate racial identity for Somalis, altered this fluidity. The Gosha became marked as an inferior and exploitable population. For Somalis, who were attempting to redefine Somaliness, colonial policy provided the rhetoric and racial framework for coalescing identity and excluding others. While it is difficult to gauge the extent to which Somalis internalized British perceptions and policies, the 1922 Darod Somali petition demonstrates how Somali identity was being formulated in the waning years of British rule.

In the 1922 petition, the Darod Somalis made several appeals for policy change, such as calls for improved education, the loosening of restrictions on migrations, and better water access.<sup>75</sup> These appeals though were not the Darod elder's primary concern. Instead, the petition concentrates on the Darod's opposition to the colony's Native Registration Ordinance and their categorization as a "native." For the Darod this classification combined Somalis with surrounding African peoples who the Somali viewed as inferior. Whether these Somalis had internalized colonial perceptions of race to make their appeal is debatable. But, the Darod's heavy reliance on racialized language to claim superiority over and distinction from "natives," suggests, at the very least, an internalization of Somali exceptionalism and an understanding of a greater "Somali" identity. The petition's use of the pronoun "we" demonstrates that these Darod Somalis believed that they were one people. The elders state, "We who are now living in whole [in] Jubaland and large portion of Tanaland and Northern Frontier Districts are descendents of same family and our treaty and rule is same."<sup>76</sup> These Darod understood every Somali in the northeast of BEAP to be of common descent; ancestry defined being Somali, and excluded others.

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<sup>74</sup> Lewis, "Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," 226; and Besteman, "Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia," 118-121.

<sup>75</sup> "Letter from Darod Somali Elders," KNA: MC/Coast/470.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 6.

This common descent from which these Darod drew commonality was strongly tied to an alleged Arab heritage. The Darod's primary opposition to the Native Registration Ordinance was its classification of Somalis as "native" as opposed to Asiatic. For the Darod, this classification threatened their claims to Arab ancestry and challenged a critical component of a coalescing Somali identity.<sup>77</sup> In opposition, the Darod Somalis stated:

As Europeans and many Asiatics, Egyptians and Boer of South Africa immigrated from Europe and Asia to Africa but they are still accounted with the Europeans and Asiatics at Home so are we also. We immigrated to Africa but we are Arab by generation and we beg this Government to treat us as the rest of Asiatics and the same rule apply to us also. [...] we are loyal subjects but we cannot accept this new regulation of slavery.<sup>78</sup>

These Somalis clearly believed that they were in fact Arabs and were from Arabia, which placed them into the Asiatic classification under the Native Registration Ordinance. For Somalis, being categorized as "native" was paramount to the denial of Arabness and, therefore, Somaliness. District Commissioner Jennings, noting Somalis opposition, stated "so long as the Somali was classified with the Arab he was satisfied, but as soon as separated; [he] has a grievance claiming to have lost status in the Mohamedan world."<sup>79</sup> While the degree to which other Arabs accepted Somalis as "Arab" is questionable, the Darod believed that they were part of a greater Arab and Islamic community that was threatened by their colonial categorization. Being classified as a "native" was not the issue; it was not being classified with Arabs and lumped together with African peoples that the Somalis opposed.

The preceding excerpt from the petition exhibits that the Darod equated being categorized as "native" as akin to slavery. As "natives," the Somali would be placed into the same category as

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<sup>77</sup> See, Turton, E. R. "Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political Activity in Kenya 1893-1960." *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 1, 1972, 127-135. Turton explores Somali opposition to colonial classification in this article, but his focus is on the Isaq Somalis, who had come to reside in and around Nairobi. Turton points out that for these Isaq Somalis their resistance to the Native Ordinance was both political and ideological. My reading of the Darod petition does not turn up any explicit political motives for their opposition. And this petition seems unconnected to the later controversy in Kenya over Somali racial categorization; the Darod here were speaking only for fellow Darod.

<sup>78</sup> "Letter from Darod Somali Elders," KNA: MC/Coast/470., 3-4.

<sup>79</sup> "Correspondence from D.C. Jenner to P.C. H. Hastings Horne," KNA: MC/Coast/470, 2.

surrounding Africans like the Gosha.<sup>80</sup> Many of these “Africans” were formerly enslaved by, or were clients to, Somalis. For the Darod, being categorized with these “slaves” was simply unacceptable; it undermined their superiority. Jennings, commenting on the petition, understood the greater implications of the category. He pointed out that “a Somali will never agree that Native means a Native of the country.”<sup>81</sup> To the Darod, “native” was more than an administrative classification; it was the difference between superiority and inferiority, master and slave, Arab and African, and, as I argue, Somali and the Gosha other.

The Darod’s opposition to being categorized as “native” demonstrates how a Somali identity in Jubaland was being constructed in opposition to the Gosha. As increasing numbers of Gosha settled along the Juba, accessed Somali clan structures, and attempted to forge their own communities, they started to pose a threat to Somaliness and Somali superiority. In response, Somalis redefined their identity to exclude and “other” these riverine communities—what it meant to be Somali was partially built around what a Somali was not. The Darod elders made this clear:

We come to learn that [Luo], Nandi, Wakimbas, Wakikuyu, Swahili, Wagalla, Wardey, [Sudanese], and Somali are classed together by the Government and the same rule applied for all. But allow us to say that in our opinion this wrong and is degrading and injustice to us all, to be ill treated like this by our Government. The Government Officials who have visited our country know we are descendent from Arabia, and this we have already proved and we can prove we assure you that we cannot accept to be equaled and compared with those pagan tribes ether with our consent or by force even if the Government orders us this we cannot comply with, but we prefer death than to be treated equally with [these] tribes for as the Government knows well these tribes are inferior to us and according to our religion they were slaves who we used to trade during past years.<sup>82</sup>

Darod claimed difference and superiority over others primarily on three interrelated and mutually reinforcing criteria: ancestry, religion, and a legacy of enslavement. Somalis, unlike the Gosha, were Arabs, not Africans. Somalis had come to Africa, and they had conquered Jubaland from its previous and inferior inhabitants. “We fought for this land” the Darod argued, “and we drove away former *native*

<sup>80</sup> Eno, “The Abolition of Slavery and the Aftermath,” 88-89.

<sup>81</sup> “Correspondence from D.C. Jenner to P.C. H. Hastings Horne,” KNA: MC/Coast/470, 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

people of these places who were Boran and Wardey for many years ago.”<sup>83</sup> Closely tied to this claim was a second characteristic of Somali identity: religion. Somalis were Muslim, not pagan like the Gosha. Interestingly this claim was not entirely true; most Gosha and Warday were in fact Muslim.<sup>84</sup> Although amongst the Gosha there was a tendency to retain and syncretize pre-enslavement traditions and religious practices, such as drum playing and dance.<sup>85</sup> To Somalis these practices made the Gosha non-Muslim, but the Gosha themselves believed otherwise.

Thus the use of religion by Somalis in the 1922 petition to claim difference carries little truth; instead its continued employment is closely connected to the third criteria, slave legacy. As Besteman points out, the use of the term *jareer*—a term to denote the supposedly unique physical characteristics of Africans, as contradistinction to Somalis—highlights the interconnectedness of paganism and slave legacy in the exclusion of the Gosha.<sup>86</sup> Besteman argues,

As slaves—and populations from which they were taken—converted to Islam, a transition from equating “slave” with “infidel” to equating “slave” with “black” occurred, with “black” being negatively valued for its association with slavery and its real or purported connection with paganism. The use of the term *jareer* to indicate “African” in Somalia may thus be linked to the historic transition in Islamic slave-holding societies from emphasizing paganism to emphasizing racial difference in slaves. When used in Somalia, it is a resuscitation of the history of slavery of the referent, clearly rooting him in the legacy of subordination and inferior social status.<sup>87</sup>

Paganism and slave legacy together highlighted the subjugation of the Gosha and, thus, Somali superiority over them. Somalis had not been enslaved; instead, they were the enslavers. Thus Somali dominance over the Gosha was an integral component of an emerging Somali identity constructed in opposition to the Gosha. For the Darod to accept “native” classification was to be considered an equal

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 1. Emphasis added on the word native to highlight Somali views of the term and its greater implications to Somali identity.

<sup>84</sup> Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 81.

<sup>85</sup> Declich, Francesca. “Identity, Dance, and Islam among People with Bantu Origins in Riverine Areas of Somalia,” 197-207.

<sup>86</sup> Besteman, “The Invention of Gosha,” 47-49. The term *jareer* literally refers to hard hair, but in Somalia the term came to encompass supposedly different physical features between Somali and Gosha, and in time *jareer* became a derogatory term to describe the Gosha and highlight their slave ancestry. See Eno, “The Abolition of Slavery and the Aftermath” and Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia*, 114-117, for more information.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, “The Invention of Gosha,” 48.

of those they viewed as inferior. It was an attack on their identity. These Darod would “prefer death than to be treated equally” with the Gosha.

### *The Other: The Invention and Imposition of a ‘Gosha’ Identity*

The new ex-slave Bantu migrants, like their fugitive predecessors, entered Jubaland at the turn of the twentieth century kinless and unattached. Owing to a lifetime of enslavement these newest arrivals were more Somalized. They had adopted the Somali language, practiced Islam, and adopted Somali customs.<sup>88</sup> Given this level of assimilation and pre-colonial traditions of Somali adoption and incorporation of ex-slaves, one would assume that these newest migrants would have been absorbed into Somali clan structures. During the first years of colonial rule this appears to have been partially true. Gosha villages founded during the 1890s and onwards continued to bear Somali clan names, suggesting close allegiance and affiliation with Somali society.<sup>89</sup> In 1901-1902, all of the Gosha villages north of Bua fought alongside or supported the rebelling Ogaden Somalis, illustrating that these Gosha villages identified with Somalis and were fulfilling obligations of clan membership.<sup>90</sup>

However, as early as 1898, British colonial officials repeatedly record instances of violence committed against the Gosha by Somalis.<sup>91</sup> In fact, the Gosha appear to have been victimized in every major Somali uprising against the British during their thirty-year rule of Jubaland.<sup>92</sup> The 1916 Aulihan raid of Gosha seems to have been particularly brutal.<sup>93</sup> This frequent violence against the Gosha throughout British rule, often when British authority was being challenged, I argue, is indicative of how Somali identity was coalescing. Violence against the Gosha reproduced perceptions of Somali

<sup>88</sup> Menkhaus, “Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia's lower Jubba Valley,” 230-337.

<sup>89</sup> Besteman, “Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia,” 105-112.

<sup>90</sup> *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition.* NA: FO 881/7936, 29-31; “Deputy Commissioner Ternan to Sir C. Eliot,” NA: FO 2/447, 183; “Intelligence Diary from March 13 to April 17, 1901,” NA: FO 2/447, 184.

<sup>91</sup> “MB 113, 1897,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, *Jubaland Logbook*, 34; *The Ogaden Punitive Expedition.* NA: FO 881/7936, 12; “Precis for the week ending for Saturday, February 26th,” RH: MSS Afr.s.583, 109.

<sup>92</sup> The lone exception was the British campaign against the Marehan, who occupied the northernmost fringes of Jubaland province and did not occupy land adjacent to the Gosha.

<sup>93</sup> Besteman in her fieldwork notes that seventy years later the Gosha she interviewed remember the event vividly, and that it forced many northern Gosha villages to flee to Italian territory. See, Besteman, “Land Tenure, Social Power, and the Legacy of Slavery in Southern Somalia,” 121.



superiority, while simultaneously marginalizing, excluding, and othering the Gosha. British colonial rule was an agent in this process; officials treated each group differently while the introduction race altered the fluidity of pre-colonial identity in Jubaland. The Gosha could no longer easily access Somali clan structures, or at the very least were not afforded the same reciprocity that clan allegiance formerly provided.

Whereas Somalis were relatively untouched by the colonial hand, the riverine “Gosha” in comparison were more intensely integrated into the colonial apparatus. Unlike Somalis, the British exploited the Gosha—they were used for forced labor, taxed regularly, and coerced to grow cash crops.<sup>94</sup> This exploitation was directly tied to a British desire to develop the region, and was legitimized through the racialized perceptions of British officials who portrayed the Gosha as docile, lazy, unintelligent, and inferior. The Gosha were understood to be a single and united people, whose way of life, history, and race differentiated them from their Somali counterparts. However, as pointed out in previous chapters, the riverine communities were anything but united or one people. Identity amongst the “Gosha” was fragmented, with some Gosha aligning themselves with Somalis, some along ethnic lines, and others through locale. Despite this, both Somalis and the British understood the various riverine communities to be a distinct group. For the British this categorization was as much administrative as it was racial. As one colonial official remarked in 1917:

The people known as the WaGosha inhabit the banks of the River Juba and are the ex-slaves of Arabs and Somalis: They are Central Africans and are composed for the most part of Wa-Sugua [sic], Wa-Gindu, Wa-Yao, Wa-Nyassa, Galla, Boran, Rindelle, Ajuran [sic], Wa-Boni, and half caste Somalis [...] Their customs are mainly Somali, the Wa-Sugua [sic] retaining their tribal usage and language.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Cashmore, “Studies in District Administration in the East Africa Protectorate,” 422; Treasurer’s Report and Appropriation Account for Year Ende 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1909,” NA: CO 533/064; “Intelligence Diary from March 13 to April 17, 1901,” NA: FO 2/447, 184-185; Clifford, E. H. M. “Notes on Jubaland.” *The Geographical Journal* 72, no. 5, Nov. 1928, 435-440; “Handing Over Report: Gosha District, 1921,” KNA: MC/Coast/461, R.S. Auden, 22 May, 1921, 1-8; and “The Juba River,” KNA: MC/Coast/461, 2.

<sup>95</sup> “Memoranda re Jubaland Somalis, Wagosha, and Bajun tribes, by AgPC.” KNA: MC/Coast/462, Author unknown, 20 December 1917, 1.

Interestingly, this official labels several non-Gosha groups as Gosha. Boran and Galla were both Oromo peoples, while the “Ajuran” were the Ajuraan, who were formerly the dominant political group in the Horn until the 1600s.<sup>96</sup> For that British official, anyone who was non-Somali qualified as Gosha, which, instead of describing the Bantu ex-slave communities along the Juba, becoming an administrative category to divide the inhabitants into two classifications: Somali and non-Somali. Assistant district commissioner Lamb, writing in 1913, understood the Gosha in a different manner, but one that was no less revealing of British attempts to place the Gosha into a single and easily defined category. Lamb remarks,

It is scarcely necessary to say that the new tribe called the Wa Gosha is comprised of many races, but these races are now so commingled as to have practically merged into one, as they indeed prefer to be so considered.<sup>97</sup>

While Lamb acknowledges that Gosha ethnic identity was previously highly fragmented, he nonetheless concludes that they were now one race. More importantly, Lamb argues that the Gosha preferred to be classified as such. Given the diverse nature of Gosha identity in pre-colonial Jubaland, one should question the accuracy of his comments. If anything, Lamb’s and the previous official’s comments exhibit how the British were imposing a Gosha racial identity on the riverine agriculturalists—an identity that classified the Gosha as an inferior, African people to legitimize their exploitation by the British.

The “Gosha” were an invention of British colonial policy and of Somali othering. The riverine communities, far from forging a cohesive Gosha identity, had a marginalized and racially identity imposed upon them. However, the “Gosha” did not passively accept this categorization. Many riverine communities, despite being othered by Somalis, denied this classification as “Gosha” and continued to align themselves with Somalis. Villages in northern Gosha continued to be founded with Somali names during British colonial rule, while several hundred Gosha sided with and fought alongside the Ogaden

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<sup>96</sup> According to Cassanelli the Ajuraan are important to Somali folklore because supposedly Somalis united together to overthrow them and thereby became the dominant group in the Horn. See Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*, 105-112; and “Short Account of the Tribes in Jubaland,” WO 276/502, 1.

<sup>97</sup> “Report on native customs, Gobwen,” KNA: PC/Coast/1/12/121, 9.

during their revolt. As late as 1921, a colonial official from Alexandria, the district HQ of Gosha district, noted that “certain numbers of Wagosha still neglect their own shambas in order to cultivate the shambas of the [Muhammad] Zubeir at Regatta.”<sup>98</sup> All of these instances suggest that the Gosha were still accessing Somali clan institutions and still, to some degree, identified with Somali.<sup>99</sup>

### **Conclusion**

British rule in Jubaland, was formulaic in the creation of a Somali identity in Jubaland. Colonial rule took differences and shared characteristics and made them into racial realities. Identity, previously fluid, became more rigid, and patron-client relationships that formerly permitted the riverine Gosha access to clan structures and resources now afforded the Gosha little reciprocity. Before colonialism, the riverine peoples of Gosha were a hodgepodge of different ethnic groups with multilayered identities. In 1925, through colonial rule and Somali othering, the riverine peoples along the Juba River were forced into a singular non-Somali racial group. As a result, systems, structures, and institutions that previously provided protection and allowed for assimilation were increasingly closed off and, worse, became vehicles through which the Gosha were further marginalized in subsequent years.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> “Handing Over Report: Gosha District, 1921,” KNA: MC/Coast/461, 2.

<sup>99</sup> Besteman points out that in subsequent years this process continued as the Gosha attempted to minimize violence and differences between themselves and Somalis through disputed historical narratives. See Besteman, “Public History and Private Knowledge,” 574-580.

<sup>100</sup> See Besteman, “The Invention of Gosha;” Besteman and Cassanelli, *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia*; Cassanelli, “The Ending of Slavery in Italian Somalia: Liberty and the Control of Labor, 1890-1935;” and Declich, “Unfree labor, forced labor and resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba, Southern Somalia.”

## Conclusion

In 1895, Somali clan structures and institutions were fluid, allowing the ex-slave riverine peoples along the Juba River valley to enter into Darod client relationship and, in time, to become “Somali.” By 1925, though, this formerly porous relationship had become more rigid and increasingly excluded the Gosha. Somali identity—once contentious, undefined, and multilayered—was now constructed in opposition to the Gosha other. Meanwhile, the riverine communities along the Juba had a “Gosha” identity imposed upon them as Somalis came to define themselves by what they were not—Gosha. British colonial rule fundamentally changed identity in Jubaland.

While colonialism in Jubaland was not as intense as in other portions of the EAP, colonial rule still altered the province’s political, economic, and social landscape. The British perceived and administered Somalis and the Gosha differently. Whereas Somalis were viewed as intelligent, lightly administered, and were treated with deference, the Gosha were defined by their slave past, labeled as ignorant and lazy, and were exploited for labor and taxed for provincial revenue. These perceptions and policies were shaped by colonial perceptions of race through which the British claimed legitimacy. Administrators in Jubaland understood the Somali and Gosha to be two biologically distinct peoples and treated each group accordingly. For Somalis, who the British believed were of partial Arabic descent and thus of higher racial stock, colonial policy was favorable. While for the Gosha, who were seen as having African racial origins, colonial policy was exploitive and marked them as inferior people.

Somalis appear to have absorbed colonial perceptions and racial rhetoric, using them to sustain and reinforce pre-colonial differences that had increasingly become threatened by the influx of the sizable and self-sufficient riverine communities. British colonial rule provided a framework, as well as legitimization for the othering of the Gosha. British officials treated the Gosha largely as they were viewed by Somalis: inferior, exploitable, and the antithesis of non-Somali. Accordingly Somali and British

perceptions mimicked and reproduced each other and marginalized the Gosha from accessing Somali social and political structures. For their part, the Gosha did not simply accept their exploitation and marginalization. While lacking primary source evidence to examine how the Gosha internalized British racial ideology, the Gosha were not easily coerced by the British.<sup>1</sup> Catherine Besteman's fieldwork during the 1980s illustrates that many Gosha saw themselves as Somali, and chose to minimize injustices and violence committed by Somalis through disputed history.<sup>2</sup>

This project contributes to the growing body of literature that deconstructs the myth of Somali homogeneity. Not only are there substantial numbers of minorities within Somali society, I have argued that Somaliness—at least amongst the Darod in Jubaland—was constructed in opposition to these minorities.<sup>3</sup> That is say, what it meant to be a “Somali” was partially defined by what a Somali was not. Somalis were not ex-slaves, not agriculturalists, and certainly not African/black. Moreover, these became features assigned to the Gosha to mark their supposed difference and justify their marginalization and mistreatment. This thesis addresses a lacuna in the literatures on the Gosha and Jubaland. Prior to this study, we lack histories of the British colonial rule of the Gosha and over Jubaland province.

This thesis is not without its faults and limitations. Chief among them is a lack of engagement with the Gosha perspective. In writing this project, I attempted to follow the sources, to understand how British officials' perceived and how colonial policy treated each group differently. My intention was to then examine how these perceptions and policies were internalized by the Somali and Gosha. However, in compiling my evidence it became clear that there simply is not enough British archival material to properly evaluate how the Gosha reacted to British rule and their racial categorization. I believe this absence of the Gosha's views is more indicative of British racialized perceptions towards the

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<sup>1</sup> “Sub-commissioner MacDougall to Sir C. Eliot from Kismayu, August 7, 1901,” F.O. 2/450, 121; and “Short Account of tribes in Jubaland,” NA: WO 276/502, 146(2).

<sup>2</sup> Besteman, “Public History and Private Knowledge.”

<sup>3</sup> See Luling, “The other Somali-Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society,” 39-55, highlights the many non-Somali minorities found in southern Somalia, as well as their role in Somali society.

Gosha. The lack of a Gosha narrative limits future research on Gosha in general. Because the Gosha recorded their history orally, it will take oral histories to properly understand the Gosha past—how they settled the region, how they formed new identities, and how they reacted to British rule and Somali marginalization. Some work has been done on this front, but it is not enough.<sup>4</sup> There has not yet been a full history conducted on the Gosha/Somali-Bantu, although the work of Omar and Muhammad Eno will hopefully rectify this limitation.<sup>5</sup>

This study concentrated on the British period of colonial rule and on the west bank of the Juba River. However, there were a substantial number of Gosha across the Juba in Italian controlled territory. My work, due to my own linguistic restraints, did not explore the dynamics between the Gosha living in British territory and those living in Italian territory—although there seems to have been much continuity between the two Gosha communities.<sup>6</sup> Thus, this project could benefit from an examination of the intricacies of British versus Italian colonial rule and how each shaped identity in their respective territories. It is my hope that future research—possibly my own—will take up this comparison and add to a greater understanding of how colonial policy and perceptions impacted Gosha and Somali identity.

What is the greater significance of this thesis? Why should anyone, beyond a few scholars, care about British colonialism's impact on Somali and Gosha identity in a border province it only governed for thirty years? In attempting to answer this question I found myself pondering T.H.R. Cashmore's views on Jubaland. He writes,

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<sup>4</sup> Besteman, Declich, Menkhaus, and Cassanelli's work are important, but more research needs to be done to reconstruct Gosha/Somali-Bantu history.

<sup>5</sup> Omar and Muhammad Eno are Somali-Bantus who have recently written extensively on the history of the Somali-Bantu/Gosha and their historic marginalization in pre-colonial, colonial, and post independence Somalia. See, Eno, M. A. *The Bantu Jareer Somalis: Unearthing Apartheid in the Horn of Africa*. (London: Adonis and Abbey Publishers Ltd., 2008); Eno, O. A. "Landless Landlords and Landed Tenants: Plantation Slavery in Southern Somalia, 1840–1940," in Abdi M. Kusow, (Ed.), *Putting the Cart before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia*: 135-154, (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2004); and Omar Eno, "The Abolition of slavery and the aftermath stigma."

<sup>6</sup> Cassanelli, "The Ending of Slavery in Italian Somalia," ; Declich, Francesca. "'Gendered Narratives,' History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigula and Shanbara," *History in Africa*, Vol 22. (1995): 93-122; Declich, Francesca. "Unfree labor, forced labor and resistance among the Zigula of the Lower Juba, Southern Somalia", in *Resisting Bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, edited by Edward Alpers, Gwyn Campbell and Michael Salman, 24-39. (London: Routledge, 2006).

It remains something of a puzzle why the East African Protectorate bothered about this expensive and not very valuable desert area. It is true it provided a strategic buffer zone, its occupation preventing raiders from striking at the heavily populated agricultural areas. For a short while it was thought to be a commercial El Dorado, though prospects of trade and agriculture proved illusory. In the cold light of hindsight, the reasons seem almost inadequate.<sup>7</sup>

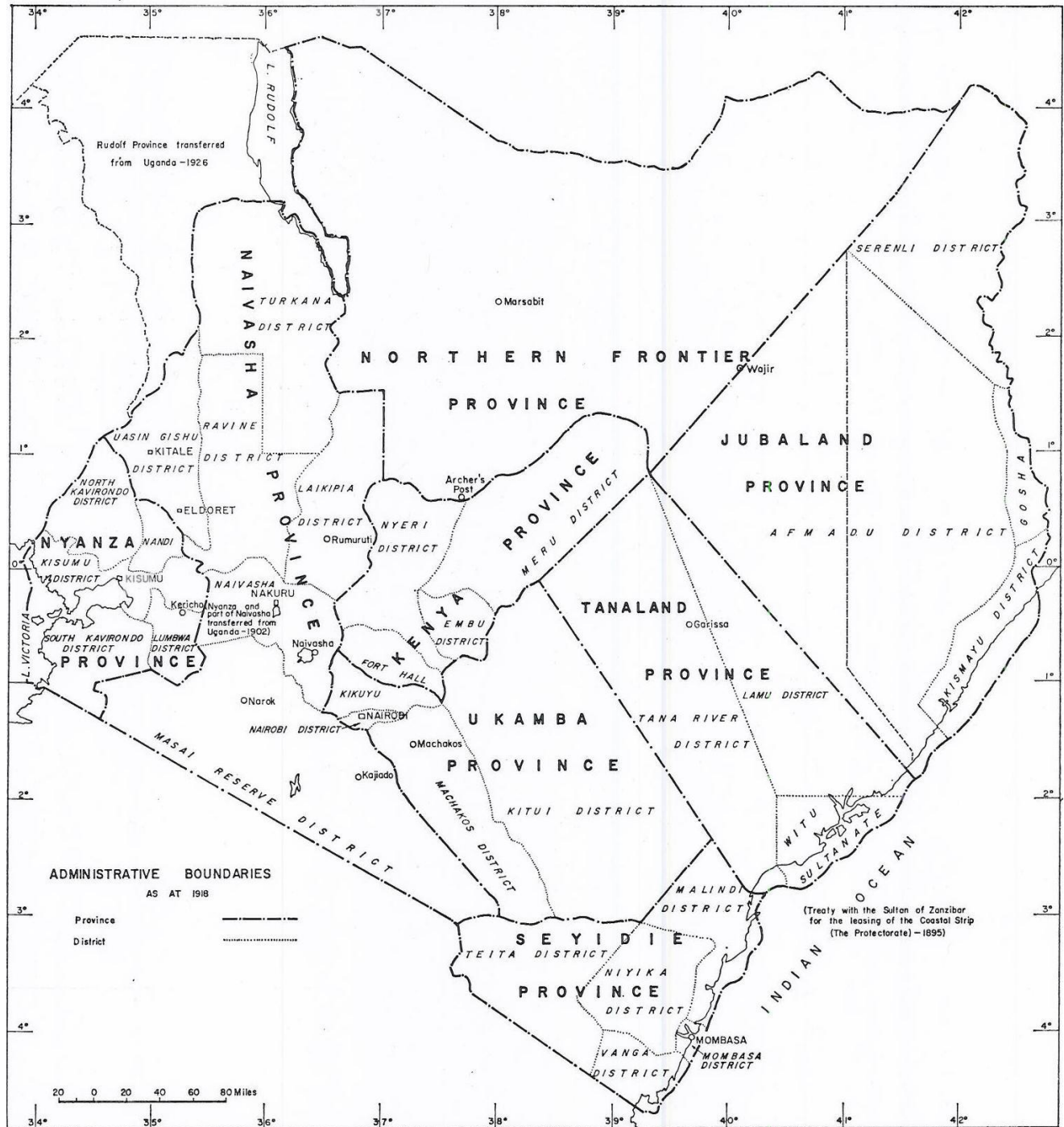
Cashmore is right; for all intents and purposes British rule in Jubaland was a complete failure. However, what is significant about this project is what the British left behind: racial divisions and a legacy of exploitation and preferential treatment. British colonial rule not only altered identity; it contributed to a process of Goshu/Somali-Bantu marginalization that continued into Italian rule, post-colonial Somalia, and into modern-day.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cashmore, "Studies in district administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1918," 454.

<sup>8</sup> Besteman, Cassanelli, and Declich have all written extensively on post independent Somalia and the marginalization of the Goshu/Somali-Bantu in Somalia. See Besteman, Catherine. "Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State." *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 3 (August 1996): 579-596; *Unraveling Somalia*; Besteman and Cassanelli, eds. *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia*; Declich, Francesca. "Fostering Ethnic Reinvention: Gender Impact of Forced Migration on Bantu Somali Refugees in Kenya." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 40, no. 157 (2000): 25-53; and Declich, Francesca. "'Gendered Narratives,' History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigula and Shanbara," *History in Africa*, Vol 22. (1995): 93-122.

### Appendix 1: British East Africa

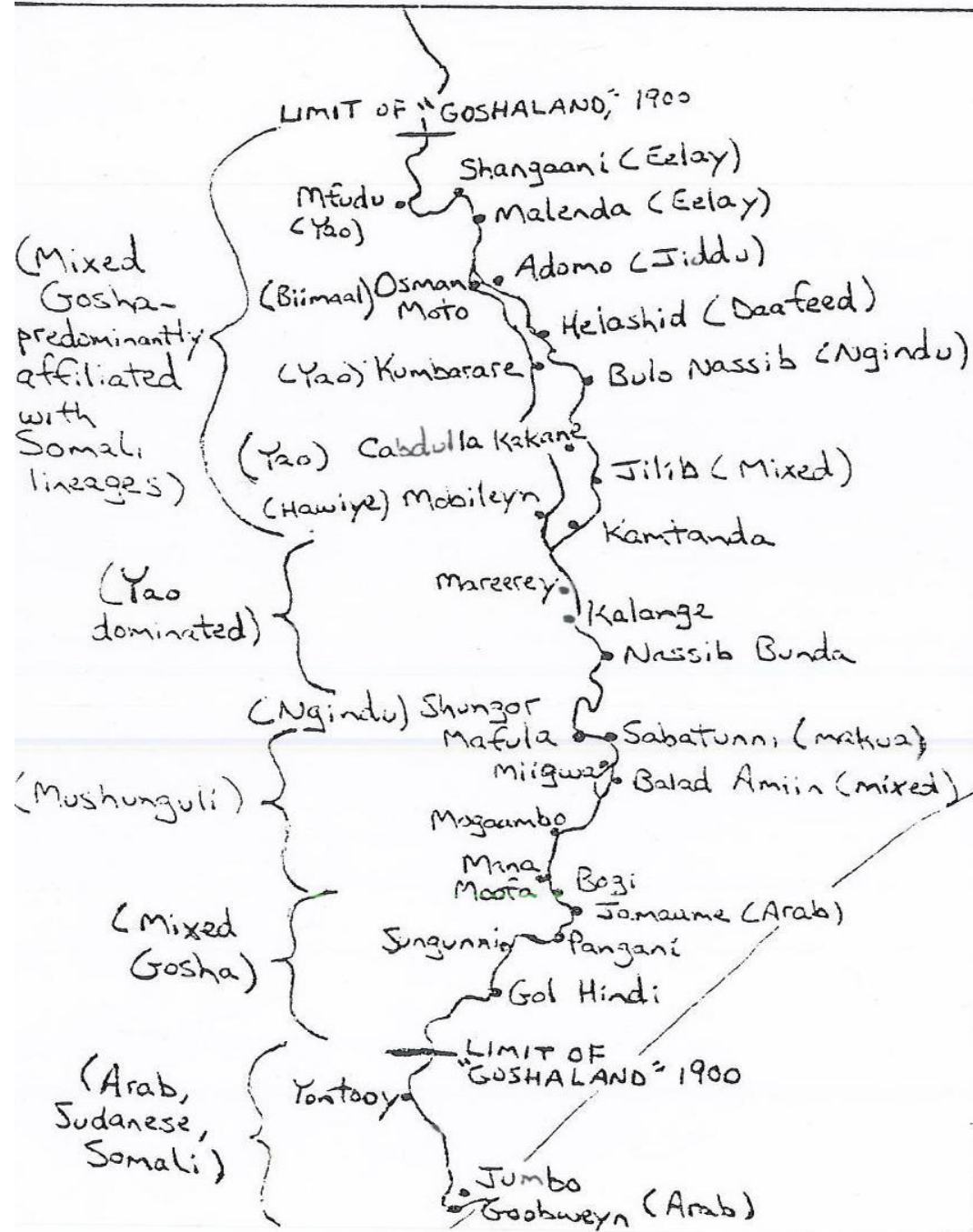


Source: Ominde, S.H. *Land and Population Movements in Kenya*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968. Figure 1.3, 6. Used under the fair use guidelines, 2011.



## Appendix 2: Gosha District and Settlement Patterns

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE LOWER JUBBA VALLEY, 1840-1900



Source: Menkhaus, Kenneth. "Rural Transformation and the Roots of Underdevelopment in Somalia's lower Jubba Valley." PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 1989. Map 2.5, 117. Used under the fair use guidelines, 2011.

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