CeSPI
Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale

Diasporas for Peace
Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involment in Conflict Settings
DIASPEACE
Case Studies from the Horn of Africa

Working Papers
62/2009

Somali Diaspora Associations in Italy: between integration and transnational engagement

Petra Mezzetti and Matteo Guglielmo

October 2009

Via d'Aracoeli, 11 – 00186 Roma (Italia) – Tel. +3906 6990630 – Fax +3906 6784104 – e-mail: cespi@cespi.it - web: www.cespi.it

INDEX

This research is part of the EU Research Project "Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa (DIASPEACE)". The project has received funding from the European Community's 7th Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement No. 217335.

The authors wish to thank Ferruccio Pastore for his work of supervision during the initial stages of the research; Mario Raffaelli and Paola Monzini for useful indications; Silvia Aprile and Mohamed Aden Sheikh for having read and commented this draft. Equally we wish to thank all the people interviewed during the field work research for their trust in telling us their stories and allowing us to start understanding some dynamics which belong to the complex universe of Somali diaspora organisations in Italy. Without their help this challenging work wouldn't have been possible.

INTRODUCTION

In the following pages the major results of the fieldwork research undertaken by CeSPI on Somali Diaspora organisations in the Italian context in different local sites are presented.

This work is part of a three-year research project funded by the European Commission under its 7th Framework Programme, titled DIASPEACE Diaspora for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa[1]. (See Box 1 below)

The study firstly describes the scope of diaspora engagement with the respective countries of origin. It thereby draws a comprehensive picture of the nature of relationships and involvement of conflict-generated diasporas and seeks to identify ways in which this engagement might contribute to facilitating peace and development in different societal spheres (social, political, economic etc.). While we do not assume that diaspora engagement in peace and conflict processes is necessarily always of a positive or constructive nature, this work specifically aims at identifying actual cases and potentials for constructive intervention. In addition, the study also seeks to identify factors that influence and shape the modes and patterns of engagement by applying a comparative perspective both with a view to countries of residence and of origin[2]. For this reason, the study addresses a subset of research questions:

1. What types of diaspora organisations from Somalia can be found in Italy? What are their most striking features in terms of size, modes of organisation, purposes, and activities?
2. By which means do these organisations seek to contribute to peace and development in their countries of origin? How these Diaspora organizations perceive and understand the conflict at "home" and their own role;
3. How and if the conflict shapes and is reflected within these organisations, and furthermore which other factors influence these organisations' patterns of mobilisation, both 'here' and 'there'?

As further investigations within the Diaspeace project will be conducted, focusing on the countries of origin[3] and on the interactions between institutions and Diaspora organisation in the countries of settlement[4], this way contributing to a better understanding of the interrogatives addressed here, the results presented in this work are still preliminary.

The ethnographic work performed in Italy took place between May of 2008 and May of 2009 through the following methodological tools: interviews; participation in different seminars and events about the situation in Somalia and its diaspora community (organised both by diaspora organisations and different Italian institutions); and participant observation from within the organisations and during the aforementioned events. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in the Italian context, there is some historical perspective which is useful in understanding the story of the associative Somali movement in Italy.

---

[1] This work will appear in *Towards a Comparative Assessment of Factors Determining Diaspora Intervention in Conflict Settings: Somali and Ethiopian Diaspora Organisations in Europe*, Compiled and edited by Andrea Warnecke (BICC) Authors: Clara Fischer, BICC, Matteo Guglielmo, CeSPI, Petra Mezzetti, CeSPI, Antony Otieno Ong'ayo, ADPC, Päivi Pirkkalainen, JYU, Andrea Warnecke, BICC, *forthcoming*.

[2] Within the Diaspeace project, field research is undertaken both in countries of residence and of origin to be able to follow-up results from both ends. However, this study primarily presents field work results from Europe, while occasionally drawing on preliminary findings from the ongoing research in the HoA countries.

[3] Diaspeace, Working Package 3.

[4] Diaspeace, Working Package 4.

Field research in Italy has been carried out in four major cities: Milan, Rome, Turin and Florence. The selection of the "research fields" is based on the dimensions of Somali communities in each city (see Table 1), in addition to some typological and qualitative representativeness: Turin, for instance, is a city where a historical community of Somalis settled; Milan and Rome are the two metropolitan cities in Italy where most Somalis live, with Rome presenting the highest concentration. Florence is a city where new arrivals have been directed to (information based on interviews). The numbers in the four mentioned cities account for over one-half of Somalis living in the entire country (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Somalis in Selected Italian Regions and Cities (Foreign Citizens as of 31 December 2008)

Italian Regions		***Cities***	
Lazio	1607	*Rome*	1516
Tuscany	1253	*Florence*	742
Lombardy	1036	*Milan*	*566*
Piemonte	865	*Turin*	*530*
Tot (sub-regional)	4761		
Tot Somali Population in Italy	**6663**	***Tot in the 4 cities above***	***3354***

Source: Istat 2009

During the research 23 Somali organisations have been mapped on the ground, including a remarkable number of women's organisations[5]. We performed 22 in-depth interviews with diaspora organisation leaders, members and key informants in the cities of Rome, Milan, Turin and Florence. (see the full list in the Annex at the end of the paper). Further we selected a few interesting cases (4)[6] which to varying degrees display the following characteristics:

- Active implementation of activities and objectives, either explicitly or implicitly targeting conflict mitigation or peacebuilding, which retain some degree of continuity;
- Engagement in transnantional networks and/or umbrella organisations;
- Existence of partners and/or projects in the Horn of Africa, thus presenting matched samples for field work to be conducted in this region that would complement this study;
- Connections and embeddedness on the ground where these initiatives are carried out, both in the countries of origin and of residence.

Field work has been a very challenging job. In the case of the Somali diaspora in Italy, obtaining information through personal contact was hindered by a general lack of trust and need for recognition (Somalis seem to be tired of being objects of study and want to play a more central role). This is often a result of prior experiences (un-recognised ownership of initiatives and projects, lack of direct involvement) that these individuals have had with NGOs or civil society aid organisations, as these groups have often spoken in the name of migrant organisations thereby generating a *crowding out effect* (Caponio, 2005). This is also probably due to the misrepresentation of Somali groups or personal migration histories reported in the media. In this regard a lot of preliminary and constant work for building trust was needed, while the path has been filled both with positive relationships as well as with obstacles, mistakes and misunderstandings. In general it has been a dialectic and reciprocal learning process.

[5] More than one-third of them.

[6] Namely the associations IIDA-Italy; Associazione Diaspora e Pace (ADEP), Associazione Senza Frontiere (ASF) and the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte.

BOX 1: About the DIASPEACE project

DIASPEACE (Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings. Case Studies from the Horn of Africa) is a three-year research project funded by the European Commission under its 7th Framework Programme.

The project seeks to generate evidence-based knowledge on how exiled populations from conflict regions play into the dynamics of peace and conflict in their countries of origin. In a globalised world such diaspora have become new forces shaping the interactions between countries, regions and continents. In the mainstream literature, diaspora are often seen to fuel conflict and exacerbate tensions through radical mobilisation along ethnic and religious lines. New research findings, however, show that diaspora groups are playing an increasingly prominent role in peace and reconciliation processes. In DIASPEACE the focus is on positive initiatives, while keeping in mind also the non-intended and negative impacts.

The project has an empirical focus on diaspora networks operating in Europe, which extend their transnational activities to the Horn of Africa. This is a region where decades of conflict have resulted in state collapse and the dispersal of more than two million people. The project involves six partners from Europe and two from the Horn of Africa and will conduct field research in both Europe and Africa.

DIASPEACE aims at: a) devising and testing methodologies of multi-sited comparative research and developing the conceptual framework for researching migrant political transnationalism in a conflict context; b) facilitating interaction between diaspora and other stakeholders in Europe and in the Horn of Africa; c) providing recommendations on how to better involve diaspora in conflict resolution and peace-building interventions.

The project consists of five main research components:

- Definition of joint analytical tools and research methodologies;
- Provision of a comparative assessment of transnational diaspora networks from the Horn of Africa and their interfaces with European civil society and state institutions;
- Case studies of diaspora as agents of conflict and peace from the Horn of Africa;
- Interaction between European state actors and diasporas in conflict resolution and peace building;
- Synthesis and dissemination of the research findings and identification of further research directions through workshops and seminars for interested diaspora groups.

The research aims at generating new knowledge to better understand diasporas` potentials, expectations and experiences as bridge builders between countries of residence and countries of origin

The research team has been established by the University of Jyväskylä and consists of:

University of Jyväskylä (JYU), Finland; Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC), Germany; Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (MPI), Germany; Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI), Italy; International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Norway; African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), Netherlands; Forum for Social Studies (FSS), Ethiopia; Academy for Peace and Development (APD), Somalia.

For further information, please visit www.diaspeace.org.

1. SOMALI MIGRATION TO ITALY

Due to its colonial past, Italy was one of the main recipient countries of Somali refugees – a kind of 'natural' destination for emigrants – both before and after the 1991 war. The early presence of Somali migrants in Italy thus dates back to the 1960s, and in the 1980s the numbers began to increase as a result of the worsening political situation in Somalia (Aden and Petrucci, 1991; Farah, 2003).

The history of the Somali migration towards Italy can roughly be divided into three different phases, each with different motivations for migrating and marked by differences in the composition of the migration flows.

Migrants in the 1980s and before 1991, a period that corresponded with the radicalization of the Siad Barre regime, were mainly students and political dissidents. It is thus interesting to note that two liberation fronts were formed in Italy. In 1989, the political wing of the United Somali Congress (USC), then led by Ali Wardigley, and later the "Manifesto" group, an unarmed party formed by 114 Somali intellectuals, business people and political figures, supported by the Italian government (through Italian diplomacy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (Aden and Petrucci, 1991; Guglielmo, 2008).

After the collapse of the state in 1991 and due to the war, both women and men began arriving in Italy. When the civil war broke out, Italy was considered as one of the main destination in Europe for those fleeing the conflict. Entire families, even temporarily, moved to Italy and joined the established Somali community, mostly until 1993. Even if less consistent in numbers, flows of Somali migrants continued to arrive to Italy in the following years, especially as refugee applicants and for "family reunification".

Recent migration flows (after 2000) are referred to as those "arriving in the boats", and are mainly youngsters[7]. In late 2006, the number of the Somali asylum seekers in Italy increased dramatically as the Ethiopian military intervention and the subsequent insurgency which opposed to the Ethiopian contingent opened up a new period of violence and political instability in the country. Therefore, thousands of Somalis, especially from the South-Central regions, have been forced to move to Europe.

Somalis in Italy are not a *homogenous* group. Years of migration from Somalia have produced diversity in the social and generational stratification of the incoming groups. It is, for example, possible to distinguish between different generations of migrants. There are those that are perceived as 'newcomers' (from 2000 and onwards) and others which belong to an 'old generation' (before and after 1991, and until the mid-late 1990s), both of which sometimes find themselves in confrontation with one another. The two groups differ enormously also for their levels of integration, which can be explained inter alia with the social and political environment, alliances, immigration and asylum policies, found and developed at different times in the country of residence. In other words the "political opportunity structure"[8] found in different historical moments in Italy, has changed and shifted from more to less "opened" over time towards Somalis and Somalia, as well as towards migrants and asylum seekers in general, as discussed in the next paragraph.

The National Institute on Statistics (Istat, 2009) – producing data based on foreigners officially registered in Municipal registries – indicates that, as of 31st December 2008, there are 6663 Somalis in Italy. Looking at the historical development of presences between 2002 and 2008[9], an increase of almost 1350 officially registered individuals can be noted. The highest peak of presences was reached in 2008, last year, especially in the Islands and in Central Italy where, according to the interview material, most Somalis newly arrived are directed[10]. This is also the first year in which the male presences almost equal that of female. It must however be noted that data produced by ISTAT do not include *irregular* presences. This is also why these data are considered under-estimations.

[7] In terms of social composition, the recent flows of migrants from Somalia are composed by middle and upper class Somalis: only people with means can face the expensive price of the travel, which can last several months. However, the reasons of Somalis' recent migration are complex, and the economic sphere is not the only dimension which can explain the profile of new Somali migrants and the reasons for fleeing the country and the conflict. (Cfr. IN1).

[8] For a broad discussion on the political opportunity structure (POS) concept applied to migration studies see: Ireland, 1994; 2000; Bousetta 2000; Koopmans *et al*., 2005.

[9] Data referring to the years prior to 2002 are not available.

[10] IN2.

Table 2. Somali Resident Population in Italy, years 2002-2008 (December 31st)

	Islands	Southern	Central	North Eastern	North Western	Italy, Total
2002, *31st December*	11	75	811	339	696	1932 Male
	10	145	1532	609	1077	3373 Female
	21	220	2343	948	1773	5305 Total
2003	13	123	889	377	760	2162 M
	12	209	1699	681	1200	3801 F
	25	332	2588	1058	1960	5963 T
2004	39	168	909	386	888	2390 M
	10	279	1473	624	1318	3704 F
	49	447	2382	1010	2206	6094 T
2005	54	206	1139	381	930	2710 M
	17	286	1359	573	1304	3539 F
	71	492	2498	954	2234	6249 T
2006	55	189	1266	370	926	2806 M
	31	264	1559	524	1230	3608 F
	86	453	2825	894	2156	6414 T
2007	171	172	1268	344	846	2801 M
	61	262	1508	467	1138	3436 F
	231	434	2776	811	1984	6237 T
2008	328	191	1493	353	908	3273 M
	112	273	1473	451	1081	3390 F
	440	464	2966	804	1989	6663 T

Source: Istat (2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009)[11]

For a long time Italy – both culturally and politically[12] – has been an important point of reference for the Somali diaspora. However in recent years Italy is perceived to have lost its central political role in relationship to the situation in the Horn of Africa, and thus, is no longer a preferred destination for Somali migrants[13]. In addition, Italy's state benefits are very low, and in some cases, non-existent (i.e. housing, employment, etc.). Thus many Somali refugees have chosen to migrate to other countries where establishing a new life would be easier. Today, Italy retains a smaller Somali community compared to those in other EU countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, and the Netherlands (Warnecke ed., 2009).

Especially in the early stages, flows toward Italy have been composed predominantly of women[14]. The little state support for refugees and asylum seekers mentioned above, coupled with the market demand for caretaking jobs, helps explaining the gender composition of the Somali diaspora: it has been harder for men initially to find satisfactory adequate work, which has resulted in the past, in decisions to move elsewhere or to not even choose Italy as a primary destination. During their time abroad, Somali women have created informal networks given the precarious situation they found themselves in and in an attempt to account for potential social risks (Decimo, 2007). This may also explain the large number of women's organisations found in Italy today, which is an exception in the context of the greater EU.

[11] For details see the following website: Istat (2002-2008) *Bilancio demografico e popolazione residente straniera al 31 dicembre per sesso e cittadinanza*, http://demo.istat.it/

[12] More specifically, from the late 1980s onwards, Italy has been deeply involved in the formation of several liberation fronts: the United Somali Congress (USC); the Mohamed Farah Aidid-led organisation, and the "Manifesto" group, an unarmed party formed by 114 Somali intellectuals, business people and political figures (Mukhtar 2003).

[13] Particularly in the last few years, Italy tried to regain a leadership role within the international community towards the situation in Somalia. However, Italy – both as a member of the International Contact Group for Somalia (ICG), established at the UN headquarters in New York in June 2006 to support the "peace and reconciliation" process, and due to its long-standing involvement in politics in Somalia before the fall of the Siad Barre regime was expected to play a bigger role within the ICG. Instead, Italy has been generally unable to address its own political agenda on the Somali situation not due to the lack of political interest, but mostly due to a vacuum of policy tools and revision of legislative instruments which would have made it possible to have the Somali crisis as a "special case" and a top priority within its foreign policy agenda.

[14] While this has been true until late 2007, this trend is changing today due to new arrivals (see Table 2 above).

2. IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE LEGISLATION

Italy had been a country of emigration until the early 1970s. In the mid 1970s, the number of immigrants arriving balanced that of Italian people emigrating. The first immigrants were students and political dissidents escaping dictatorship and persecution in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia (Caponio, 2005). These flows of asylum seekers and refugees were not perceived negatively as "invaders", as instead are depicted in the media and in the general discourse today. The social and political "environment" – the political opportunity structure – was more "opened" and hospitable towards groups coming from former Italian colonies, in particular from Eritrea and Somalia.[15]

In the early 1980s, however, immigrants began arriving in Italy, and only during the 1990s, migration became a stable phenomenon (Bonifazi, 1998; Ambrosini, 2001).

The first act attempting to regulate immigration flows was Statute no. 943 of 30 December 1986 (Zincone and Caponio, 2006). This Statute regarded immigrants as workers, and dealt with the issue from the perspective of employment[16]. The idea behind this Statute was that the immigration phenomenon was limited and transitory, and thus, it contained nothing to encourage integration (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2005).

Other legislation was passed during the 1990s mainly aimed at reducing the number of immigrants in the country, while an overall understanding of the complexity of the migration phenomenon was lacking. Migration has, thus, often been framed only in *security* terms, and migration policy has been mostly based on limiting migration into the country. Those allowed in were done so to meet labour demands and fill particular positions, rather than out of concern for the migrants' social integration.

The first comprehensive immigration law was approved in 1998 (law number 40/98)[17]. This was the first law to acknowledge the importance of integration, and which spoke of migrants' rights and obligations. They were not considered as merely a 'labour force', and integration policies were meant to ensure that foreign citizens would have access to goods and services as well as enjoy work and living conditions similar to those of Italian citizens (Chaloff, 2005; Zincone and Caponio, 2006).

The current immigration law, 189, approved in 2002 by the centre-right Berlusconi-led government (also known as the "Bossi-Fini" law), is mainly a reform of law 40 (1998), rather than a new comprehensive immigration bill. Policy has, however, become more narrow in terms of migrants' entrance and integration matters (Marta 2008; Kosic and Triandafyllidou 2005; Chaloff 2005).

In sum, Italy's recent experience with immigration coupled with the need to homogenise its policies with other European countries has produced "strict and often contradictory legislation" (Pastore, 2004), governed by anti-immigrant rhetoric as well as recurrent shifts between inclusion and tough exclusion measures (Bolaffi and Damiani 1996; Zincone and Caponio 2006). Most importantly Italy is the only country in Europe that does not have a comprehensive law on asylum, and refugees are granted few rights in this context (UNHCR, 2008). Legislation on the matter of refugees and

[15] In favour of this argument – accounting for a favourable "environment" towards political groups and liberation movements from the Horn of Africa – it can be noted that a political office was opened in Rome by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) opposing the Menghistu regime. The same attempt was made also by the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), with no success.

[16] Undocumented foreign workers were regularised as all subsequent immigration reforms would also contain a regularisation.

[17] Titled "Disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione giuridica dello straniero", and also known as the "Turco-Napolitano" law, after the Ministries proposing the draft law.

asylum seekers exists in terms of legislative decrees[18], together with the establishment of programmes at the local and territorial level in favour of asylum seekers and aiming at sustaining the integration of recognised refugees. The major problem, however, is often rooted in the lack of available resources for implementing policies, initiatives and providing support. This affects migrants and refugees alike and has a stronger impact on the most vulnerable (UNHCR, 2008).

Today, Italy still does not grant political asylum status to Somali migrants, while an asylum for 'humanitarian reasons' may be issued. This status can have two negative consequences. On the one hand Somalis are obliged to stay in Italy,[19] where public and social housing and financial subsidies are not available, and on the other hand Somalis are forced to spend their time satisfying basic needs, making it difficult to find regular jobs.[20] Furthermore, the Italian Citizenship Law (Statute no. 91 of 1992) is highly restrictive in both theory and practice, with 90 per cent of applications for naturalisation being rejected.[21] Decisions are made by the Ministry of the Interior, which enjoys a great deal of discretion and is not required to explain the reason for rejecting an applicant (Chaloff, 2005). This is the general political context in which conditions for the Somali diaspora in Italy have been shaped over the years. It is evident that Italian migration law is one of the most complicated in comparison to other EU countries. Somali citizens cannot receive a permit of stay for longer than twelve months at a time, of which six months are spent waiting for a permit renewal. This puts Somali citizens in Italy in a 'legal limbo', where it is difficult to satisfy any of the basic survival needs, such as finding a job or renting an apartment. In addition to this, all Somali passports since 1999 have been invalidated, yet the Italian state has not granted Somalis the rights of statelessness. As an identification card, Somalis are given a 'travel document' with a maximum validity of twenty-four months, which considerably affects their freedom of movement both inside and outside the European Schengen Area. Somalis do not have diplomatic representation in Italy, which makes them even more vulnerable to lengthy and unjust bureaucratic procedures to obtain official certificates of birth, marriage, or death, which are frequently delivered by the Italian Red Cross on the base of self-certifications[22]. Moreover, since foreigners are not allowed to vote in Italy, Somalis have not voted since the last free elections in Somalia in 1968 (UN Instraw, 2008b).

3. DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS AND SELECTED CASE STUDIES

3.1Evolutions in scopes: From mutual aid to transnational political engagement

We will describe some general characteristics of the Somali diaspora organisations observed in the Italian context[23] and, in particular, look at the historical evolution of these organisations. In the process, we will assess their scopes, major areas of concern and involvement, their dimensions and organisational structures, and their membership characteristics. As mentioned above, the Somali

[18] Regulation for the recognition of the status of refugees: Decree, 6 September, 2004 n. 303; Decree for the actuation of the communitarian normative for the reception of asylum seekers: Decree 30 May 2005 n. 140; Legislative decree implementing the communitarian directive on the norms for attributing the qualification of refugee or person in need of international protection D. Lgs. 19 November, 2007 n.251.

[19] In accordance with the Dublin Regulation (also known as Dublin II), there are strict and objective criteria establishing the Member States responsible for examining asylum applications. The system is designed to prevent "asylum shopping" and, at the same time, to ensure that each asylum applicant's case is processed by only one Member State. Therefore, In the case where a Member State has already examined or began to examine an asylum application, the applicant – even if in a different country – must return to the country where his/her application was filed in the first place. Cfr. Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003.

[20] Cfr. IN2.

[21] This 'restrictive' reform of the citizenship legislation passed in the early 1990s. In fact, this act penalises non-EU immigrants, while introducing a strong principle of co-ethnic preference (Zincone, 2005).

[22] While in the process of revising this work, the new Somali Ambassador in Italy has been finally appointed and has taken duty in Rome, September 2009.

[23] More specifically in the four Italian cities and regions of reference: Milan in Lombardy, Turin in Piedmont, Florence in Tuscany and Rome in the Lazio Region.

diaspora in Italy is a long-standing community. Its associations, however, are still quite a recent phenomenon, partly focusing on "internal issues occurring within the community", and are composed of people which mainly arrived in Italy before 1991.[24]

Given that the first waves of Somalis in Italy belonged to an elite, the Siad Barre regime tended to keep this community under tight restrictions.[25] Therefore, the earliest associations formed in the early to mid-1990s generally featured a non-political profile, and were mostly concerned with issues of immigration/integration and human rights within Italy.[26] Among the groups, a few first generation associations – established in the early 1990s – have been playing a 'reference' role for the Somali people and newcomers, providing information regarding their rights in upon arrival, where and how to find a house, how to complete the documentation procedures, etc. One example in the city of Milan is the Associazione Mamme e Bimbi Somali founded in 1994.

This phenomenon, which has been termed "immigrant politics" by Ostergaard-Nielsen (2003, p. 21), refers to the political activities undertaken by the community to improve its social status in the residence country, i.e. attempts to fight discrimination and to gain more political, economic or social rights. 'Immigrant politics' has been, and partly still is, the major concern (and area of interest) for Somali diaspora organisations in Italy.

The tendency of the Somali diaspora of forming associations with the objective of influencing Somali politics 'at home', and as a tool of conflict resolution or for undertaking peacebuilding activities–although this wording is never used or made explicit–is instead a more recent phenomenon that began no earlier than 2000.[27] This year represents a fundamental turning point in the Somali conflict for two main reasons. On the one hand, in late 2000 a peace conference took place in Djibouti, where the Somali Diaspora's support was explicitly requested, and on the other hand, due to the relative stability on the ground, some Somalis based in Italy seized the opportunity to go back to Somalia to run development and peace-building organisations, further establishing local counterparts in Italy.[28] In the literature this engagement can be termed "translocal politics" (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). It is defined as the initiatives of migrant communities or individuals who seek to provide concrete support to specific localities in the country of origin (these may include projects as described below undertaken by the associations IIDA; ASF; Soomaaliya) and to *homeland politics* (i.e. in the case of the associations and fora ADEP, SDC). This is done through political activities in which the migrant communities engage the government of their country of residence on issues that exclusively concern the country from which they came. Most Somalis in Italy come from South-Central Somalia, and most Somali diaspora associations in fact focus on the situation in the South.

Through 'transnational activism', the migrant community shows its support for or hostility to the political regime in its homeland. The emergence of these new organisations' scopes has been determined by a variety of factors, the most important of which have been the intensified cycles of

[24] Cfr. IN2.

[25] Historical ties especially between Rome and Mogadishu concur in explaining some crucial features of the Somali diaspora in Italy, which is: 1) a long-standing community (since most Somalis in Italy already lived there at the time of the state collapse in Somalia, or they had strong bonds to Italy in the form of family or work); 2) a 'high-ranking community' of former politicians, intellectuals, doctors, etc. can be found, as most people come from the Somali ruling class. In this regard the partnership between the Somali National University and the University of Rome *La Sapienza* concurs in explaining the social composition of Somalis in Italy; 3) a community with an urban background, as people generally come from the largest Southern towns, such as Mogadishu, Kismayu, Merka and Brava. (Aden Sheikh, and Petrucci. 1991).

[26] The main tool of the Somali regime to keep under control the community in Italy was the NSS (National Security Service). The NSS was an elite organization staffed by men from other intelligence units, such as the Somali National Army, the Somali National Police Force, the People's Militia, and a number of other intelligence operations headed mostly by trusted members of Barre's family. Due to the capillary of such institutions, the Somali Diaspora was unable to establish political organizations in Italy in opposition to the regime before its' collapse in January 1991. Cfr. IN3.

[27] This if we exclude the creation of the two liberation fronts in the late 1980s, as mentioned earlier in the text.

[28] As discussed in the next pages this is the case of IIDA and Geelo, both of which formed their counterparts in more recent years in Italy (namely IIDA-Italy and ASF).

violence (i.e. the Ethiopian invasion in late 2006), and the ongoing Somali national reconciliation process and corresponding events. In fact, a significant number of Somali organisations have been formalized in correspondence with the most important reconciliation conferences, such as the ones in Djibouti in 2000, Nairobi in 2004 and, more recently, in Djibouti in 2008. Most of the organisations that were looked at were formed during the years 2007 and 2008 (IIDA-Italy in 2007; Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte also in 2007; ADEP Associazione Diaspora e Pace in early April 2008). Furthermore, the ability of the Somali elites to extend the debate about the state building process helped diaspora communities (especially those based in Europe and in North America) to become more involved in Somali politics.

Within the Somali diaspora, many 'discourses' and nuances regarding the individuals' social and political identity, membership in associations, etc. tend to co-exist. Somalis thus for example participate simultaneously in different type of organisations, some of which are visible and formalised, while others are less visible and informal, and are linked to a specific clan. It has been interesting to note that there is an instrumental use of this sense of belonging, one which may be more 'publicly' accepted and another which often remains latent and belongs to the 'private' sphere.

3.2 A preliminary typology of the associations: membership, structures and *scopes*

Migrants' associations in Italy vary in their degree of formalisation. Often formalised and registered associations (as non-profit, for instance) coexist with un-registered but formalised groups (i.e. as cultural associations) and informal discussion groups.

In terms of organisational and management structures, we found a number of similarities between the Somali organisations that were investigated. Most associations often do not have official headquarters. As a result, meetings are held in the work place of the president, or informally in the home of one of the members. The groups may also enjoy the hospitability of other civil society organisations which are partners in projects, or sustain the work of the different organisations, such as NGOs, etc. The organisations are never very large (20 members on average). The great majority of the associations, however, have a formalised structure with a registered statute establishing the positions of the president, the steering committee, etc. Membership fees and fund-raising events, such as dinners and parties, are a common way of raising money. For more 'professional' organisations, answering to calls for proposals, in partnership with NGOs, etc. has also represented a strategy for funding (IIDA; ASF, etc).

By assessing the scopes and membership criteria of the organisations, we identified the following typologies within the four different locations in Italy:

Community (or ethnic) associations: These can be more or less 'broad' community support organisations (or federations), where membership is based on being Somali. Examples include Federazione delle Comunità Somale in Italia, located in Florence, the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte in Turin, or the association Mamme e Bimbi Somali in Milan, which used to be very active in the mid-1990s. However, these 'umbrella' organisations cannot be found in all cities. They supply information to both Somalis on various aspects of life in Italy. These organisations also have good relationships with Italian institutions, and are "recognised" as actual or potential "official interlocutors". Currently, no such organisations can be found in Rome, or in Milan. For other immigrant communities, these types of umbrella associations will often establish relationships with their respective governmental institutions (Ceschi and Stocchiero, 2007; Mezzetti, 2007), whereas, due to the void created by the lack of a Somali government presence, these groups are not in a position to act as mobilising interlocutors.[29]

Women's organisations: Membership in these groups is based on gender. These associations often include either inter-ethnic or multi-cultural associations, where women of different cultures unite. Here Somali women often either hold a leadership position or are active members (e.i. Donne in

[29] See footnote 22.

Rete per lo sviluppo e la pace (ADIR) in Milan, Nosotras in Florence, Alma Mater in Turin, Associazione Punto di Partenza in Livorno etc.), or Somali Women's Associations (or networks) such as:

- IIDA-Italy, created in 2007 and based in Turin. The organisation was founded to support and enhance the work of IIDA-Women Development Organisation[30], while being administratively autonomous from the 'mother' organisation.[31] IIDA-Italy is strongly linked to the Somali Women Agenda (SWA) movement, created in 2007 in Nairobi, consisting of a network of civil society women's organisations operating throughout Somalia. SWA holds a number of focal points in the Italian cities of Turin, Rome, Florence, as well as abroad through the Somali Women's Diaspora Network (with focal points in and not limited to Finland, the UK, the Netherlands, etc.).
- Another example includes ADEP (Associazione Diaspora e Pace), a network comprising seven member organisations from different Italian cities, which started to work in late 2006 and was formalised in April 2008. The network's objective is to promote the participation of women in the peace and state-building processes in Somalia and in the Somali elections. - originally announced for November 2009,[32] - by providing training activities while being also concerned with the needs of Somali women in Italy[33] (UN Instraw 2008a).

Second generation groups: These are less formalised discussion groups or organisations, such as the *Iftiin*, which, based on its membership, is a second generation group that was formed in Rome in late 2007. *Iftiin*, which means "shine", was the first attempt to put together a Somali second generation discussion group and also included some Italian members. Its first task was to open up a discussion within the Somali community in Italy focusing on the group's principal needs, such as inter-generational relationships.

Inter-cultural organisations with advocacy or lobbying scopes: An example of this type of organization is the Forum Italia-Somalia per la Pace e la Ricostruzione. Comprised of Somali and non-Somali stakeholders, this organisation has been founded with political aims such as influencing the Italian foreign policy agenda towards Somalia, denouncing issues on the status of refugees, etc.

Project-oriented associations (these might also be referred to in the literature as Hometown associations or "Amicales")[34]. Membership in these groups may be based on a common ethnic background or a shared migration experience, and often reunite people who met during their time abroad in their city or town of residence. This might include people who came from the same area in the country of origin (village, neighbourhood, etc), but can also be extended to include Italians. In the case of Somalia, we found associations which have been established around a development project to be implemented in an area in Somalia, which is often supported by strong leadership, either in the country of residence or of origin (as discussed below in some cases these include returnees). They, thus, volunteer as groups of professionals on a smaller scale. Examples include the Associazione Senza Frontiera (ASF) in Milan, which funded projects in Beledweyne in the Hiiraan

[30] Founded in 1991 in Somalia for further details see *Tahrib* n 1. 2009.

[31] One interesting activity IIDA-Italy has being carrying out since June 2008 to present is the publication of a very thorough and well documented Newsletter titled *Tahrib*, (4 numbers and a *Special Issue* has been published and distributed). This activity has been realised with the support of the Province of Turin.

[32] The election dates have shifted and the dates which circulate today refer to November 2010.

[33] Cfr. IN5, IN4.

[34] "Home-town associations" emerged in the literature on international migration, especially to describe Mexican migrants organisations in the United States (Orozco, 2003). These are small associations formed by migrants sharing places of origin: village, neighbourhood or region. These association are concerned with socio-economic development in its communities of origin (building a well, a school) and increasingly engaging both governmental and civic entities in sending and receiving countries in these projects' (Vertovec, 2004). The scope of their activities has been broadened progressively (informal insurance, rotating credit, sportive and cultural events organisation, etc.) (see also Mezzetti, 2008).

Region,[35] and the Associazione Soomaaliya Onlus in Turin, which has a mixed membership (Somalis and autochthonous) and operates in the villages of, Galkaayo, Kismaayo, Sabiid and Caanoole.

Transnational political fora: The Somali Diaspora Congress (SDC)[36] is an advocacy network organisation acting transnationally, established on 28 August 2007 by Somalis representing diaspora communities from twelve Western countries.[37] It opposed the invasion of Somalia and was set up to draw attention to the crisis in Somalia. Participation can be on an individual or collective basis. "Representatives" have however not been elected by diaspora communities. In the Italian case, for example, members are well known people within the Somali community, intellectuals, professionals, and politicians all interested in following the political process and which have time and the means to participate.

In our investigation of Somali diaspora organisations we did not find any self-proclaimed, explicitly clan based organisation. However less formalised (and less visible) clan-based groups do seem to exist and send help in the form of remittances for implementing projects or initiatives in specific areas or regions of Somalia.[38]

Insofar as Somali associationism in Italy is mostly an elitarian phenomenon, clan often seems to remain a *latent* concept. This could well be because of the predominant South Central Somali population, e.i. linked to the colonial and historical ties between Italy and Somalia, which coming from the urban centres and belonging to an elite, has considered traditionally 'backwards' to talk about clan. It might also be that clan, while structuring some aspects of organization, cannot be articulated as such (cf. Kleist 2008). Moreover, the clan dimension may have been underplayed and even denied, as a strategy for the associations to get support from Italian stakeholders.

Despite the considerations above, clan seems to resurge as a strong dimension and an undeniable practice, when working in Somalia (for a further discussion on the clan issue see Box 2 below).

Groups, associations, etc., especially those working in Somalia (and to a lesser extent in the diaspora) are easily identified and, thus, "stigmatised" as belonging to a clan or a sub-clan. Members of any association will often be associated with the clan of the associations' leader – or of the most charismatic figure acting in the association (this may be the case even when the association's members are from different clans). It is important to note that between different organisations, in the diaspora as well as on the ground in Somalia, a common practice is to denigrate the work of one another on the basis of this 'stigmatisation'. It seems thus somewhat difficult (or impossible) to judge the work undertaken by organisations for its merits or reached objectives. Interestingly while clan divisions seem to play a central role, these often reflect – as in the rhetorical figure synecdoche, by which the part is substituted for the whole – the entire range of political, social, religious competitions between the different groups.

3.3 Associations' key features: Leadership, gender, citizenship, social capital *and networks*

Somali diaspora associations in Italy show the following key features:

High-ranking and high profile leaderships: Somali diaspora's organisations comprise 'high-ranking' members. It is thus often possible to find within the organisations people who belong or have been part to the Somali ruling class. Leadership positions held within diaspora associations seem to reflect this social composition. In one case for example, the president of a community association was the former Minister of Health and High Education during the Siad Barre regime

[35] The ASF association operates as it will be described further through the counterpart association *Geelo* based in Nairobi, which has represented one matched sample case study on which the Norwegian Diaspeace partner PRIO has been conducting transnational research within DIASPEACE WP3.

[36] Cfr. IN3. For more information see also the following website: http://free-somalia.org/?p=579.

[37] United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Canada, United States of America, Italy, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France.

[38] Cfr. IN4.

(Guglielmo, 2008: 69), in another case the president of a women's association - part of a broader network - is related to a former military colonel, appointed Minister of Finance; other high ranking bonds are widespread.

The centrality of the gender dimension: This feature is strongly noted in the composition of migration flows to Italy, which, when compared to other EU countries, has a high female percentage. In addition, this is also due to the professional opportunities that some Somali women in Italy have reached, occupying high-level positions, working often within local public institutions, trade unions, political parties, etc.

Citizenship status: A large number of organisations' members and leaders are Italian citizens, and in most cases, are fully integrated into Italian society, which gives them the opportunity to actively take part in political activities, become members of political parties, etc.[39]. Interestingly enough, many interviewees have also been elected to the *ad hoc* consultative bodies instituted in Italy especially at the local/municipal levels since 1986 with the goal of fostering immigrant civic participation and "political" representation[40].

Embeddedness in the local environment and *bridging* social capital[41] (Faist, 2000; Putnam, 1993): Somali organisations' leaders are involved in the political and social spheres in Italy, especially at the *local level*, not only by holding positions within local institutions (such as our interviewees in Rome, Turin and Milan), but also through their ability of establishing relationships with local civil society organizations. These ties reach out ('bridge') beyond ethnic boundaries, establishing preferably inter-ethnic (or multi-ethnic) networks rather than exclusive ones.

Network-building strategy: Given that Somali organisations are spatially dispersed throughout Italy (the most important ones are based in Rome, Milan, Turin and Florence), we observed an inclination towards building up associative networks among Somali groups (i.e. IIDA, ADEP).

To the best of our knowledge, Somali organizations based in Italy have rarely received financial support from Italian institutions (the only example of this occurring that we encountered is described in paragraph 4.4.). However, Somali diaspora associations seem to be involved in or make instrumental use of – both directly and indirectly – relationships with Italian local institutions. In several cases, they have even taken advantage of collaborations/links with Italian political parties that mainly belong to the left or centre-left coalition.

In sum, the important role played by some individuals and organisations at the local level has however been hard to translate into mobilization and lobbying activities at the national level.[42] Regarding the genesis and scope of the Somali organisations – especially during the 1990s – these have been framed by domestic patterns, while from 2000 to present, the trends have shifted away from the exclusive local dimension, in some significant cases, towards broader patterns of mobilization aimed at Somalia (often via establishing networks at the transnational level). This shift can be read as the consequence of three simultaneous factors: on the one hand, a new or renewed need in the diaspora for supporting and actively take part in the latest national reconciliation

[39] In Italy voting and standing for elections is only possible for citizens.

[40] Municipal Consultative Bodies are elected by foreign citizens, aged 18 or more, who have been officially resident in the city for at least one year. These municipal bodies are not established by law but rather come out of local authority initiatives. One of the very first Consultative Committees established is the one in Milan (1986-1992) (Caponio, 2005). Other experiences have included i.e. the creation of a Municipal Consultative Body on immigration in Turin in 1995, followed in 1996 by those of Modena and Padova, in Rome only in 2004, etc. (Zincone and Caponio 2006; Caritas 2004). Several municipalities set up this type of consultative bodies in recent years but most ceased to function after one or two years (Kosic and Triandafyllidou, 2005). For a critical overview on such bodies: Blommaert and Martiniello, 1996, Vertovec, 1999.

[41] The notions of "bridging" and "bonding" social capital have been defined by Putnam, (2000: 22-23). Bridging is used here as social relations which animate Somalis people and association, often undertaken by leaders, which can "bridge" and connect different political actors, stakeholders, and institutions.

[42] ADEP which has represented an attempt in this direction although specifically relating to women's issues, saw a slowdown of its process due to end of the UN-Instraw/ADEP project, which was not renewed due also to changes in the Italian government.

processes in Somalia; on the other hand, growing expectations of Somali politicians towards the diaspora; finally the little material (in terms of funds) but also political opportunities offered in the Italian context towards migrants and their organisational institutions, not only has created a worsening competitive environment (as all groups are competing for few resources) but can explain the diaspora's greater political engagement at the transnational level.

Box 2: Clan seen by the diaspora and as a mobilising tool in national politics

As mentioned above, we did not encounter formal clan associations during our investigation. In general, we found that the use of clan identity is unpredictable, both as a discourse as well as a highly problematic practice, or as an organisational tool. Sometimes, clan doesn't seem to be a central divisive factor within the diaspora. It has been widely believed that Somali clans, within the Italian diaspora and its organisations, are far from representing an insurmountable division. Insofar other factors contribute to community fragmentation according, for example to the President of a community association in Florence: *sometimes we have disputes in our organisation, but they are related to Italian issues, where the clan's role is very marginal. For example, such disagreements could be produced by the participation or belonging to different Italian political parties. On the other hand, in other European countries, such as Sweden and UK, we can witness many cases of "clan clashing", due to the policies led by residence countries toward the Somali communities. In addition, in Italy public demonstrations in order to support or protest against the Somali government have never been held. What is happening in Florence, and in general in Italy is aware of Somali politics, at the same time the main focus for the majority of Somali organisations is represented by Italian policies toward migrants.*

However, the clan dimension seems to become meaningful, with both positive and negative repercussions, when individuals or groups are engaged in Somali national politics, or in material work on the ground. Clan issues insofar can directly affect diaspora groups in Italy, and clan becomes crucial when the diaspora is called to take part in the international peace process.

"Clanism" thus goes beyond the Italian national sphere, and becomes strongly interconnected with political alliances and divisions developed within the Somali peace process: i.e. the 4.5 formula, in which each of the four major clan families are meant to be represented in the Transitional Federal Institutions. According to the 4.5 formula, the major four clans (i.e. Hawiye, Darod, Dir and Digil-Mirifle) receive the majority of seats in the Transitional Parliament, while a residual category of "minority groups" receives one half of the seats accorded to each of the major clan-families—hence the "0.5". For example, in October 2004, the selection of delegates involved in the peace process held in Nairobi was framed by the '4.5 formula'; such a formula was also used during the last peace process in Djibouti making the "clan" a key prerequisite for registering for the conference, including for diaspora groups. The Somali diaspora in Italy willing to take part in the Djibouti peace conference, had to adjust to these rules, and thus decided to participate individually and not through organisations to the process.

Sources**:** Cfr. IN2; Menkhaus, 2007.

4. DIASPORA PERCEPTIONS ON PEACE AND CONFLICT

Conflict in Somalia started roughly over 20 years ago and has involved actors and dimensions that are continuously changing (Menkhaus, 2004). Even for observers, policymakers and social scientists, the Somali crisis is often hard to capture and to understand. Conflicts in Somalia have occurred at all levels: both interstate (i.e. Ethiopia) and intrastate, i.e. among proxies, between clans/families, as well as at the centre and in the periphery. An additional cause for confusion has been the tendency of armed actors in Somalia (i.e. warlords) to align themselves with, whether it be for ideological or strategic purposes, the fight against terrorism (Cliffe 1999; Healy 2008). The

situation in South-Central Somalia especially – as well as the "alliances" just mentioned – is thus difficult to grasp and constantly changing.

As a result it is difficult for the Somali diaspora as for any other international actor to obtain comprehensive information on the conflict and the underlying factors. Just like other actors, diaspora groups may also be incapable of grasping the root-causes of the civil war, being directly often a party in conflict.

4.1 Perceptions of the conflict

Many informants perceive the conflict in Somalia as occurring in the political spheres where different factions fight for power, which is often thought of as "far from the average citizen's world". Others attribute most blame for the suffering that occurs to external actors. The international community is greatly criticized, often for its inaction and non-interventionist policies and for its inability to understand the complex reality on the ground despite being involved in peace negotiations. Ethiopia's military intervention in the last two years, prior to withdrawal, was perceived as "the conflict".

Presently, great unease is also expressed over the growing attention that the issue of piracy has received. Most informants feel that interests – other than people – opaque in nature, such as "toxic waste" and the like are at stake.

Many Somalis utilize websites created by diaspora members as specialised, transnational Internet discussion groups which monitor the conflict at home, how it is perceived abroad and by the international community. In general, however, an explicit and overall perception of the conflict expressed by the diaspora does not seem to emerge. This partly may be attributed to an extremely politically fragmented situation at home, which ends up being reflected on the diaspora. Furthermore, the distance (not only spatial but also temporal and cultural) makes most potential actors unable to develop a comprehensive and global idea about the situation in Somalia[43]. This is not to say that the diaspora is not informed and updated, rather there is a lot of 'unsaid'.

Individuals that we have interviewed, who are members of organisations that have strong links to and counterparts in Somalia, tend to refer to a *local* picture of the Somali crisis. They generally relate to the regions of origin and where they might assist with development projects, or simply retain memories of and/or relationships with relatives. Insofar this *local* understanding of the conflict could contribute to the overall comprehension of the situation in Somalia.

Few diaspora associations present themselves as capable of understanding the conflict beyond the *local* dimension, and have in some cases also attempted to address the underlying structural factors within the Somali conflict. These are, however, exceptions and they tend to be one of the following: 1) development organisations which are present in different regions in Somalia (i.e. in the case of IIDA which operates in Mogadishu, Merka, Galgaduud and Kenya); 2) organisations whose leaders have been involved in Somali politics in the past, and are thus experienced in the complexities of such political dynamics; or 3) organisation that are involved in combating human rights violations and conflict through, for example, women's involvement in peacebuilding processes, which have established strategic partnerships at the institutional level, or are linked to international organisations[44].

4.2 Diaspora's role: Political protagonist and/or development actor?

As is mentioned above, the two main areas in which Somali organisations or individuals operate in Somalia are: *development* activities, through what we have defined as "transnational or translocal

[43] Especially true for people coming, as in the Italian case, from South-Central Somalia, the dire situation in the Horn of Africa prevents members of the diaspora from travelling home, especially for security reasons.

[44] I.e. in the case of ADEP, which wanted to push the TFG to include women in the Somali peace and state-building processes, regardless of how the government itself may be organised.

politics," and *political* activities/engagement, defined as "homeland politics". These strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive since often involvement in political processes may represent a development dimension.

During our field work, we encountered different actors and stakeholders that have expressed a genuine interest in the future of Somalia. We had the opportunity to be present at different seminars organised in Italy on this subject and to witness a renewed interest in Somalia.[45] We have noted different opinions regarding the role of the diaspora in the peacebuilding and state-building processes.

We found groups and individuals who are very keen on the diaspora's participation at this stage. This political "protagonist role" was both voiced by women's groups and also played by people who have been participating on an *individual* level in transnational political fora such as the SDC. Another example is the association ADEP, which felt that it was time to transfer the political experience (*political remittances*) gained abroad (as most members have been active in party politics, and held institutional responsibilities) to Somalia. In the case of ADEP, members have also been personally interested in playing an active role in the political processes taking place in Somalia. This is, despite criticism expressed by others who claim that women from the diaspora should not run for office in Somalia, and instead support women in Somalia and their attempts at political engagement (UN Instraw 2008a).

Other actors in the diaspora have expressed a more *discrete interest* in taking part directly in the peacebuilding process at home. These stakeholders are often less explicitly "political" and intend to take part in the process by either foregoing politics and focusing on development (i.e. ASF), or by operating "off of the radar" and establishing strong relationships with Somali groups on the ground (as in the case of IIDA-Somalia)[46]. The latter position is one which recognises the existence, dynamism and great experience gained by several local civil society organisations working on the ground, which have been living and operating despite the years of war in Somalia.

The third view of the role that the diaspora should play is far more pessimistic. According to this, the Somali crisis should be resolved by Somalis living in Somalia, and the diaspora is considered an external actor that has been abroad for an extended period of time and does not understand the present situation. This view is in some cases shared by Italian NGOs operating on the ground, which might reflect an existing competition between such NGOs and new potential actors represented by the diaspora. It might be the case that they are viewed as "outsiders" who are unprepared to perform development work, and which might upset long-standing power equilibriums.

4.3 Ambiguities between offensive and defensive strategies

Somali diaspora organisations working on the ground in Somalia predominantly operate at the local level by sending financial aid both as collective remittances through development projects, often directed at healthcare and school infrastructures, or through individual remittances aimed at providing shelter for specific families or communities. This is the case with various associations, such as ASF, Associazione Donne Somale Immigrate, Somaliyaa and AISCIA. These organisations have experimented different methods of working in Somalia: by implementing projects through local counterparts working on the ground (the Geelo association for ASF; the counterpart AISCIA operating in the Karaan district in Mogadishu); in partnership with (or through the support of)

[45] In Rome an International Conference on the *Somali Civil Society* was held in February 2008; in Turin in May 2008 another international Conference on the *Future of Somalia* was organised by the IIDA Network, attended by TFG representatives, SWA members and Italian local institutions; the ADEP/UN Instraw Project held two seminars in Milan and Bari in 2008; A conference was also organised in Milan in February 2009 by the well established ISPI Institution on the new electoral results in Somalia with international experts and diaspora organisations' representatives.

[46] Cfr. IN6; Seminar on the *Future of Somalia*, Turin, May 2008; Conference on *Somali Women: a new political actor for building peace*, organised in Turin on the 3rd of April 2009.

Italian NGOs[47] (as in the cases of IIDA and Geelo); or trying to establish a direct and more explicit partnership on the ground, such as the women's network called Somali Women Agenda (IIDA). In some cases, however, money is sent to the 'clan', and although, perhaps, the project to be funded is explicitly a hospital, it is not totally clear as to who manages the money and for which purpose it will go.

When dealing with resources that are destined for projects on the ground, it is important to note that not only the remittances sent by the diaspora, but also, and to a greater extent, the implementation and support of certain development projects that often are entangled with the interests of groups in conflict can have direct implications for the conflict. During an armed dispute such activities can very easily end up supporting militia leaders or warlords who might have some degree of power over the regions or villages where aid was supposed to have been distributed. This is an issue that some groups raise and others are either unaware of or find it too difficult to speak about (see Box 3).

Therefore, due to the serious lack of security, the line between a defensive and an offensive role for foreign aid in Somalia is very thin and difficult to control. Often it ends up depending on relationships and trust which groups and individuals establish within the different organisations. The fact that the diaspora's involvement in the conflict can be a sensitive issue illustrates that Somali organisations are often aware of the implications of their influence on the crisis. The acknowledgement of the lack of security in Somalia by the diaspora is a very crucial issue in Somalia and can translate into remittances and other types of material support for certain factions, as opposed to society in general. These are conscious decisions that may further fuel the conflict. For some groups, given the lack of governance, financial remittances are seen as a legitimate practice, even when these resources must be defended and secured through militia forces (see Box 3). Other groups are more aware of the 'offensive' role which aid may have and express concern for this risk. During the interview process, some individuals raised the issue of the nature of the projects that can be implemented in Somalia today. While a physical contribution, such as a hospital, is visible and has a symbolic relevance, and thus needs to be 'defended' – thus perpetuating and exacerbating though 'offending' strategies the militia system, conflict etc. – a training course for the empowerment of women or capacity-building, being less tangible, may be less problematic.

Box 3: Diaspora, Clan and Conflict: Offensive or Defensive Strategy?

According to Ioan M. Lewis, clan identification permeates all aspects of Somali culture and politics (Lewis, 2002). However, in Somalia, clan ideology and the militarisation of the clan occurred as the point of arrival of a social process, which produced a number of ruptures within the clan notion itself, both at the hierarchical and the ethical level. Mobilisation through clan identity is a process within which the diaspora played a leading role. The lack of security, and the general need of Somalis to protect their communities, brought different individuals and organisations within the diaspora to support, financially and politically, armed groups or local politicians from their respective clans (Guglielmo, 2008).

The boundaries between "defensive" and "offensive" practices undertaken by the clan communities, which are often supported by the diaspora, are extremely prone to change and correlate with the total lack of security in Somalia. However, diaspora remittances, often framed as a necessity to provide security to specific communities, can also be utilized for offensive activities, especially when tensions and violence are rising. In addition, it is crucial to acknowledge that the role of the diaspora in offensive activities, given the lack of control over the final destination of remittances, is not always an intended one. As the President of a women's organisations explains: "*as a diaspora group (…) we have to send three hundred dollars each month to Daynile in order to provide some degree of security for the Hospital we manage in collaboration with MSF. Daynile is our community of origin, so we chose to build up a Hospital there because our clan community comes from Daynile*".

[47] Including some Italian NGOs which have operated in Somalia for many years i.e. COSPE or COSV.

Other organisations that have a more explicit development mandate, instead, seem to be more aware that aid activities can also be counterproductive. They realize that due to issues of security, there is a price for bringing development to the region, which they are not always willing to pay. This is the case of a smaller project-oriented organisation, based in Milan*: "the project we are funding is in a village where the person who is running our counterpart association, now based in Nairobi, is from. As far as of today the reputation of this women in her town and perhaps also the fact that an orphanage doesn't raise the attention of military forces, left our project free of defence. We don't want to build a school and to have to pay also people with guns to defend it this is something which goes against our will".*

Sources**:** Lewis 2002; Guglielmo 2008; Cfr. IN4 and IN7.

4.4 Factors shaping conflict, divisions and co-operation within and between the *groups*

The diaspora in Italy appears to be divided due to the group's or community's internal problems, formed while abroad. These divisions occur along the following lines: social (class), political (party politics in Italy), and generational (1st generation vs. later generations immigrants). Processes through which residence country institutions engage diaspora groups in peacebuilding in Somalia may also contribute to the deepening of divisions as will be discussed below.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) promoted, however, one interesting pilot project which saw the involvement of diaspora women's groups in the Somali peace process, recognising in turn, these groups as a potential and effective peacebuilding agent.[48] The initiative was undertaken between 2007 and 2008, and was sponsored by the Italian MFA and implemented by ADEP[49] in collaboration with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN Instraw, 2008a; 2008b). This program, however, did not live up to the expectations, which were to involve a large number of Somali women in the project.

It is, however, early to evaluate this project which has undoubtedly had the positive effect of bringing attention to the Somali situation and to the potential involvement of Somali women in the political processes. Thus far, our understanding is that Italian institutions (namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) demonstrated their inexperience and lack of understanding regarding the complexities of diasporas in conflict, and of the Somali diaspora more specifically. A wrong assumption made by the Italian institutions was, perhaps, that the diaspora groups would collaborate because the gender aspect would eliminate other divisive factors. The project instead lead to the emergence of destructive competitions between different diaspora groups.

As one key Somali actor in Italy pointed out, peacebuilding processes based on gender or other 'parochial differences', such as clan, family, generation, and community, are doomed to fail for at least two reasons. First, the internal divisions (social, political and generational) of the Somali diaspora affect its organisations, even for those groups that are supposed to have an affinity for one another, such as women's organisations. Secondly, it is probably wrong to assume that by setting up peacebuilding processes, divisions will disappear. This is why women shouldn't be considered as the *exclusive* peacebuilding actor – under the oversimplified and wrong assumption that while women are for peace, men do war – but as facilitators of a more comprehensive process.[50]

Interestingly, the diaspora tends to become either *compact* and generate debates and discussions, or *fragmented* based on specific political events and positions occurring in Somalia. For example, in June 2006, after the Islamic Courts had taken Mogadishu, a lively debate started within diaspora

[48] The experiment came to an end and wasn't re-sponsored mostly due to changes within the Italian government.

[49] This Somali women's umbrella association works towards the empowerment of women, both in Somalia and as migrants in the diaspora, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and local authorities. In order to engage more women in the Somali national political process, ADEP was to implement, in collaboration with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) the project "Gender and Peace in Somalia–Implementation of Resolution 1325."

[50] Cfr. IN3.

groups on the potential to support this new political actor (Barnes and Hassan 2007). When Ethiopia intervened in Somalia, a strong mobilization process involving diaspora groups took place and new networks were formed with the aim of raising the diaspora's voice.

In most of the above mentioned cases, mobilisation in the diaspora reached beyond Italian national borders. An interesting example of this is the Somali Diaspora Congress (SDC) mentioned above, an advocacy organisation that opposed the invasion of Somalia and was set up to draw attention to the crisis. The creation of the SDC, and the appointment of 'Italian' delegates[51] in order to take part in this political experiment, gave the Somali diaspora the chance to set up a more coordinated approach in Italy. This resulted first in the creation of the Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte and then in the identification at the national level of potential Somali delegates (thus creating a platform in Italy through which 'Italians' could take part in the Somali diaspora Congress project).

As the president of the association explained:

> "at least two purposes laid on the formation of our association. The first was the need to go beyond the clan issue and particular factors within the diaspora in Piemonte. Unfortunately they still exist, but especially after the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia, these have been partially overcome, at least within our diaspora community in Turin. The second purpose involved the general need to build up a coordinated work within the diaspora community in order to make our voice stronger in a more comprehensive project named Somali diaspora Congress (SDC), which was set up in that period in Sweden. The SDC was a very huge diaspora coalition, which saw the participation of numbers of diaspora communities, not only from Europe. Between April and July 2007, different delegates met officially three times in Stockholm, Turin and London. The delegates' selection has been settled before the first meeting from the respective diaspora communities and in the occasion of the last meeting, which took place in London, we decided to join the opposition of ARS (Alliance of the Re-liberation of Somalia) which was formalized in Asmara in September 2007. As a prominent exponent of the Somali diaspora in Italy, and due to my past involvement in Somali politics I was appointed as a member of the Central Committee of the ARS, which has been composed by 195 representatives". (IN3)

Therefore, as is illustrated by this example, in the context of certain political circumstances in Somalia, the diaspora in Italy and its organisational dimension can be shaped by two related factors:

- *Conflict in Somalia:* This *has the potential to* spur unification within the diaspora. As an August 2008 SDC press release illustrates,[52] the will expressed by the diaspora to overcome internal fragmentations and the capacity of the organisation to influence the political process in Somalia can play a crucial role at specific moments during the conflict. This was true in the case of the Ethiopian intervention of Somalia in December 2006.
- *Transnational co-ordination between diaspora groups:* There is no debate at the national level in Italy regarding the role of the Somali diaspora in conflict resolution. In order to directly and positively influence the peacebuilding process in Somalia, several actors in the diaspora went beyond Italian borders, and created space for engagement at the transnational level in order to promote the diaspora's political role (i.e. SDC).

[51] In the sense of Somalis living in Italy.

[52] Summarised in five pillars: "1. Unconditional withdrawal of the Ethiopian occupation forces from all the territory in Somalia; 2. Immediate return of displaced people to their homes; 3. Un-hindered access of the humanitarian relief organisations to the millions of people that are suffering of acute shortage of food that could cause mass starvation; 4. End this barbaric attack against the helpless Somali people; 5. Establish an international war crimes tribunal and immediately investigate of all war related crimes committed in Somali"), see http://www.goobjoog.com/index.php/maqaallada/94-english/827-somali-diaspora-congress-press-release

5. NETWORKING AND CO-OPERATION

5.1Alliances in the countries of settlement: Beyond ethnic networks

In some organisations we observed the use of a *network-building strategy* between different diaspora groups as a tool which allows them to go beyond the local sphere, where they are based and to develop relationships in different cities. This networking strategy may help them to directly partake in peacebuilding activities in Somalia, transnationally and trans-*locally*. This is the case with IIDA through their participation in the Somali Women Agenda movement (founded in Nairobi) which has both SWA *focal points* in different cities in Italy and countries in the EU. These diaspora networks are, however, never exclusively ethnically or clan based. In addition to diaspora networks, other relationships are established and maintained that include several civil society organisations. Alliances in the development sector that we have traced include those between diaspora organisations and Italian NGOs.

Women's organisations also tend to have strong inter-ethnic relationships with civil society groups working on gender or migration issues, which include autochthonous as well as inter-ethnic groups. In the specific case of Somali women, the issue of female genital mutilation sparked exchanges and professional relationships between advocacy groups concerned with this topic at the local, national and transnational level. Also the topic of refugees and asylum seekers, which often focuses on the Horn of Africa and has recently made its way to the front pages of local newspapers (i.e. Turin and Rome), also became an area in which diaspora organisations have been involved or called for the involvement of local humanitarian organisations.[53] Professional relationships may also exist, for example, those established by the organisation AISCIA with medical personnel working at the Hospital Gemelli in Rome.

In addition, meaningful alliances exist at the political level led by diaspora members who participate in different Italian political parties. Such relationships often develop at the local level, where the Somali diaspora has both a strong influence and a great capacity to mobilise its community. In our field work, we found at least 5 Somalis who were members of leftist parties in different municipal contexts. In one case, an interviewee was elected to the Council for Foreigners' Communities in the Municipality of Rome.[54]

When political engagement is not confined to "foreigners' consultative bodies," but also entails the possibility of participating in national politics, holding Italian citizenship is crucial for voting and being elected.[55] In other cases, we found interviewees who were elected to the neighbourhood councils, others who, being proponents of political parties, were put onto electoral lists and some times have won elections in local institutions. These experiences have always left people with strong personal contacts within parties and institutions. It is important to emphasise that alliances between Somali associations and Italian political parties, both at the local and national levels, are mostly established through individual contacts rather than the associational dimension.

---

[53] The two cases of Rome and Turin are quite extreme. A hundred Somali refugees in Rome for example, have found shelter in the old buildings of the Somali Consulate and Embassy. These buildings belong to the Somali State, and because of the absence of a central government in Somalia, they are used by the Somali community in order to house refugees in transit through Italy. Somali women refugees used to stay in the Consulate and men in the Embassy. It is interesting to underline that no Italian NGO or local institution has been involved in providing basic needs to refugees in the Consulate or in the Embassy, while the "general responsibility" seems to be totally granted by few key Somali organisations or individuals (IN 1). In Turin instead, a plethora of actors—including civil society organisations together with Somali organisations and individuals—have been supporting the refugee cause and crisis generated around unbearable living conditions in some squatted buildings in via Bologna and corso Peschiera in the city, where people from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan found shelter in late January 2009.

[54] Formed in June 2004, representing one of the main links between foreign communities living in Rome and the Municipal Administration (Cardito, 2004).

[55] In one case we also found a candidate in one List for the European elections in 2009, for the North West Italian Region see: http://romanoborrelli.wordpress.com/2009/04/ 28/presentazione-della-lista-unitaria-comunista-e-anticapitalista/.

The establishment of networks has also, in some cases, been prompted by Italian local or national actors with the aim of identifying groups or individuals within the diaspora who could potentially play a peacebuilding role in Somalia. This is often the product of political alliances or informal relationships established between diaspora and institutional representatives.[56] It is crucial to stress that such processes are never merely *top-down*, in which only Italian institutions play a leading role, but are generated through relationships which can easily be perceived as "exclusionist" by other actors not involved from the beginning. Other practices undertaken by diaspora groups, instead, include bottom-up practices.[57]

5.2 Ties to the country of origin: Between institutional interlocutors and local *counterparts*

As mentioned earlier, the decision of whom to work with in Somalia is of crucial and strategic importance. When operating within 'transnational' scopes (either in development or in politics) it is interesting to note that the organisations assessed often have a counterpart working on the ground in Somalia. Their counterparts may more often be based in Kenya, i.e. IIDA*;* ASF, etc. In the case of IIDA an important interlocutor–created recently in Somalia also with the support of diaspora groups–is the Somali Woman Agenda, mentioned in earlier pages. Other groups have instead developed dialogues with high-level political figures, who, for instance operate in the diaspora in other countries, such as the UK or the United States, or in the opposition movement in Somalia (with ASR in Asmara as is the case of the SDC), or with TFG authorities[58] (UN Instraw, 2008).

Diaspora groups which have been in contact with high-level politicians (i.e. at the institutional level with ministries of the TFG), may seem not to be interested in finding an interlocutor on the ground. Such an attitude may contribute to widen the existing gap between Somali civil society groups and the diaspora, who only seems to speak with high-level institutions' representatives. However, in the complex context of Somalia today, this may also represent a strategy to subvert a system by which all the so-called 'local' actors on the ground can easily be identified as clan or a sub-clan affiliation (as discussed above in paragraph 3). For this reason, any strategic partnership with local actors may be deemed as a family-clan partnership or a clan-family driven project. The institutional actor may instead be considered *super partes*, able to designate partners or beneficiaries. Another option would be to preferably work with individuals who have a reputation among civil society and public opinion of acting beyond clan divisions.

Interestingly, in more than one case we found that people who operate on the ground in Somalia or in Nairobi are often returnees (people who have lived abroad for several years, often studying and working there) to Somalia or, more recently, Kenya.[59] These returnees have a network of diaspora organisations and international institutions, and NGOs and they know how to deal (or speak) with donors, international stakeholders, Somali organisations on the ground as well as their diaspora 'counterparts'. We have observed that the decision-making process of what must be done and how measures are implemented on the ground, lies in the hands of such charismatic leaders (one particular example for this is the Association Geelo, and is also true for IIDA).

---

[56] For example, in the case of the associative network ADEP, their project was implemented using ministerial funds. The idea of the project was developed in the occasion of a first encounter between the Italian former Under Secretary for Development Cooperation (a woman very active in a left wing party), with the various presidents of the associations part of the ADEP network, all of whom are also very active women in politics and in social affairs, which took place at the African Social Forum in Bamako (see Box 3 for further details).

[57] As in the case of the *Associazione Somali del Piemonte*, for whom the formalization process was instrumental for taking part in the SDC.

[58] ADEP met with the Prime Minister of Somalia and other members of the TFG in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in late January 2008 in order to lobby for women's increased participation and representation. ADEP has also gained the political support of other authorities, such as members of the European Parliament

[59] Cfr. Hansen (2007) concerning transnational returnees to Somaliland.

5.3 Transnational engagement and "openings" towards the diaspora

In Italy, the year 2007 was a crucial year for the Somali diaspora. In late December 2006, the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia caused lively debates within Somali diaspora communities. Results of some of these debates were the formalization of political programmes for direct intervention in Somali politics. The huge capacity of the diaspora, appreciated also by Somali politicians, prompted the diaspora to find tools to formalize its role as a mobilised political actor in Somali transitional institutions, operating at the same level of the main Somali political groups.

One of the first steps towards the involvement of the diaspora in Somali politics was taken by the opposition groups to the Transitional Federal Government in late 2006. In particular, during the foundation of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in September 2007, a significant number of seats of ARS' Central Committee were allocated to diaspora members. Since the ARS was a coalition, it also included representatives from Islamic courts and former parliamentarians of Transitional Institutions, which opposed President Abdullahi Yusuf. Therefore, the diaspora's role within the ARS was considered to be rather marginal. In fact, the Italian delegate who was appointed member of the Central Committee thought it was not correct to actively participate in this opposition group. As he explained:

> "*I have never been in Asmara because I was somewhat doubtful regarding the project as a whole, and also I did not appreciate all ARS' delegates (especially the Islamic Courts delegates, but unfortunately they were more powerful then others in the coalition). Even today, after the Djibouti agreement, I do not believe that the diaspora will be seriously considered. In addition, I do not think the TFG will succeeded, for two main reasons: 1. because it is not possible to create a government out of Somalia, with delegates living abroad for many years and 2. because of the general incompetence of the new ministers to rule, they are simply unfit*."[60]

For this reason, there was not much optimism on the part of the Somali diaspora in Italy with regard to the Islamist project set up in Somalia by Islamic Court leaders.

From May 2008 to January 2009, on the occasion of the Djibouti peace agreement between the ARS and the TFG, the diaspora's role was formalized in the context of the new enlarged parliament. The Djibouti agreement offered the diaspora new opportunities to actively participate in the peace process. Representatives of the Italian diaspora participated rather as individuals than as members of organisations. At least two factors can be mentioned to explain this trend:

- *Clan discourse*: The enlargement of the Transitional Institutions occurred according to the "4.5" formula,[61] which maintains the association to a clan as the most important condition of inclusion. Therefore, in order to be able to join the peace process and to be appointed to any official position, Somali diaspora members had to participate and talk with clan leaders.
- *The specific type of Somali 'associationism' in Italy:* At the surface, clan association is presented to be a minor factor contributing to the fragmentation of Somali diaspora organisations in Italy. In addition as we tried to explain earlier, that clan divisions can be overcome by the creation of networks. Notwithstanding, as clan has been chosen as a constitutional element by the new Somali institutions, Somali diaspora associations were *de facto* excluded from taking part in the peace process.

Looking at the openings offered by Somali politics to the diaspora, and their impact on diaspora organisations, it is clear that the choice to keep the "4.5" formula (and the clan formula) as a tool of legitimacy has produced new clan divisions within the diaspora. Therefore, even if the role the diaspora (in particular as individuals) can play in the peace process in Somalia has been formally recognized the diaspora in its organisational dimension is still far from being a recognized political actor.

[60] Cfr. IN3.
[61] See Box 1.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Somali diaspora in Italy, with its long history and social composition can claim for highly integrated people into the Italian society, this however occurs especially at the associations' leadership level. In sum Somali diaspora associations are led by Somalis which are well connected both with the Italian civil society and governmental institutions, especially at the local level. Instead the widespread situation of 'new comers' or the new generation of Somali migrants is still harsh, rendering them incapable of taking actively part in the diaspora associative life – if not as 'objects' lacking effective tools for integrating. In other words, the Somali community suffers from a certain degree of cleavage, which occurs between a 'historical group' of Somalis living in Italy since, and before, the civil war and those who arrived (and continue to arrive) more recently because of the conflicts' escalation in South Central Somalia.

The associational dimension, despite being a relatively new phenomenon, shows also high-potentials for future involvement of diaspora groups as peacebuilding actors in the conflict at home. This phenomenon emerged in correspondence with significant events such as the various Somali national reconciliation processes or crucial political changes at home (i.e. the Ethiopian invasion in late 2006).

Somali diaspora organisations often do not term their involvement and activities in Somalia/ Somaliland as 'peacebuilding' activities, but rather operate towards change. The two areas of engagement are *development* and/or *political processes*.

Projects and initiatives undertaken by diaspora groups aiming at Somalia but also in Italy are implemented through *dense networks* that have been established in Italy, Somalia/ Somaliland but also on a transnational level. Most networks in the residence country are inter-ethnic; often linked to local level party politics, in which associations' leaders or members participate (although sometimes they also engage in national institutions). In the origin country the associations' networks (depending on the nature of the projects) are linked to Italian NGOs; local counterparts, sometimes also family-clan communities, or high level civil servants and national institutions (i.e. of the TFG). Women's organisations' networks are very active also transnationally.

It was our aim to investigate the diasporas' perception of the conflict. One result is that interviewed diaspora members find it difficult to speak of the conflict beyond a *local* dimension, which is rarely directly judged by the interviewee but rather constitutes a mix of views of family, friends, and relatives. During our research we had to learn to take into account that the situation and conflict in Somalia is subject to continuous change. Between the beginning of our investigations and the time of writing, the Ethiopian troops have withdrawn from Somalia, a new TFG and presidency, have been set up with the consequence of entirely new configurations of power in the country.

Due to its dynamic character the conflict at 'home' directly affects the diaspora's perception on its role as potential development actor and its effective ability to be considered as a peacebuilding agent on the ground. More so, the diaspora can also be perceived in home countries as an "outsider " actor, and is thus not in the best position in the eyes of the local population to take part in political and peace-building processes. It is fundamental for diaspora groups that wish to operate in Somalia, to build and negotiate alliances with the local population.

Diaspora seems to be more confident in finding its place at the "local" rather than at the "national" level—an important difference compared to other national and international agents. However, as we have tried to argue here, the local strategy of the Somali diaspora to act at "home" may in some cases be perceived by antagonist factions, actors or clans as "offensive". In other words, the *system of conflict*s in Somalia plays a significant role in shaping diasporas' activities as well as in excluding or including diaspora associations on the ground. Depending on the specific conflict, perceptions, understandings, and common stigmatisations, may be viewed to be offensive or defensive, rather than the diaspora activities *per se*.

One must, however, not overlook the difficulties that Somali organisation are faced with in Italy and the factors that can frustrate their potential. Two factors come to mind in particular:

1. The Italian environment, or *political opportunity structure:* The 'immigration discourse' is framed around terms of security and public order and diaspora members are far from being considered actors of peacebuilding. Instead—despite the common language and culture shared with Italy due to the colonial past, a permit of stay is quite hard to obtain for Somali citizens; conditions for refugees and asylum seekers' are worse compared to other EU countries. Therefore many Somali refugees had to move to other European countries. It is in this context, that diaspora organisations have voiced their major concern focusing on migrants' conditions and issues rather than on development/peacebuilding projects in the origin country.
2. Lack of co-ordination between associations and personal competition. Lack of co-ordination is rooted in political and individual antagonisms (and to a lesser and less visible extend to clan associations). These competitions at times undermine organisations' involvement in peacebuilding processes.

Therefore, engaging diaspora organisations in Italy – as compared to other European countries – seems to be hampered by a "double wall". First, the almost total absence of institutional policies for engaging diasporas, which impedes any dialogue and common ground for involving diaspora organisations in development, peacebuilding etc. Second, the peculiar condition of Somali immigrants in Italy and the legal limbo in which they are forced to live causes most organisations to call for improvements in their living conditions in Italy rather than devoting their energies to establishing solid and transnational networks in order to serve as development actor at home.

For the various dimensions and factors highlighted through this study, the Somali associational dimension is more effective at the local level in the country of residence, or at the transnational level by establishing strategic alliances with NGOs or other partners abroad, while involvement at home in national and political processes seems to be best realised by individuals in the diaspora.

REFERENCE LIST

Aden Sheikh, Mohamed and Pietro Petrucci. 1991. *Arrivederci a Mogadiscio*, Roma: Edizioni Associate.

Ambrosini, Maurizio. 2001. *La fatica di integrarsi*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Barnes, Cedric and Harun Hassan. 2007. *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*. London: Chatham House. Available via <http://www.chathamhouse.org.United Kingdom>, accessed 24 May 2009).

Blommaert, Jan and Marco Martiniello. 1996. "Ethnic mobilisation, multiculturalism, and the political process in two Belgian cities: Antwerp and Liège" Innovation, Vol. 9, No. 1: 51-73.

Bolaffi, Guido and Maria Rosaria Damiani. 1996. *Una politica per gli immigrati*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Bonifazi, Corrado. 1998. *L'immigrazione straniera in Italia*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Bousetta, Hassan. 2000. "Institutional theories of immigrant ethnic mobilisation: relevance and limitations." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2: 229-245.

Bushra Judy and Judith Gardner (Eds.). 2004. *Somalia: the untold story. the war through the eyes of Somali women*, London: Pluto.

Calchi Novati, Giampaolo. 1994. "Italy in the Triangle of the Horn: Too Many Corners for a Half Power." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3: 369-385.

Caponio, Tiziana. 2005. "Policy networks and immigrants' associations in Italy. The cases of Milan, Bologna and Naples." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 5: 931-950.

Cardito, Cecilia. 2004. "I diritti politici dei residenti stranieri in Europa: il caso di Roma", *Unpublished Paper*.

Caritas. 2004. Caritas (2004), *Dossier statistico 2004*, Roma: Anterem.

Ceschi, Sebastiano and Andrea Stocchiero. 2007. *Relations Transnationales et Codéveloppement, Associations et Entrepreneurs Sénégalais entre Italie et Lieux d'Origine*. Turin: L'Harmattan.

Chaloff, Jonathan. 2005. "Italy." In Jan Niessen, Yongmi Schibel and Cressida Thompson, eds. *Current Immigration Debates in Europe: A Publication of the European Migration Dialogue*. Available via <http://www.migpolgroup.com/multiattachments/3007/DocumentName/EMD_Italy_2005.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2009.

Cliffe, Lionel. 1999. "Regional dimensions of conflict in the Horn of Africa" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1: 89-111.

Decimo, Francesca. 2007. "Globalising Diasporic Networks: Somali Female Workers in Italy." In Kusow Abdi and Stephanie Bjork, eds. *From Mogadishu to Dixon. The Somali Diaspora in a Global Context*. Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

European Council (EC). 2003. *Council Regulation* No 343/2003 of 18 February, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003R0343:EN: HTML [Last accessed September 2009]

Faist, Thomas. 2000. *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2005. "The Migration-Security Nexus: International Migration and Security before and after 9/11." *Working Paper*, No. 9. University of Bielefeld, Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development.

Farah, Nuruddin. 2003. *Rifugiati: voci dalla diaspora somala*. Roma: Meltemi.

Gardner, Judith and Judy El Bushra. 2004. *Somalia: The Untold Story; The war through the eyes of Somali women*, London, Sterling: CIIR and Pluto Press.

Guglielmo, Matteo. 2008. *Somalia. Le ragioni storiche del conflitto*. Torrazza Coste: Altravista Edizioni.

Hansen, Peter. 2007. *Revolving Returnees. Meanings and Practices of Transnational Return among Somalilanders*. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen.

Healy, Sally. 2008. *Lost Opportunities in the Horn of Africa: how conflicts connect and peace agreements unravel*. London: Chatham House.

IIDA-Italy, 2008-2009. *Tahrib Newsletter*, n. 1; 2; 3; 4 and "Special issue" July 2009, with the support of the Province of Turin;

Ireland, Patrick. 1994. *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity. Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Ireland, Patrick. 2000. "Reaping What They Sow: Institutions and Immigrant Political Participation in Western Europe" in Koopmans, Ruud and Paul Statham. (eds.) *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics. Comparative European Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Istat. See: National Institute of Statistics Italy.

Kleist, Nauja. 2008. "Mobilising 'the Diaspora': Somali Transnational Political Engagement". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34*(2), 307-323.

Koopmans, Ruud and Paul Statham, eds. 2000. *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics. Comparative European Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2003. "How National Citizenship Shapes Transnationalism: Migrant and Minority Claims-making in Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands." In Christian Joppke and Ewa Koopmans, Ruud, Paul Statham, Marco Giugni and Florence Passy. 2005. *Contested Citizenship. Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kosic, Ankica and Anna Triandafyllidou. 2005. "Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Italy." Country Report prepared for the European research project POLITIS, Oldenburg. Available via <http//:www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe>, accessed March 2009.

Lewis, Ioan Myrddin. 1994. *Blood and Bone. The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press.

_____. 2002. *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.

Marchal, Roland. 2000. "Globalization and its impact on Somalia." Nairobi: UNDP/UNDOS, January.

Marta, Claudio. 2008. *L'"Altro" Nemico*. Napoli: UNI Press.

Menkhaus, Ken. 2004. "Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism." *Adelphi Paper* No. 364. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2007. "The Crisis in Somalia: A Tragedy in Five Acts." *African Affairs*, Vol. 106, No. 204: 357-90.

Mezzetti, Petra. 2007. "Associationnisme et entreprise sénégalaise à Milan. Perspectives et limites pour un co-développement entre le différentes territories." In Sebastiano Ceschi and Andrea Stocchiero, eds. *Relations Transnationales et Co-développement, Associations et Entrepreneurs Sénégalais entre Italie et Lieux d'Origine.* Turin: L'Harmattan.

_____. 2008. "Migrants' Social and Political Participation: Associative Networks and Dynamics of Mobilisation in a Local Context." PhD Thesis, University of Milano-Bicocca, Faculty of Sociology, Department of Sociology, Doctoral Programme in Urban Europe, Unpublished.

Ministero dell'Interno – Dipartimento per le Libertà Civili e l'Integrazione, *L'Immigrazione in Italia: tra Identità e Pluralismo*, Pubblicazione presentata in occasione della Seconda Conferenza Nazionale sull'Immigrazione, Milano, 25 e 26 settembre 2009.

Mukhtar, Mohamed Haji. 2003. *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*, Oxford: The Scarecrow Press.

National Institute of Statistics Italy. 2002-2009. "Bilancio Demografico e popolazione residente straniera al 31 dicembre per sesso e cittadinanza". Available via http://demo.istat.it/ (last accessed September 2009).

Orozco Manuel, 2003. *Hometown Associations and their Present and Future Partnerships: New Development Opportunities?*, Inter-American Dialogue Report commissioned by the U.S. Agency for International Development, Washington, DC, September.

Ostergaard-Nielsen, Eva. 2003a. *Transnational Politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany*. London and New York: Routledge.

_____. 2003b. "The Politics of Migrants' Transnational Political Practices." *International Migration Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3: 760-786.

_____. 2006. "Diasporas and Conflict Resolution – Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?" *DIIS Brief*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, March. Paris, Roland. 1997. "Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism." *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2: 54-89.

Pastore, Ferruccio. 2004. *Dobbiamo temere le migrazioni?* Rome-Bari: Laterza.

Pestalozza, Luigi. 1973. *Somalia, cronaca di una rivoluzione.* Bari: Dedalo Libri.

Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, Robert. 1993. *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

UNHCR. 2008. "I rifugiati in Italia." Rome: UNHCR. Available via <http://www.unhcr.it/news/dir/30/view/176/scheda-09-17600.html>, accessed April 2009.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN Instraw). 2008a. "Final Report of the Seminars held in Milan (23-24 February 2008) and Bari.Gender and Peace in Somalia—Implementation of Resolution 1325". 3-4 May. Available via <http://www.un-instraw.org/en/gps/gps-homepage/somalia-project.html>, accessed April 2009.

_____. 2008b. "Women, Peace and Security in Somalia: Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. A UN-Instraw Background Paper." Available via <http://www.uninstraw. org/en/gps/gps-homepage/somalia-project.html>, accessed April 2009.

UN Instraw. See: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Vertovec, Steven. 1999. "Minority associations, networks and public policies: re-assessing relationships." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1: 21-42.

_____. 2004. "Migrant transnationalism and modes of transformation", in *International Migration Review,* 38 (3), pp: 970-1001;

Warnecke, Andrea, ed. 2009. "Diaspora Networks in Europe: Summary Report of Initial Data Collection on Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean Diaspora Organisations in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom." Unpublished DIASPEACE Report. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion.

Zincone, Giovanna. 2005. "Italian immigrants and immigration policy-making: Structures, actors and practices." *Working Paper*. Amsterdam: International Migration**,** Integration and Social Cohesion.

Zincone Giovanna and Tiziana Caponio. 2006. "Immigrant and immigration policy-making: The case of Italy." *Working Paper*: Country report. Amsterdam: International Migration**,** Integration and Social Cohesion. Available via <http//:www.imiscoe.org/publications/>, accessed March 2009.

Websites

http://www.un-instraw.org/en/gps/gps-homepage/somalia-project.html
http://www.unhcr.it/
http://www.goobjoog.com/index.php/maqaallada/94-english/827-somali-diasporacongress-press-release
http://romanoborrelli.wordpress.com/2009/04/28/presentazione-della-lista-unitariacomunista-e-anticapitalista/

ANNEX

1. List of Interviews

Interview Codes	Nationality and Gender	Type of Organisation/Role	Place and Date
1. IN1	Somali, Female	Member of a Network of Somali women's associations (comprising also individuals); member of a second generation association	Rome, April 2009; May 2009
2. IN2	Somali, Male	President Somali community association	Florence, FEB 2009
3. IN3	Somali, Male	President, Somali community association	Turin, MAR 2009
4. IN4	Somali, Female	President, Somali Women's association	Rome, SEP2008 FEB2009
5. IN5	Somali, Female	President of an Inter-ethnic women's organisation	Milan, APR 2009
6. IN6	Somali, Female	Deputy Director Somali women's organisation	Turin, NOV2008
7. IN7	Somali, Female	President "Project-oriented" associations	Milan, NOV2008
8. IN8	Somali, Female	President, Cultural association	Milan, SEPT 2008
9. IN9	Italian, Male	Spokesperson, lobbying Forum	Rome, September 2008
10. IN10	Italian, Female	Former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in charge of Cooperation	Rome, November 2008
11. IN11	Somali, Female	Member, Somali Women's network	Rome, March 2009
12. IN12	Somali, Female	President of a Project-oriented Somali Association	Rome, March 2009
13. IN13	Somali, Female	President, Somali Women Association	Rome, September 2008
14. IN14	Somali, Female	President, "Project-oriented" association	Rome, June 2009
15. IN15	Italian-Somali, Female	writer	Rome, May 2009
16. IN16	Somali, Male	Coordinator of a "Project-oriented" association	Rome, May 2009
17. IN17	Somali, Female	Member of a 2nd generation association	Rome, May 2009
18. IN18	Somali, Male	Member of a 2nd generation association; worked in an Italian NGO, active in Somalia	Rome, May 2008
19. IN19	Italian-Somali, Female	Writer	Rome, April 2009
20. IN20	Somali, Male	Employed, Universal TV	Rome, June 2009
21. IN21	Somali, Male	Lecturer, University "Roma 3"	Rome, June 2009
22. IN22	Somali, Male	Member, Lobbying Forum	Rome, December 2008

2. List of Mapped Associations

Transnational Fora

1. Somali Diaspora Congress (individual membership), transnational network
2. Associazione Donne Diaspora - *Somali Diaspora Women Network* (Women's transnational network)

Womens' Networks

3. IIDA, Turin and Florence (women's network)
4. ADEP – Associazione Diaspora e Pace (women's network including associations and individuals, based in different cities)

Women's organisations, also including inter-ethnic associations

5. Alma Mater, Turin
6. ADIR - Donne in Rete per lo Sviluppo e la Pace, Milan
7. Associazione Nosotras, Florence
8. Punto di Partenza, Livorno
9. Associazione Donne Somale Immigrate, Rome

Lobbying/Advocacy Fora

10. Associazione Nazionale della Comunità Italo Somala (Ancis), Rome
11. Forum Italia-Somalia per la Pace e la Ricostruzione, Rome

Project-oriented/developmental/non-govermental organisations

12. ASF, Associazione Senza Frontiere, Milan (this also presents a membership based on gender)
13. Soomaaliya, Turin
14. Associazione Stella Bianca, Alessandria
15. Nuova A.Do.So.E Onlus, Rome
16. A.c.s.a - Associazione di cooperazione allo sviluppo in East Africa, Rome
17. AISCIA - *Associazione* Italo Somala Comunità Internazionale e Africana, Rome

Community (ethnic) associations

18. Associazione Culturale Comunità Somale, Milan
19. Federazione delle Comunità Somale in Italia, Florence
20. Associazione per le Famiglie Somale, Milan
21. Associazione Comunità Somala del Piemonte, Turin
22. Associazione Mamme e Bimbi Somali, Milan (this is a 'historical association', not active any more)

Second generations' organisation

23. Iftiin, Rome (informal discussion group, which has stopped its activities at the time of writing this work).