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The Architecture of Militarization and Conflict in Somalia

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Abstract

The ongoing Somalia conflict is rooted in a history of foreign influence, complex social networks, economic marginalization, the abuse of sovereignty, and the disintegration of the state. These processes have initiated the formation of new spaces and systems that establish and extend conflict through militarization and violence. Attempts by outside actors, such as humanitarian agencies and military interventions, have been undermined by the perpetuation of militarization and the politicization of space by non-state actors.

The transformation of urban spaces by militant groups, notably Harakat al-Shabaab, has established a system of power outside the judicial mechanisms of sovereignty. Whereas the Transitional Federal Government struggles to impose the rule of law upon a fragmented landscape at the decree of the international community, the roots of its sovereign power lie outside of Somalia, rendering its mechanisms of juridical law inept to impose order. Al-Shabaab has otherwise acquired power through the control of urban spaces, the appropriation of Laanta Buur prison, and the proliferation of militant training camps. These sites and structures are analyzed utilizing the works of Foucault and Deleuze to understand how such sites function as mechanisms of power and to determine strategic assets for conflict stabilization.
# Table of Contents

**Abstract**  

**Table of Contents**  

**List of Figures**  

**List of Abbreviations**  

**Introduction**  

I. Research Objective and Methodology  
II. Presentation of Manuscript  

**Section I: The History of Conflict**  

An Early History of the Somali People  
Centuries of Foreign Dominance  
Independence from Colonial Rule  
Civil War in the 1990s  
The Fragmentation of the State  
Section Summary  

**Section II: The Urban Spatial Form of Conflict and Militarization**  

New War and Militarization  
Ungoverned Space  
The Urban Concentration of Conflict  
Combat in Mogadishu  
Humanitarian Space  
Spaces of Displacement  
The Militant Training Camp  
Laanta Buur Prison  
Section Summary
SECTION III: THE ARCHITECTURES OF POWER AND STABILITY 46

THE PURSUIT OF SOVEREIGNTY 46
WAR AND POWER 49
DISCIPLINE AND CONTROL AT LAANTA BUUR 52
THE AL-SHABAAB MILITANT TRAINING CAMP AT LAANTA BUUR PRISON 55
THE CONFLICT CITY AND THE SOVEREIGN STATE 59
SECTION SUMMARY 63
FINAL THOUGHTS 65

BIBLIOGRAPHY 66
List of Figures

FIGURE 1 MAP OF SOMALIA ______________________________________________ 4
FIGURE 2 THE SOMALI CLAN SYSTEM________________________________________ 7
FIGURE 3 THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF SOMALI CLANS IN SOMALIA __________ 7
FIGURE 4 AFGOOGYE CORRIDOR OCTOBER 2007- JULY 2010 _________________________ 32
FIGURE 5 AFGOOGYE CORRIDOR 2010 ______________________________________ 33
FIGURE 6 AFGOOGYE CORRIDOR SETTLEMENTS 2010 _____________________________ 33
FIGURE 7 LOCATION OF LAANTA BUUR MILITANT TRAINING CAMP ________________ 36
FIGURE 8 LAANTA BUUR MILITANT TRAINING CAMP AIRFIELD _____________________ 37
FIGURE 9 LAANTA BUUR MILITANT TRAINING CAMP ____________________________ 37
FIGURE 10 SOMALI TURKLES WITHIN LAANTA BUUR MILITANT TRAINING CAMP _______ 39
FIGURE 11 TRADITIONAL SOMALI TURKLE ____________________________________ 39
FIGURE 12 LAANTA BUUR PRISON AND MILITANT TRAINING CAMP __________________ 42
FIGURE 13 LAANTA BUUR PRISON ___________________________________________ 42
FIGURE 14 ROAD LEADING TO LABAATAN JIROW PRISON ____________________________ 43
FIGURE 15 LABAATAN JIROW PRISON _________________________________________ 43
List of Abbreviations

AMISOM African Union Mission in Somalia
COIN Counter Insurgency
IDP Internally Displaced Person
IHL International Humanitarian Law
NGO Non-Government Organization
NSS National Security Service of Somalia
TFG Transitional Federal Government
SCIC Supreme Council of Islamic Courts
UIC United Islamic Courts
UNITAF Unified Task Force
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees
UNISOM United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNOCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Introduction

I. Research Objective and Methodology

Somalia contains cities riddled by bullets, an infrastructure depleted from neglect, and an unforgiving landscape occupied by squandering displacement camps. While various actors seek to stabilize the ongoing war and found a functional state, how can the transition from war to peace occur within such an environment? If Somalia is to ever function as a sovereign nation, the physical conditions will need to transform as a landscape formed by violence must become a landscape of peace and healing. This physical transformation is essential as the proliferation and reproduction of violence does not exist in a vacuum, but is enclosed by space and embedded in the built environment. The relationship between the built environment and conflict is illustrated by general acts of terrorism where the targeting of a population is accompanied by the destruction of the surrounding environment. It is the destruction of the built environment such as the café or the plaza, where the loss of human life is compounded by the loss of human spaces, magnifying the repercussions of fear and intimidation. While the bomb itself is the instrument of mortal violence, it is the greater destruction of the surrounding space that provides terrorists with a vehicle to control populations and emphasize social vulnerabilities.

To analyze the dimensions of conflict in Somalia is to reveal a patchwork of continually shifting spaces, each embodying the dynamics of power and suffering. These spaces are not autonomous, but overlap in an entangled network and at times are distinguished by concentrated nodes; architectures of violence, capitalist production, and militarization. If Somalia is to become stabilized through intervention,
such an intervention must be designed to transform the shifting terrain of conflict into a productive asset for peace.

To interpret the dynamics of contemporary conflict in Somalia, it is necessary to adapt a fluid methodology that is responsive to the irregularities of the problem. Whether an act of violence is spontaneous or pre-meditated, successful in its objective or otherwise, the distribution of violence across time, space, and form does not fit inside the rigid conventions of scientific measurement. To understand the spatial dynamics of the Somali conflict the analytical tools must be as malleable and dynamic as the problem itself.

The research presented not only attempts to understand the socio-economic and political factors that define contemporary Somalia, but explore how space and architecture articulate and reproduce the processes of militarization and conflict. By discussing the spatial forms in which conflict is manifest, and describing the conflict spaces at a variety of scales, I rely upon the works of Foucault to determine how these spaces contain power and how this power is implemented upon the landscape. I then utilize Deleuze and Guattari’s essay City/State to analyze prospects of stabilization and realignment of the collapsed state of Somalia with the international community as a sovereign, functional state.

II. Presentation of Manuscript

Following an overview of Somali history and the actors in the contemporary conflict in Section I, I discuss Somalia’s conflict at a variety of scales in Section II. I examine the broad trends of new war, the urban concentration of violence, the role of
humanitarian space, and the emerging spaces found between humanitarian and conflict zones as a byproduct of forced displacement. Lastly, I locate and describe the site of a militant training camp in a remote location, and describe the unique relationship of the camp to an adjacent prison facility. In Section III, I analyze how these spaces and architectures within Somalia contribute to processes of conflict, and analyze how these processes contribute to the interaction of functioning power relations. Upon examining the territorial implications of sovereignty, I introduce Foucault’s theories on the discipline society to deconstruct the sources of power within Somalia, with a particular focus on the militant training camp. The relationship between Somalia’s urban conflicts and the sovereignty of the state is lastly analyzed in light of Deleuze and Guattari’s essay City/State, in an attempt to identify assets for stabilization and future development of the nation.
Figure 1 Map of Somalia

Source: United Nations 2011
Section I: The History of Conflict

The history of the Somali people has been foremost shaped by regional geography, complex social systems, and the powers of foreign influence. After centuries of dominance by foreign actors, the vision of a unified, sovereign Somalia emerged as a widely desired, yet shortly experienced, vision amongst the Somali people. Subject to an aggressive political dictatorship and Cold War influences, Somalia’s ultimate collapse into civil war during an era of globalization promoted the emergence of powerful militants and regional instability.

An Early History of the Somali People

Occupying over 637,000 square kilometers of the northeastern corner of Africa, Somalia forms the continental Horn, separated from the Arabian Peninsula by the Gulf of Aden. Primarily a flat, rocky plateau, sloping into undulating hills, the terrain is long familiar with seasonal draughts, dust storms, and the severe flooding of spring rains.¹ The urban centers along the coast, such as Mogadishu, were the consequence of Arab settlement along the coast. This process of colonization introduced centralized government and the religion of Islam.² Several coastal cities were established, such as Zeila and Berbera, yet the city of Mogadishu quickly became among the most important due to its strategic location at the crossroads of Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia), and

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Arabia. As it grew to become the permanent settlement of the foreign merchant class, Mogadishu was the foothold for Muslim expansion into Eastern and North Africa.  

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, Mogadishu exerted widespread regional influence along the east African Bennadir coast by means of trade, politics, and religious conversion. Over time, sufis, Islamic mystics traveled from Mogadishu into the interior of the Shabelle and Juban, valleys and integrated among the nomadic pastoral clans, spread Islam, and initiated a gradual transformation of the socio-political landscape. The interior of Somalia underwent dramatic changes as large-scale migration redistributed power among a complex system of clans and territorial land use (Figures 2 and 3). The first traditional record of large-scale interior migration took place between the 10th and 12th centuries, changing the ethnic composition of Somalia significantly by the 18th century.

These two phenomena, the regional socioeconomic influence of the coastal cities and the interior migratory shifts, remain a consistent theme within the early history of Somalia as the two trends developed along separate, parallel, and at times, crossed trajectories. Warfare was constant as the migratory shifts were not a peaceful process, but were fraught with inter-tribal conflict while foreign powers wrestled for coastal domination. The ongoing conflict between powerful clans presented a weakness to European colonists who exploited local conflicts for personal gain in an attempt to control the strategic, yet unstable, geography of Somalia. 

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3 Lewis, 20-22.  
4 Ibid.
Figure 2 The Somali Clan System
Source: Author 2011

Figure 3 The Geographic Distribution of Somali Clans in Somalia
Source: CIA Map of Somalia Clans 2002
Centuries of Foreign Dominance

In the 15th century, Portugal was the first European power to arrive at the Somali coast. Unpredictable sieges by the Portuguese and drawn-out campaigns by interior clans eventually undermined regional economic stability. The disruption of trade and power shifts among internal clans devastated the urban centers, facilitating Oman’s aspirations of coastal control. Oman’s domination of the entire coastline was short-lived, lasting only from 1824 to 1827, when Mogadishu rebelled and declared independence at the promise of support by the British Indian Navy.

In the 19th century, Somalia became the site of a competition for power and control by Britain, France, Italy, Turkey, and to a lesser extent, Egypt and Abyssinia. By 1897, the region was thoroughly partitioned. Britain occupied two areas of Somalia; the northern coast which later became known as British Somaliland, and the area west of the Juba River, known as the Northern Frontier District of British Kenya. In 1925, Britain ceded a large swath of the territory to Italy, including Mogadishu. Italy designated Mogadishu the colonial capital, and set forth on constructing an array of large-scale building and infrastructure projects. During the following decades, Mogadishu expanded dramatically.

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Independence from Colonial Rule

The prospect of an independent Somalia did not arise until 1960, when Italian territories and Somaliland were united. However, the colonial boundaries of French Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia divided much of the land occupied by Ethnic Somalis. These boundaries created tremendous frictions for several decades, as nomadic pastoralists were continually separated from family, waterholes, and pastures by international demarcations with no immediate recognition.

In 1969, army officer Siyad Barre acquired control of the recently established independent state of Somalia by means of a military coup. Shortly after, Barre’s independent Somalia initiated a military campaign against Ethiopia to acquire the Ogaden region. This battle was more than a conflict between old enemies over a historically disputed territory; it was a proxy conflict of the Cold War, with foreign support and interventions by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba.⁹

Domestically, Siyad Barre’s regime advanced a campaign of *scientific socialism*. Supported by military aid from the Soviet Union throughout the 1970s, Barre initiated a variety of programs to reinforce state power, such as abolishing the recognition of clan distinctions, negating patron-client relationships, and efforts to enhance economic growth.¹⁰ Barre also introduced several new branches of government to consolidate power through the investigation of offenses and punishment of disloyalty. The greatly feared National Security Service (NSS) was directed by KGB trained commanders, and was infamous for arbitrarily arresting local citizens. The NSS and National Security

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Courts reported directly to the president, as did local militias, police, and the prison system. By introducing a large body of new laws to seize control of land, water, civil and social services, and political processes, Barre attempted to dominate all facets of Somali society. As the nation began to deteriorate under his rule, Barre abandoned his socialist visions and began to manipulate long-standing tribal divisions to exert control upon the population. When many tribes began to retaliate, the government reacted with bombing campaigns and widespread civil war erupted. In 1991, the regime of Siyad Barre was finished.11

Civil War in the 1990s

After Barre abandoned Mogadishu and greater Somalia to the aggressive violence of civil war, the international community perceived the conflicts of Somalia during the early 90’s as situations of violent anarchy; however, it was more precisely “a struggle for territorial control among segments of the Somali population endowed with unequal assets (political, military, commercial).”12 As time progressed, the conflict evolved from a circumstance of intertribal competition to acquire political control into a large-scale conflict between the *abbaanduule* (War Lords) over weapons and economic resources. These groups fought one another for access to “land, port facilities, and urban real estate, which in turn could be used to sustain networks of patronage and

11 Ibid, 11-17
Like Barre, the abbaanduule exacerbated clan differences to enhance their own position of power.\textsuperscript{14}

In 1992, the UN and the United States established the joint UNISOM intervention to secure and stabilize Somalia known as UNITAF. After a U.S. black hawk helicopter was shot down and 18 U.S. soldiers lost their lives, UNITAF lost popular domestic support, and the U.S. withdrew forces in 1994. One year later, UNISOM was finished and the situation in Somalia could only be considered for the worse as the nation was abandoned by the international community.\textsuperscript{15}

Following the withdrawal of UNISOM, Somalia became subject to a rampant battle for control by competing militant groups. After 1994, Somalia became the site of an ongoing low-intensity conflict, although the deaths of some leadership figures brought brief periods of peace.\textsuperscript{16} These years of dispersed conflict were primarily situated in Mogadishu and Kismayo, reconfiguring the social landscape as populations were displaced, city centers were destroyed, and new settlements evolved. Mixed communities deteriorated and new settlement patterns emerged entirely around tribal affiliations.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Peter Little, \textit{Somalia: Economy Without State} (Oxford: James Curry, 2003), 55.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Cassanelli, 266-275.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Marchal, “Resilience of a City at War,” 2006, 213.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
The Fragmentation of the State

In 2006, a solution emerged out of civil society with the creation of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) which was unified against the oppression of the abbaanduule. Concurrently, world powers attempted to construct and implement the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), a secular institution that otherwise had limited power or influence. The United States quickly supported the TFG, claiming the UIC had connections with the terrorist organization *al-Qaeda* in wake of the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. In contrast, the UIC achieved far more local support by unifying clan factions and implementing Islamic law, or *sharia*, via the creation of the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (SCIC). Western attempts to broker a power sharing agreement between the SCIC and the TFG were unsuccessful as both sides refused to participate.

For the UIC to implement rule of law throughout Somalia, they relied on the assistance of the militant group *Harakat al-Shabaab*, the Youth Movement for Global Jihad, as the implementing military force. *Al-Shabaab*, also known as *The Boys* or *Youth* in Arabic, was known for their extremist interpretation of Islam and their capacity for violence. The UIC and al-Shabaab maintained a functioning partnership until the invasion of AMISOM, the African Union effort to stabilize Somalia in partnership with the TFG.

Inspired by the longstanding hostilities between Ethiopia and Somalia, *al-Shabaab* became an unshakable force for Somali unity. Equipped with global financial

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20 Verhoeven, 477.
networks and specialized training by foreign militants to mobilize and undermine Ethiopian forces, by 2009, al-Shabaab emerged as the dominant military force in Somalia. As smaller local militant groups joined al-Shabaab, the organization became more sophisticated with training camps, expanded financial networks, and a hierarchical, organizational structure.

Shabaab’s international linkages have continued to expand, reinforcing al-Shabaab’s power in Somalia. Remittance flows from the Somali diaspora are channeled into refugee camps and local communities, providing conduits to fund militants while the dire conditions of the refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia establish recruiting centers for frustrated youth with no livelihood prospects. Al-Shabaab has also firmly rooted itself within the economic linkages of the Somali diaspora, especially in Kenya where many business owners maintain financial ties to al-Shabaab. Although many Somalis do not support the extremist views of al-Shabaab, organized popular support has been acquired upon the conviction of shared enemies rather than by shared beliefs. Furthermore, Shabaab promotes a specific interpretation of the ummah, a unified Somali state founded on classical Islamic law, without the influence of foreign governments or hindered by the longstanding constraints of tribalism. Due to the economic and political advantages Shabaab can offer the community, this militant group is considered a viable means to bring peace and governance to Somalia.

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24 Ibid.
Al-Shabaab’s pursuit of an aggressive Islamic state nonetheless places this organization at odds with the general interests of the international community. In 2008 the organization publicly declared allegiance to Osama Bin Laden and the al-Qaeda network.\textsuperscript{25} Shabaab provides safe haven to al-Qaeda members who have fled Afghanistan, Yemen, and other sites of al-Qaeda activity.\textsuperscript{26} In collaboration with al-Qaeda, Shabaab has the capacity to secure weapons and technical expertise to conduct operations although it continues to lack the ability to supply recruited youth with anything beyond poor quality shelter and basic food.\textsuperscript{27} Youth recruited to these camps learn bomb construction and weapons training from al-Qaeda militants, and are specifically instructed to fight against the TFG/AMISOM army.\textsuperscript{28}

Section Summary

For centuries, the harsh desert landscapes, lush river valleys, and strategically located coastlines have shaped the socio-economic development and cultural history of the Somali people. Framed by a complex social system of clan affiliations and strict adherence to Islam, the Somali’s developed agricultural and nomadic pastoralist livelihoods to maximize the limited inland resources and develop a successful trading enterprise in along the coast. Attracted to the commercial advantages of the coastal cities, it was only a matter of time until foreign powers arrived and began to exploit local


\textsuperscript{27} Sipus, 29.

clan divisions as a means to assume power. Continually subject to foreign interests, even after achieving independence from Britain in the 1960s, the creation of a unified, sovereign Somalia became instilled in the social consciousness of the Somali people.

Unfortunately the actions of the president Sayid Barre to exploit tribal divisions and use tactics of intimidation upon civil society led to the utter collapse of the state and the onset of civil war in the 1990s. International intervention to uphold and rebuild the semblance of sovereign rule failed to pacify widespread fighting, while later efforts to instill rule of law by the Union of Islamic courts were unsuccessful due to the lack of international support. Somalia's total collapse in a globalized era gave rise to the emergence of non-state militant groups with unprecedented capacities. In 2006, the Harakat al-Shabaab militant group erupted across Somalia and quickly obtained vast swathes of territory. Supported by international terrorist group, al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab remains the dominant actor in opposition to the internationally supported Transitional Federal Government.
Section II: The Urban Spatial Form of Conflict and Militarization

New War and Militarization

Since the collapse of the Cold War, wars have transformed from international conflicts between sovereign states into a fragmentation of decentralized conflicts consisting of small groups who maintain operational capacities on par with the state. This is not the same model as traditional civil war, in which militant groups battle for political and territorial control of the sovereign state. Rather, the decentralization of combat among non-state armed groups acquires a greater sophistication and dynamism due to the influence of globalization and capital flows. In the context of new war, areas of conflict are trapped in a vicious intersection of inept governance, poverty, corruption, and militarization leading to the formation of the failed state. Wherein formal authority and economic infrastructures have collapsed, consequential attempts to rebuild a rule of law have proven unsuccessful. The leaders of new war often seek to perpetuate the chaos so as to increase profits rather than pursue pathways toward stability, often engaging in illicit networks of criminal enterprise. Consequently, new wars do not exist independently, but are components of the larger global matrix of war. On the global scale, the wider conceptions of violence and domination have given rise to the deterioration of local and global distinctions between “war and criminality, civility and barbarism, legality and illegality.”

Operating at a variety of scales, new war does not typically function as a binary opposition between two non-state groups, such as a single organized group against the state. The diversity of actors are not well defined categorically, but are defined by their objective, organizational structure, logistical capacity, and social ties. Given the range in character and capacity, these groups vary by definition and label. They may be known as non-state armed groups, non-state actors, gangs, militias, rebel groups, insurgents, terrorists, or criminal organizations.\(^{32}\) The unifying element among each group is their access to complex social and logistical networks and their sophisticated technological capabilities such as weaponry, communications, and intelligence abilities. These networks and capacities may be used for combat purposes; or to pursue private economic advancement by formal, informal, or illicit means; or to build politically advantageous social capital. These groups are also known to proliferate within regions of hostile geography and poor governance, popularly known as *ungoverned spaces*.\(^{33}\)

**Ungoverned Space**

Ungoverned spaces may consist of failed states or on a smaller scale, such as rogue cities and border regions, where attempts to institute mechanisms of order and governance have proven ineffective. The disintegration of the state enables widespread corruption, promoting institutional degradation and eventual military fragmentation, leading to the militarization of civil society.\(^ {34}\) In theory, ungoverned spaces provide a breeding ground for terrorist groups and non-state actors and threaten other states via

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\(^{33}\) Jennifer Hazen, 373.

\(^{34}\) Kaldor, 97.
the regional proliferation of criminal enterprise and terrorism. Due to their capacities, these destabilizing networks may easily expand beyond the immediate region and maintain a potentially global impact.

However, to designate such spaces as “ungoverned” is not quite accurate, as these spaces are more precisely characterized as locations of poor or ineffective governance. Border regions, territories beyond the centralized power of the capital city, or crumbling inner-city neighborhoods are frequently prone to the formation of non-state armed groups as the state cannot protect its citizens from violence and provide sufficient rule of law, or it maintains weak political systems that inhibit the monopolization of power. Consequently the connection between these groups and these spaces is not from the complete lack of formal government, but rather from the lack of formal resources and power competing with the individualist pursuit of capital.35

The Urban Concentration of Conflict

The forces of globalization within the fragmentation of conflict and the formation of non-state armed groups have produced the symbiotic emergence of urbanization and new war. Globalization has facilitated dramatic economic disparities throughout the Global South, and the cities of Somalia are no exception. In Somalia, however, the stratification of society within the urban environment has led to insecurity, social discrimination, and the creation of desolate landscapes where people no longer venture to walk the streets.36 Within the urban context, “it is deprivation as inequality that is the

most important form of structural violence, and also that which is most significant to the emergence of everyday reactionary violence.” 37 This deprivation includes lack of access to social services, lack of state protection, and widespread corruption – the same driving factors that facilitate the formation of non-state groups. Furthermore, the array of armed actors within the urban environment, such as public police, private security groups, military units, street gangs, organized crime, and local vigilante groups deny citizens the ability to distinguish between sources of protection and sources of insecurity. 38

If cities are concentrations of deprivation, and thus contain vulnerable populations prone to militarization, it is no surprise that Somali cities such as Mogadishu or Kismayo are the primary battlegrounds and recruiting centers in the current conflict. Those who join such groups as a consequence of poverty and social deprivation often reinforce this cycle by using their position to financially exploit the local population for protection. 39 Militant groups often must compete against each other for the same taxable resources they demand from the population in exchange for security. In Somalia, locations with the highest concentration of taxable goods consistently have the greatest frequency of conflict. 40 Young men also gravitate toward militant groups for more than financial capital as participation in these groups is a means to acquire social status and identity reinforcement.

Cities also provide a strategic interest to non-state groups as cities contain the most accessible concentration of logistics infrastructure, consumer goods, and social

39 Kaldor, 97.
service networks. 41 As cities are hubs for information, transportation, and capital, they provide the greatest collection of assets to non-state groups who are searching for empowerment. 42 The built environment can provide tactical advantages by facilitating logistical supply lines and by concealing lone actors or forces in retreat. Snipers and observers can situate themselves in tall buildings, while basements, cellars, and sewers can allow groups to quickly mobilize and disperse. A building constructed with thick stone and concrete masonry can be easily converted into a stronghold by a few men and modest artillery. 43 Ultimately all infrastructures acquire a characteristic of dual-use, as military units must calculate the direct and indirect consequence of their decisions due to the complexity of urban infrastructure. 44

The dualistic nature of the built environment is most evident when imposing forces struggle to uphold international humanitarian law (IHL) standards to avoid harming civilian populations with areas of high density. 45 For example, the standard tactical decision to take out an electrical power system – so as to cut off the power usage of the armed group – could also potentially risk civilian lives by cutting the power to hospitals and water treatment systems. Sophisticated technology may support better tactical decisions on the dual-use of urban infrastructure and the built environment, however, military commanders are continually faced with limitations in foresight during

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42 Harroff-Tavel, 334.
45 Duijens, 361.
the moment of the battle and are therefore unable to fully overcome the impediments of urban warfare.\textsuperscript{46}

Combat in Mogadishu

Within the present conflict in Mogadishu, al-Shabaab has continued to utilize the interconnected complexity of urban environments to their advantage. By means of hit and run tactics, Shabaab fighters have been known to enter a residential neighborhood, fire mortars against pro-government forces, and quickly evacuate the area before the arrival of retaliatory fire. The resulting violation of IHL standards from the undue harm inflicted upon the residential community at the moment of retaliation has greatly undermined the capacity of AMISOM forces to acquire the support of the local population, a key component within the predominating military theories of Counter Insurgency (COIN).

Establishing a productive interface between counterinsurgency forces and the local population is critical within COIN, as it recognizes that militarization is rooted within the collapse of a functional social system, and consequently the vitality of an insurgent unit is reflective of the social wellbeing.\textsuperscript{47} Maintaining a positive interface between the local community and the military promotes greater control of the inputs that facilitate militancy such as alienation, grievances, and social sympathy. In this manner, the

\textsuperscript{46} John-Hopkins, 487.
military should have the means to neutralize the possible outputs of violence, displacement, and destruction, thus stabilizing the conflict.\textsuperscript{48}

Unfortunately, Shabaab’s tactics have undermined AMISOM’s ability to implement the insights of COIN, and the African Union troops are the source of much resentment within the Somali community. Between January 2007 and 2008, approximately 9,500 civilians and an unknown number of al-Shabaab fighters were killed due to the indiscriminate and repeated shelling of residential and commercial areas by AMISOM and Ethiopian forces in an attempt to kill Shabaab militants hiding among non-combatants. AMISOM forces have also consistently failed to uphold their own obligations to act within the bounds of the Geneva Conventions, and have been found to frequently bomb market places, bus stations, and additional civilian properties where “the anticipated loss of civilian life is disproportionate to the expected military gain.”\textsuperscript{49}

It is not only the pro-government forces who have devised new strategies to conduct combat within an asymmetric urban environment, militant groups have adapted as well. Since the days of the UNISOM intervention, the vehicle of choice among militant groups is the \textit{technical}, a pickup truck with a mounted heavy machine gun, grenade launcher, or anti-tank gun to maximize speed and firepower.\textsuperscript{50} Since 2007, al-Shabaab has used suicide and car bombings to target government, Ethiopian, and UN

buildings. In 2011 al-Shabaab has also dug a maze of trenches and tunnels beneath the city surface, connecting buildings and strategic locations, modifying the urban terrain to meet the demands of the conflict. Ugandan troops serving under AMISOM describe Shabaab’s primary supply trench as running 5 miles. While the duality of the built environment has great influence upon the mechanics of combat, within Mogadishu the persistence of conflict has reflexively shaped the urban spatial structure and physical terrain.

Humanitarian Space

The urban fragmentation of conflict has not only undermined the interests of civil society, or complicated stabilization efforts by the TFG, it has hindered the provision of humanitarian aid. The demand for security by humanitarian actors within hostile environments underscores a demand for military support and protection. At the same time, this demand for support is fundamentally in conflict with the humanitarian objective to apolitically deliver aid to vulnerable populations. Aid agencies face a complicated problem to ensure the safety of their staff and to serve vulnerable populations. This is most discernable when humanitarian agencies designate a physical space within the battle zone as secure and politically neutral to provide aid and assistance to anyone who seeks it. Frequently it is possible for the agency to designate a space without

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53 Ibid.
military support, yet when non-state actors target aid workers or civilians, new questions arise regarding the legitimacy and security of the humanitarian space.

The conception of humanitarian space is not universal as it acquires different roles among different humanitarian agencies. Within the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) it is understood as a place of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, the order of international law, and as a means to recognize the variety of actors within the conflict. \(^{54}\) Conversely, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) uses the term *humanitarian space* as a strict synonym for “humanitarian operating environment,” the environment in which humanitarian agencies and organizations are obliged to operate. \(^{55}\) It may be understood conceptually as a place to claim and express human rights, or it may be understood in logistical terms, to serve as a protected space within conflict zones, such as the approach by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). \(^{56}\)

Humanitarian space is defined by the nature of the humanitarian intervention and the population serviced. As a stage designed to facilitate the interest of the humanitarian agency and the aided population, these spaces are constructed within the physical landscape to facilitate a series of mutual objectives, such as the creation of a safe corridor for the delivery of food aid, a space for political protest, or as a place of protracted settlement and protection. At the outset, there is a tendency for local populations to define the nature humanitarian intervention according to their needs, yet

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[^56]: Ibid.
as the humanitarian body holds the assistance in need, and the ability to exercise the power of assistance, the spaces generally adapt to conform to the independent objective of the humanitarian actor rather than the needs of the population.

When humanitarian spaces are established to support the expression of human rights among afflicted populations, the militarization of operational spaces may increase conflict and endanger aid workers or displaced peoples by politicizing the neutrality of humanitarian aid on the local scale. Aid agencies operating in Somalia find themselves faced with a complex conflict, and even those who are foremost against the use of military support such as MSF and the ICRC have been known to use armed escorts.\textsuperscript{57}

Although acting upon the pretense of neutrality, humanitarian actions in a militarized zone affect the expression of rights among all populations who occupy the same territory.\textsuperscript{58} Notably, the issue does not exist when the military is the humanitarian actor, as militaries maintain humanitarian obligations under the Geneva Conventions, such as the responsibility to evacuate wounded civilians. Under these conditions, the greater ethical issue is the role of the military operating in the humanitarian space within the context of new war, as aid becomes a part of counter-insurgency strategies and a means to combat terrorism.\textsuperscript{59}

The legitimacy of humanitarian space as a spatial mechanism for human rights remains delicate even without military support. Humanitarian action exists so that


populations may claim their rights, yet it is easy for the understanding and expression of human rights to take the form of only a legal provision, rather than as a social process of value production. While the humanitarian space exists as a place in which people may express rights, the provision of space also becomes a point of socio-economic isolation supplying limited services to one population at the obvious exclusion of another. In this manner, the humanitarian space fails to live up to the local demands of assistance, meeting instead the minimal demands of an imposing, foreign humanitarian mandate. In such circumstances, the provision of aid is disconnected from the origins of conflict and fails to provide meaningful assistance.

It is no surprise that the concept of humanitarian space remains dominated by ideas of difference, such as those held between refugees and host communities, when the humanitarian space becomes a territory that contributes to the formation of hostilities through contradiction and suppressed dialogue. As the productive assets of humanitarianism are transformed into assets of oppositional force, the neutrality of humanitarian space may do more to politicize local social groups or encourage conflict. For example, by declaring the humanitarian space neutral territory, non-state actors who claim to fight on behalf of the local population may shun their own communal burden and informally delegate the provision of social service and aid provision to the responsibility aid agencies. Militant groups may also choose to use the humanitarian space as a tactical asset, hiding or retreating into the humanitarian space when not

\[60\text{ Feldman, 140.}
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Such problems may be curtailed through the effective management of these spaces, yet several factors affect the quality of humanitarian spaces within Somalia. Because the conflict is severe, many agencies manage operations from Nairobi Kenya, a decision that affects the quality of information and negates their ability to interpret actions taking place on the ground. The available strategies of remote programming – remote control, remote support, and remote partnership – are intended to maximize the security and the neutrality of the humanitarian space, but often do more to impose additional burdens on local staff.\footnote{Abild, 11-12.} Remote management and operation ultimately creates a transfer of risks.

An explicit risk transfer is placed upon local Somalis employed as aid workers. Management decisions are received from a distant headquarters and local staff persons are forced to navigate the complex terrain of local authorities and social institutions composed of warlords, community representatives, non-state actors, the TFG, and coordinating humanitarian agencies. This risk transfer also shifts social blame as communities target the local staff for the failure to provide adequate assistance, rather than targeting foreign aid institutions or militant aggressors. Perceptions of elevated social status and responsibility may also exacerbate existing local tensions. In some circumstances, local staff abuse their position of power and unfairly delegate resources to friends, family, or even support militant actors.
Within Somalia, the role of remote programming, the transfer of risk, and the scarcity of resources undermines the credibility, efficiency, and security of humanitarian spaces. No matter how impartial, the humanitarian space still consumes and competes for the same limited resources as the local community. The limit of resources is complicated by the absence of legitimate authorities, as the capacity to deliver aid transfers authority upon the humanitarian actor, again politicizing a theoretically neutral space. Aid quickly becomes embedded within the deteriorated and corrupt social networks and the lines that distinguish the humanitarian space from the surrounding ungoverned spaces become blurred, leaving aid agencies as a substitute for authority.

Well aware of the pseudo-authority of aid agencies, when al-Shabaab came into power, one of their first actions to acquire regional recognition was to expel aid agencies and then later invite the organizations to return. Since that time, Al-Shabaab has continued to find new ways to utilize the flow of aid and the humanitarian spaces for their own interests. Claiming that several of the agencies were attempting to spread Christianity through their operations, they seized control of the operational spaces and equipment, expanding their territorial control and acquiring humanitarian assets. Due to the politicization of aid and the power of militant groups, it can be argued that there is no ability to create a humanitarian space in Somalia.

While 3.2 million Somalis are in need of assistance, the inability for non-government organizations (NGOs) to define a functioning humanitarian space and the ongoing targeting of NGO workers within conflict, such as a bombing attack in January

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid, 14.
2008 that killed three MSF staff members, many agencies have ceased operations in Somalia.\textsuperscript{67} MSF and the ICRC continue to operate as the most visible agencies within the region; however, they primarily operate by providing local hospitals with supplies, salaries, and infrastructure support. Unable to survive the perils of urban combat, but without any formal spaces of safety, the Somali people have been forced to find new spaces of security.

Spaces of Displacement

In response to urban conflict, the role of humanitarian aid, and the limit of available resources, targeted population displacement has evolved as a mechanism of territorial control by militant groups.\textsuperscript{68} Territorial control cannot be created through the provision of improved services or quality of life, as the conditions of ungovernable spaces have too few resources. Rather, it is to the economic advantage of the militant group to displace opposition groups and communities. These methods have been appropriated from the strategies promoted by western governments toward guerrilla movements during the Cold War, such as when the CIA aided \textit{mujahidin} freedom fighters in Afghanistan or supported \textit{Contra} rebels in Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{69} Strategies include \textit{poisoning the sea}, the creation of an unfavorable environment for populations that are not under the control of the armed group by weakening available infrastructure.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{68} Kaldor, 104.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
Armed groups also enforce a shared general complicity to violence by deepening divisions and reinforcing hatred of the “other” among social groups.\textsuperscript{71}

Forced from their homes, displaced families and individuals often find that when safe spaces are available, they are inhabited by thousands of other displaced persons. As international law is only structured to provide the protections of refugee status to those who are outside their country of origin, there are no sufficient mechanisms for governments or agencies to provide sufficient protection to internally displaced populations (IDPs). In recent years, UNHCR has attempted to assist IDPs, yet IDPs do not fall within their organizational mandate and consequentially UNHCR policy to assist IDPs has been inconsistent, frequently leading to insufficient service provision.\textsuperscript{72}

A consequence of continual violence, it has been estimated that approximately two-thirds of Mogadishu’s population have been displaced.\textsuperscript{73} The process of displacement is challenging, as many individuals do not have access to efficient transportation systems, the local streets remain dangerous, and there may be at best, only a vaguely defined point of destination. Populations fleeing Mogadishu discover routes of escape shaped entirely by “transport availability, the shifting geography of the conflict, and [changing] information about the situation at different borders.”\textsuperscript{74} As the conflict terrain shifts, departure strategies must be modified and often the final location of settlement is nothing more than a densely populated, informal settlement of other

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
vulnerable groups. In Somalia, the roads outside Mogadishu known as Afgooye have become the closest approximation of a sanctuary.\textsuperscript{75}

As of 2007, UNHCR teams in the small town of Afgooye have struggled to accommodate the influx of displaced Somalis from Mogadishu. Only 30 km northwest of the capital, it has become a primary destination for IDPs although it contains an array of challenging circumstances. It is not an entirely safe haven as residents remain at risk of burglary and gangs. The scarcity of resources has raised local prices and land owners frequently charge rent to IDPs who reside on their property. The migration influx has modified traditional settlement patterns as well, forcing out members of the indigenous \textit{Eyle} clan from their traditional homeland to the edges of the city.\textsuperscript{76}

Within the last 3 years, the 30 km roadway leading to Afgooye, the “Afgooye Corridor,” has quickly become the largest IDP settlement within Somalia (Figure 4). It is believed that the Afgooye Corridor contains nearly a third of Somalia’s displaced populations, with a population of roughly 410,000.\textsuperscript{77} With so many people, the Afgooye corridor has also become a center for construction and urbanization. Transitional IDP sites often transform into small towns, and Afgooye has acquired the appearance of a permanent settlement while the violence continues to dominate Mogadishu. Nonetheless, living conditions within Afgooye remain arduous. While some humanitarian assistance does get to the region, it cannot accommodate the demand.\textsuperscript{78}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75}Erik Abild, “Creating humanitarian space: a case study of Somalia,” 1.
\item \textsuperscript{76} UNHCR, “Small Somali town struggling to cope with tens of thousands of people displaced by fighting in nearby Mogadishu,” April 25, 2007 \url{http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=462f7d4f4&query=afgooye}, accessed April 12, 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{77} UNHCR, “Afgooye corridor fast becoming the capital of Somalia’s displaced,” Briefing Notes, October 1 2010, \url{http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=4ca5d91f9&query=afgooye}, accessed April 12, 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
A closer investigation of the Afgooye Corridor reveals five distinct settlements (Figure 5 and 6). While the town of Afgooye may have served as the primary destination of displaced persons, it appears to have the second smallest population of IDPs, totaling 46,000. The largest settlement is found at Ceelasha, comprised of 159,000 IDPs, with the largest population and one settlement removed from Mogadishu. It is also situated at a crossroads, and is the most likely destination for displaced people from Mogadishu as the location provides a balance of proximity to urban employment and the safety of distance from conflict. Furthermore, situated on a transportation axis, it has the most access to goods and humanitarian assistance, thus driving down the costs of living.
Figure 5 Afgooye Corridor 2010
Source: UNHCR 2010, Figure Created by Author

Figure 6 Afgooye Corridor Settlements
Source: UNHCR 2010
The Militant Training Camp

Since 2010, al-Shabaab has made efforts to extend their influence beyond the boundaries of Somalia and export their presence into nations abroad. The distribution of propaganda videos on the internet, including a staged English language news briefing directed toward Western audiences, has not only served as a tool to intimidate foreign populations, but to showcase the breadth of Shabaab’s influence to local populations. Such efforts not only raise general support, but facilitate the recruitment of youth.

Recruitment efforts are ongoing and al-Shabaab recently announced the construction of new training camps in the lower Shabelle region to attract Somali youth. These camps are designed to instruct youth to use weapons and “feature courses on bomb construction that are taught by al-Qaeda members in Somalia.” To reinforce recruitment efforts, Shabaab has forced the closure of local schools to encourage students to join the battle against the African Union forces in Mogadishu. Within a recent report, al-Shabaab’s primary training camp was described as located in “Laanta Buro [sic] village at the periphery of Afgoye [sic] town nearly 40km south of Mogadishu.”

Satellite imagery of this militant training camp was located in Google Earth by comparing a collection of descriptions (Figure 7). The location of Laanta Buur village is described in a 2010 country report for the UK Border Agency.

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“Heading beyond Agfoye [sic] in the direction of the coastal town of Merka, there are more checkpoints… at Laanta Buur, I am surprised to see that people can travel safely without fear of being ambushed… at Laanta Buur checkpoint, al-Shabaab militia members search men one at a time…”

It is also mentioned in the personal account of a Somali man who was once imprisoned within its walls.

“A couple of hours later, we were dumped at Laanta Buur Prison, situated in the middle of nowhere, about 90 kilometers to the south of Mogadishu, on the road to the coastal city of Merca.”

Somalia has only one road between the southern coastal city of Merka and Mogadishu. Although there are conflicting reports describing the distance of the facility from Mogadishu (90km and 40km), following this road it was possible to quickly determine the location of al-Shabaab’s training camp at Laanta Buur. There is only one large settlement between Merka and Mogadishu, which features an airport runway, a feature also described in the UK Border Office report. Laanta Buur is approximately 40 kilometers south of Mogadishu and within the vicinity of Afgoooye (Figures 7, 8, 9).

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Laanta Buur contains several features that differentiate this space from the nearby towns and villages. Set back away from the primary road between Merka and Mogadishu by roughly ½ a kilometer, the airstrip runs parallel to the main road (Figure 9). The airstrip was once a functioning airport known as “K-50.” For many years, when use of the International Airport in Mogadishu was too dangerous, K-50 was a fully operational airport utilized by many aid agencies to transport supplies into the country. In 2008, al-Shabaab took over the K-50 airport and all flights were suspended.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 168.
Figure 8 Laanta Buur Militant Training Camp
Source: Google Earth, 2011

Figure 9 Laanta Buur Militant Training Camp Airfield
Source: Google Earth 2011
In the area of highest urban density (Figure 10) one can identify multiple building typologies, with warehouse structures dotting a small service road in the northwest, and a large fortified collection of concrete buildings near the center crossing point of the airstrip. Nearby are modern concrete structures, fencing constructed from local natural materials, and traditional Somali Turkles constructed using bright orange tarps.

The turkle is common dwelling among Somali nomadic pastoralists, and is typically constructed by the women of the families (Figure 11). Traditionally constructed from dyed animals skins stretched over a dome of wooden poles woven together, the structure has been modified over the years to include a variety of alternative materials, such as the use of plastic tarpaulins. Regardless of the materials, the provision of turkle housing with uniform orange plastic sheeting would unify housing for al-Shabaab militants while also maximizing their mobility, as these structures are designed to be quickly set-up, broken-down, and transported. Given the immediate proximity of 14 large automobiles to the turkles, and the large congestion of human traffic in the streets, it can be surmised that militants will be soon venturing away from the camp. The proliferation of structures with metal roofs likely house upper level officers, provide administrative offices, and training centers comparable to a western university. There is likely at least one mosque on the premise although this cannot be specifically identified.

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Figure 10 Somali Turkles within Laanta Buur Militant Training Camp
Source: Google Earth 2011

Figure 11 Traditional Somali Turkle
Source: Author 2007
Laanta Buur Prison

Adjacent to the southern side of the airstrip is a series of large concrete buildings in a Modernist style, surrounded by a trapezoidal wall (Figure 12). The wall has two points of entry, one at the northeastern corner, and one at the southeastern corner. Upon inspection of Figure 13, one can discern that the surrounding wall features three guard towers on the northwestern wall.

This structure is one of the two infamous prisons constructed by Sayid Barre’s National Security Service (NSS). Constructed by East German engineers in the 1970s, this foreboding structure contains underground solitary confinement cells and was well known as a center of torture and abuse. The NSS utilized this prison as a “tool of intimidation, torture, and executions... the occupants of these centers, during this period, were mostly members of the political elite.” An Amnesty International Report in 1984 described the acts of torture by the NSS at Laanta Buur and the prison of Labaatan Jirow to have included beatings while bound in a contorted position, electric shocks, rape, simulated execution, and death threats. Many prisoners were held in prolonged solitary confinement, and some cells were permanently dark while others were permanently lit, resulting in hypertension and nervous breakdowns among prisoners.

Within the personal account of time spent at Laanta Buur, Mahumud Yahya described it as a very lonely place, where political prisoners were separated from

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families, friends, and loved ones and were denied decent food and even reading materials. Each prisoner was left isolated in a large, filthy, rectangular room, empty except for a toilet.89 Yahya explained, however, that the one redeeming quality of the prison was the large courtyard, as prisoners at Laanta Buur were allowed to sometimes spend time there in the evening, whereas at the prison of Labaatan Jirow, located near Baidoa, prisoners were forced to spend the entirety of their incarceration in solitary confinement.90

Just as Laanta Buur prison was converted into an al-Shabaab training camp, the other NSS prison, Labaantan Jirow, shared a similar history in the 1990s. According to a letter addressed to the UN Security Council in 1992, Labaantan Jirow was a point of operations for the Ethiopian military, which used it as a training camp and weapons storage location.91 Today, the prison appears to be abandoned, yet examination of the road to Baidoa that passes the prison suggests that it remains avoided as the adjacent roadway forks into an informal detour (with smaller fragmentary detours) to circumvent the prison (Figures 14 and 15). The additional time, effort, and challenge of driving through the bush would only be worthwhile if the driver had good reason, such as avoidance of an unseen checkpoint. It is also possible that the haunting memory of the site is enough to redirect traffic.

90 Ibid.
Figure 12 Laanta Buur Prison and Militant Training Camp
Source: Google Earth 2011

Figure 13 Laanta Buur Prison
Source: Google Earth 2011
Figure 14 Road leading to Labaatan Jirow Prison
Source: Google Earth 2011

Figure 15 Labaatan Jirow Prison
Source: Google Earth 2011
Section Summary

The implications of new war can be observed at a variety of scales within Somalia. Macro-analysis of new war phenomena describes the territorial fragmentation of the sovereign state via the emergence of civil war within the globalized era. Non-state armed groups formed in response to the proliferation of Somalia’s ungoverned spaces, yet the formation of these groups only facilitated greater destabilization of the nation state. Militancy within Somalia has transformed as non-state groups no longer demand political control, but utilize violence to facilitate capitalist enterprise to the disadvantage of civil society.

Since 2006, militant group al-Shabaab has utilized remittances drawn from the Somali diaspora, control of foreign aid imports and linkages with international terrorist organization al-Qaeda, to emerge as the most powerful armed group. Somali cities have become nodes of conflict due to their concentration of resources and the tactical advantages presented within urban settings. Shabaab has utilized the complexity of the urban environment to their gain and the international community has thus been unable to introduce stability and rule of law.

Decentralized urban conflict has likewise reduced the capacity of international humanitarian agencies to create politically neutral spaces for the delivery of humanitarian aid and provide security to vulnerable populations. The deterioration of the humanitarian space combined with the use of displacement as a tactical methodology has forced populations to find new safe havens at the margins of urban settlement. The roadway from Mogadishu to Afgooye has become the most
concentrated settlement of IDPs in Somalia, containing nearly a third of Somalia’s current population.

The limited access to livelihood options and the widespread distribution of conflict as a strategy for capital accumulation has forced non-militants to either struggle to survive or to join the militant actors. Equipped with capacities equal to or greater than those of the TFG, al-Shabaab has constructed militant training camps across the country to recruit youth. Satellite analysis of Shabaab’s largest and most established camp at Laanta Buur displays a settlement composed of multiple building typologies, a functional airstrip, close proximity to major urban centers (Merka, Afgooye, Mogadishu), and the historic prison of Laanta Buur.
Section III: The Architectures of Power and Stability

Having described the relationships between architecture, space, militancy and conflict in Somalia, it is possible to deconstruct these spaces to determine pathways toward conflict stabilization. Borrowing from the works of Foucault, I consider the territorial implications of sovereignty and the TFG's effort to impose rule of law as a sovereign government within the context new war. Concluding the TFG does not have the necessary mechanisms to contain and disseminate power due to its inability to internally function as a sovereign state, the chaos of the Somali landscape is analyzed to determine sources of power, and examining their interplay via conflict, economic production, and the physical infrastructure. Attention is directed toward al-Shabaab’s appropriation of the built environment, in particular the prison of Laanta Buur, as a significant source of power and as a means to impose discipline, rather than law, upon the population. Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari’s essay *City/State* illuminates the reciprocal relationship between Somalia’s urban conflicts and the pursuit of state sovereignty.

The Pursuit of Sovereignty

Somalia’s history as a sovereign state has been short lived. At this moment, it is inaccurate to describe Somalia as a functioning state, or describe it as sovereign, even though the TFG is recognized as the sovereign government of Somalia by the United Nations. Although equipped with external recognition, the TFG does not have the legitimate support of the Somali people, nor does it have the capacity to impose a rule of law within its own territorial borders. Moreover, given the resistance by non-state
actors, it has not successfully pursued a local pathway to acquire this power. Although the international political system is founded on the principal of sovereignty, there have been few successful models in which the international community has imposed sovereignty from the outside when there is a lack of internal support. A challenging circumstance has arisen, as Somalia’s sovereignty is internationally recognized, yet within its borders the designation has no immediate value.

At its historic and conceptual origin, sovereignty is a product created by the citizens of the state, not by external powers. As found in Hobbe’s *Leviathan*, sovereignty is “the only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Forraigners, [sic] and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such or, as that by their owne industrie [sic].”92 The United Nations has imposed the secular Transitional Federal Government and pronounced this institution sovereign, befitting the needs of the international community. Yet for those who live within Somalia, it is not “by their own industry.”93 Sovereignty is the mechanism of self governance, determined by the collective, and reciprocally reproduced by the imposition of judicial order. While the mutual recognition of sovereignty among states establishes international order so as to reinforce the determination of state, the sovereignty of the state must be internally grounded to function.

While international recognition is essential for any contemporary nation, this recognition does not define sovereign power, as sovereignty is a means of power expression and not a source of power. As an expression, sovereignty usurps internal capacities to simultaneously impose order at the limits of its physical territory and

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93 Ibid.
juridical threshold, to impose order upon external space (chaos) so that chaos becomes included in the juridical order and the “normal situation.” 94 To stand legitimate, sovereignty must have the capacity to exist inside and outside the juridical order so as to include that which has been pushed outside. For example, a sovereign state has the capacity to express the rule of law within border spaces, to maintain the fiction of legal order within airports, border checks, and coastlines.

The rule of law within a sovereign nation is defined by its threshold just as the power of the state is physically defined by the boundaries of the state. Through the formation of the archetypal state of exception, the recognition of that which exists within and outside the law, the juridical order is localized and the sovereignty of territory becomes possible.95 Arguably, the crisis of Somalia and the imposition of the TFG is an attempt to by the international community to impose order at the judicial threshold of the United Nations. Confronted with the threshold of international order, the UN’s desire to normalize and impose hierarchical rule upon chaos has founded the establishment of the TFG as an extension of the international, sovereign system.

Yet the TFG is incapable to determine the sovereign exception, “the zone of indistinction between nature and right,” and to express order at this threshold96 Unable to extend its own juridical apparatus beyond an institutional determination and unable to define the state of exception, it fails to function as sovereign. The TFG maintains order of a four-block radius in central Mogadishu, and beyond those four blocks, there is the chaos of conflict with no rule of law or recognition of the state by its citizens. Ultimately,

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid, 18-22.
the establishment of the TFG articulates the sovereignty of the United Nations via the imposition of law and normalization at the international threshold, yet it cannot function as sovereign within the state. Incapable of implementing order within defined limits, let alone when confronted by the state of exception, the Transitional Federal Government is simply another actor vying for power in Somalia’s warzone. It may benefit from the international designation of sovereignty; however, until this designation can become internally determined, the TFG is impotent to apply order and stability.

War and Power

The classical juridico-political theory of sovereign law is rooted in the Middle Ages, when Roman Law was reactivated to bring stability to an era of disorder. 97 This conception of sovereignty was established to support the monarchy by functioning as the actual power instrument of the monarchy (theories on power to be discussed later in this section) and was later utilized to construct an alternate political model via the creation of the parliamentary democracy. 98 As part of the monarchy, the expression of power through sovereignty had a vertical distribution, articulated downward from the sovereign to subject, from the subject to the subjugated. The expenditure of power was remained centralized with the removal of the monarchy as the mechanisms of power became concealed by the formation of democracy’s judicial edifice and contributed to the creation of a discipline society. 99

98 Ibid.
Through the imposition of discipline, such as the hegemonic institutionalization of education and health, the state imposes order upon the populace so that the expression of popular rights are attributed to the sovereignty of the state, yet the state maintains the centrality of power.  

Thus modern society is equipped with various institutions built around the notion of sovereignty while a “tight grid of disciplinary coercions” guarantees the cohesion of the social body. Beneath the guise of the sovereign, “power is exercised somewhere between a right of sovereignty and the mechanics of discipline.”

Somalia’s TFG does not have the means to successfully implement judicial order and has not created institutions of discipline within the social fabric. The failure to establish sovereignty negates the establishment of institutional mechanisms to impose a vertical hierarchy of order (such as the judiciary); Somalia’s distribution of power circulates on a horizontal plane between militant groups, civil society, humanitarian actors, and the TFG. Sovereign mechanisms designed to impose discipline, such as international humanitarian norms, lose their utility when the distribution of power is no longer vertical, as found in Somalia’s war-torn geography. Among sovereign states, one may find agreement with Clausewitz’s “war is a mere continuation of policy by other means,” yet when confronted with the horizontal power axis of Somalia, Foucault’s inversion that “politics is the continuation of war by other means” is arguably more appropriate. War is the starting point upon which the mechanisms of power and their reproduction take place, and the classical apparatuses of political power are insufficient.

100 Ibid, 37.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
It is the chaotic collisions and interactions of power that strain the neutrality of humanitarian aid, undermine AMISOM forces in urban combat, and enable militant groups throughout Somalia.

The horizontal axis of Somalia’s functioning power relations and their mechanisms presents a seemingly chaotic landscape. In the classical model of the sovereign state, power is possessed and transferred like a commodity by means of juridical act, contract agreement, or by the surrender of a party. Yet in Somalia, while power may potentially take this concrete form it is arguably rendered in its more primitive shape. “Power is that which represses nature, instincts, a class or individuals.” Power is a mechanism for repression, an effect and continuation of a relationship of domination exercised though capillary networks and concentrated within institutions. In Somalia, militant aggression, rape, violence, militarization, and insurgency dominate the region as direct impositions of power. Whereas a sovereign state has technologies to contain, order, and capitalize upon the imposition of power, Somalia’s fragmentation can only produce technologies to impose disciplinary control. Such technologies may take the form of aggressive religious mandates, gender discrimination, and terrorism.

If al-Shabaab maintained an interest in establishing itself as the sovereign ruler of a state, they would appropriate the technologies of power and discipline offered by the international community, such as the Geneva Conventions. Rather, al-Shabaab accrues political power via commerce and exploitation, consolidating and utilizing power to perpetuate “relations of production and to reproduce a class of domination that is

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106 Ibid.
107 Ibid, 28.
made possible by the development of the productive forces.” Al-Shabaab’s utilization of global technology such as remittance flows, weapons, and communication technologies reflects the selective appropriation of global mechanisms to reproduce their own systems of subjugation. Within all of Shabaab’s operations, from the extortion of funds from local communities for protection, to the control of shipping ports and airfields, the enterprise to consolidate power and invest in its reproduction is the critical objective. Notably, al-Shabaab’s systematic organization as a capitalist enterprise and exploitation of the landscape through the control of supply corridors, remittance networks, and local businesses illuminates Shabaab’s determined embrace of the “economic functionality of power,” rather than a pursuit of sovereign rule. However, Shabaab does not only accrue power by controlling the economic assets embedded within the landscape, but engages and appropriates the nuanced sources of power found within the built environment. Nowhere is this practice more visible than the establishment of the militant training camp at Laanta Buur prison.

Discipline and Control at Laanta Buur

The government under Barre was the only historic Somali government to exist as a modern sovereign state, yet Somalia quickly descended into a surveillance state. Appropriating the technologies of the Cold War to reinforce its power, Laanta Buur Prison was a mechanism of repression utilized by the regime to negate political opposition. The construction of the Laanta Buur prison by the East Germans in the late 1970s was a project headed by the National Security Services and guided by the KGB.

\[\text{108 Ibid.}\]
\[\text{109 Ibid, 14.}\]
Laanta Buur was an instrument of terror and control, widely known for the isolation and torture of its prisoners. It was used to secure control of the population not only through the direct imprisonment of political adversaries, but by use of excess force to prevent the uprising of future opposition. This is most in keeping with the early conceptions of the prison as an “instrument of despotism, a legal penalty, but an illegal use of arbitrary indeterminate detention, an abuse of power... not to punish but to secure the persons of the offenders.”

The role of the prison as an archetypal institution within social order has a mandate within its construction beyond ability to satisfy the bloodlust of despotism. The design of the prison is to serve as an instrument of justice, a calculable method of determining punishment through incarceration in proportion to the degree of the criminal act. As a non-differential, regulatory apparatus – an apparatus that provides the same punishment to all prisoners but only for different lengths of time – the modern prison has the ability to cover the span between offences from the petty crimes to the most severe infringements on the social order. In addition, the prison was designed as a mechanism for the transformation of the individual through the imposition of discipline. The work yard, the isolation of the carceral cell, and the regulation of activities – scheduled hours of eating, sleeping, working and prayer - was thought to transform the criminal into a productive member of society. In this manner, the juridical order acquires two forms of repayment from the prisoner; one in terms of social penalty, and the other through

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economic production. Appropriately, the architecture of incarceration directly reflects the dualistic nature of incarceration.111

The prison is a translation of sovereign law into reality, encompassing a penal code and graphic hierarchy. The different levels of the prison correspond to the levels of centralized administration, while the totality of the prison complex is integrated into the “very body of the state apparatus,” to reproduce and disseminate “a new physics of power” throughout the social order and as a substitution of the spectacle of public execution.112 A high wall surrounds the prison to establish it as a fortress, but not to secure protection from an outside threat, rather to establish a power that surrounds and encloses the prison. This enclosure articulates the heterogeneity of the institution, closed in upon itself, concealing the mysterious work of punishment and concentrating its power to punish.113

The principle of this enclosure is not constant. Rather, it partitions individuals, establishes lines of communication while disrupting others, and formulates an analytical space to supervise their conduct. Through the imposition of discipline in the spatial order, the “confused, useless, or dangerous multitudes,” are transformed into ordered multiplicities.114 The mass is broken into categorical units and the elements become interchangeable as each space is defined by its location in the series and by the gaps created between spaces. Each unit of space is relegated from a broader unit of discipline or habitation and is therefore defined merely by classification, by its rank.115

111 Ibid, 122-126.
113 Ibid, 116, 141-142.
115 Ibid, 145.
Although Laanta Buur functioned as an instrument of abuse, the physical construction of the prison is consistent with the intention to discipline. Situated in the rural provinces, yet nearly equidistant to the some of the larger coastal and interior towns, this heterotopia of deviance and crisis juxtaposes in a single place “different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other.”

Laanta Buur prison was instituted to solidify the juridical rule of the sovereign state and the rights of the collective. It was designed to reform the criminal (so as to reinforce sovereign power) and to serve as an economic asset. Although intended for the promotion of discipline, it functioned rather as a technology of abuse by the surveillance state; charging the secrecy of its enclosure with a power of domination to resonate throughout the population. Laanta Buur was not a mere mechanism of discipline; it was an explicit tool of oppression and a tactic of domination to control the population through intimidation. While the spatial form of Laanta Buur may have originated in the ideal of transformative justice, the abuse of its form and function for the deprivation of collective liberty redefined the verticality of its power. The power of Laanta Buur does not only exist in its structural form, but is socially reproduced through fear, supercharging the power of its presence to mythic proportion.

The al-Shabaab Militant Training Camp at Laanta Buur Prison

Lacking the instruments of sovereign power, al-Shabaab has reinforced its own power through the appropriation of power mechanisms already embedded in the landscape. By colonizing available systems of economic production, forcefully

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displacing oppositions and populations to the geographic margins, and territorial domination of cities, al-Shabaab has constructed a position of power and organization unequaled within Somalia. To reinforce and reproduce this power, however, the organization has begun to impose a grid of discipline upon the fragmented landscape, thereby creating a network for the distribution and circulation of power. The imposition of religious mandates, the demand of financial payments from civil society (taxation), and control of humanitarian aid are characteristic of the discipline society. After all, the discipline society is a technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise."  

It does not demand the larger apparatuses of state sovereignty. In contrast, it utilizes social institutions to impose discipline over bodies. It is the power of discipline that seeks to bind individuals together to use them, to train individual units or bodies into a multiplicity of individual elements as a singular instrument of exercise such as the formation of a military unit. Discipline is constructed through the normalization of hierarchical observation, and examination. Whereas the exercise of discipline "presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation… to induce effects of power and to make the means of coercion clearly visible to those who are subjugated," no model of discipline reflects this normalized and hierarchical power like the militant training camp at Laanta Buur.

The military camp is an artificial city built with the intent to consolidate and reinforce power. "In the perfect camp, all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a part of the overall functioning of power… the

120 Ibid.
camp is the diagram of a power that acts by means of a general visibility.\footnote{Ibid, 171.} In effect, the perfect camp contains mechanisms of surveillance embedded throughout. Within the ordering of tents, location of pathways, and placement of entrances and corridors all are networked according to the demands of a spatial hierarchy, rending detailed control without secrecy - as the blatant omnipresence of control is the source of power. In this manner, individual conduct is supervised in totality, transforming the individual and altering him in accordance. The perfect disciplinary apparatus within the military camp would make it possible for “a single gaze to see everything.”\footnote{Ibid, 171-172.}

At Laanta Buur, al-Shabaab may indeed have the perfect military camp. Al-Shabaab openly runs a central training camp upon the grounds and within the architecture of the notorious prison, a site of power and abuse deeply rooted within the collective consciousness of the Somali people, utilizing its presence to legitimize the operations of the militant group. To appropriate this technology of control, a mechanism of authoritarian abuse, is to inherit the legacy of preceding sovereignty and domination. Laanta Buur is more than a node of power and authority, it is the relic of a former sovereign despot. Through appropriation, al-Shabaab is able to capture the prison’s “surplus value of code,” and reterritorialize the structure with their imprint by infusing their own “code”.\footnote{Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia}, trans. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota Press: 2007), 10.} Enclosed by walls of power and secrecy, it imposes itself upon the geography of Somalia. Al-Shabaab’s colonization and reterritorialization of Laanta
Buur reciprocally reterritorializes the organization as a newly established vestige of power.124

By colonizing the prison with the imposition of the militant training camp, Shabaab has established itself at the intersection of vertical and horizontal power structures. By colonizing Laanta Buur a classical mechanism of power descended from the former state with construction of the military camp, Al-Shabaab has created a new mechanism of dualistic power. This acquisition and redistribution of power expands the horizontal influence of al-Shabaab against outside forces but it also utilizes the power of Laanta Buur to reinforce the grid of discipline within their own training camp.

Recruited youth who join al-Shabaab must live constantly beneath the gaze of Laanta Buur prison. The prison's white, concrete walls tower over the landscape and the sleek, vacant facades stand coolly complacent to an internal legacy of cruelty. All social and personal conduct within the camp takes place within proximity to this dominating structure, a constant reminder of how the brutal force once applied within it is now rearticulated through al-Shabaab. It is unknown how al-Shabaab utilizes the prison structure or if the hallways echo with emptiness, yet mere ownership of the prison space is enough to manifest hierarchical control over the recruited bodies.

The prison functions in coordination with the regulatory nature of camp life. The processes of indoctrination and transformation in the camp are comparable to the workings of a prison, with scheduled times to wake, eat, study, work, pray and to sleep. The disciplinary power of the camp functions as an “integrated system,” wherein the linkages between economic production, mechanisms of power, and the aims of the

124 Ibid.
institution are fully integrated within a hierarchical, disciplinary system under constant surveillance. This network of individuals and internal systems ultimately functions like a piece of machinery, where the apparatus as a whole produces power.  

Al-Shabaab imposes discipline to consolidate its own power and utilizes local technologies to achieve this end. Appropriating the assets of urban infrastructure and the remaining vestiges of the previous regime, in particular the Laanta Buur prison, their position within local and global networks is fully established without need of juridical law or international recognition. The reproduction of militancy and conflict within Somalia is rooted in Shabaab’s consistent reterritorialization of disciplinary technology to consolidate their own socioeconomic and territorial power.

The Conflict City and the Sovereign State

The Somalia conflicts rage onward by multiple forces to establish complete territorial rule, control over economic production and the power to regulate civil society. Although the conflict concerns the fate of the region, actual combat has been primarily restricted to urban settlements. While al-Shabaab does not appear interested in establishing sovereignty, their control of urban centers has provided them the utmost power within the region, as their appropriation and reterritorialization of local sources of power has reinforced their agenda to recruit and militarize the population in service of their organizational mandate.

Conversely, the TFG has been unable to establish power as the lack of collective support incapacitates the institution’s ability to impose rule of law beyond its territorial

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125 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 176-177.
threshold. Although supported by the international community, the lack of local recognition undermines the construction and implementation of law. As power does not descend from sovereignty, the TFG must discern local sources of power and engage these sources in the same manner as al-Shabaab if there is any prospect of change. To control the urban battlegrounds and to reterritorialize the architecture of militarization is to win control over of an otherwise fragmented geography. Only once the TFG may pacify the conflict will it have the means to institutionalize and reproduce itself within the social fabric, effectively solidifying the sovereign order and founding the rule of law.

The domination of the city within new war is critical, as the city functions as a vertical node of power on the otherwise horizontal plane of power dynamics. According to Deleuze and Guattari’s essay City/State, the city is a “correlate of the road,” a singular point within the network of commerce and socio-cultural enterprise, operating over a complete town-by-town integration along a horizontal axis. Each town is a centralized power, a power of forced co-ordination (the milieu). Notably the city is not self contained and autonomous, as the city may only thrive when in network with another city. Each city functions as a singular polity, a container of interior power dynamics. Yet each city also exists as a fluid point of transit, with each urban settlement functioning in relation to another.

In an effective sovereign state, the state operates as a vertical force that penetrates the circuitry and makes the points “resonate” with an “intraconsistent

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127 Ibid, 313.
128 Ibid.
vibration" throughout the geographic domain. The harmonization of the city and the state imposes a regulatory framework of collective balance as the functions of state and the city are reciprocal to one another.” When the city functions without the state, it finds itself limited in its capitalist pursuit, yet when the state overextends itself, the city makes threat of succession. The city continually functions in relation to the state, as the city has limited capacity to acquire capital without the support of the state. In the same manner, the modern state supports the realization of capitalism within the global economy when acting in co-resonance among nation-states.

Utilizing this same concept, it is in the interest of any dominating power in Somalia to participate in the global order. While al-Shabaab dominates the landscape through capitalist aggression, the ties between existing local systems of capital accumulation and the linkages to the global economy are unable to function to their utmost capacity. To establish these linkages and harmonize the state of Somalia in the international community demands the acquisition of sovereignty within and outside the boundaries of Somalia. Presently, Al-Shabaab controls the *milieus* of internal power by controlling the cities, but the absence of international support limits their ability to acquire capital. Conversely, while the TFG struggles to control the state from within, it controls the nation-state as a milieu of the international collective.

The primary difference between the TFG and al-Shabaab, the state and the non-state militant, is not the definition or utility of their powers, but rather the difference is the variation between power sources and the institutional abilities to reproduce power across geography. The power obtained through the control of economic corridors,

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129 Ibid.
130 Ibid, 313-314.
methods of production, and architectures of control and discipline, is a power obtained through immediate sources. Such sources of power promote broad application, yet function with a predetermined scale. The powers of international partnership, the juridical edifice, and the tools of state governance may do well to neutralize the global matrix of war, but they do not have the grounding to counteract the local battlefield of new war. While new wars are defined by globalization and are fragments of a broader global war system, within Somalia, it is the control of the local infrastructure, the milieu, that shapes and determines the acquisition of power.
Section Summary

If the Transitional Federal Government is to succeed, it is necessary that the TFG re-evaluate the technologies of its power. It is essential they examine the points of preexisting and concentrated power within the landscape, and examine how power circulates between these points. It is in the interest of the TFG to examine how al-Shabaab has localized power through the appropriation of the built environment. By reterritorializing the Laanta Buur Prison via the military training camp, al-Shabaab has established itself as the dominant force of power in the region. At Laanta Buur, Shabaab has effectively conquered the legacy of a despotic regime and subsumed the power of the site to support the reproduction of a contemporary militant agenda. The construction and proliferation of additional training camps throughout the region replicates the power and authority of Laanta Buur, imposing discipline upon a society caught in chaos and garnering support. For the Transitional Federal Government to function with equal power and capacity it must examine the institutional infrastructure and determine technological mechanisms that are consistent with the dynamics of the population and the broader socio-economic and historical context as al-Shabaab has done.

From a tactical military perspective, it is sensible for AMISOM to target locations such as Laanta Buur and to again assign new meaning to the location, such as through the demolition of the prison, or the re-opening of the airport for humanitarian agencies. The conversion of the prison into an institution to support the expression of rights would also reinforce the power of the TFG, yet replacing the prison site with socially productive, disciplinary institutions such as schools or hospitals would solidify the
relationship between the TFG and the needs of the population. These mechanisms of the discipline society are essential in the absence of law to bring order, yet they are at odds with the technologies implemented by Shabaab and will contribute to the future stability of the sovereign state.

Likewise, the prison of Labaatan Jirow remains empty and could be easily appropriated by AMISOM forces as a means to acquire power on par with al-Shabaab. Outside of the prisons, the TFG could prioritize the security of the Afgooye corridor, a means to acquire the immediate support nearly a third of the Somali population. By identifying and appropriating the milieus of power within conflict terrain and constructing productive social institutions, the TFG has the opportunity to bring order to the state on a local scale and to undermine the power base of militant groups such as al-Shabaab.
Final Thoughts

To stabilize the landscape is to synchronize the frequencies of the cities with the state, as the power of the state is embedded in the circulation of capital through the intra-network of milieus. To conquer the global matrix of war requires the same demands; the community of nation states must resuscitate failed states, allowing capital to flow between all nation states. Without this scaled harmonization, ungovernable spaces will continue to witness the formation of non-state actors and the emergence of new wars. In new war, non-state actors will persistently dominate urban centers to control existing capital flows and concurrently acquire control over civil society for their own interests. The reterritorialization of disciplinary systems, such as prisons and militant camps, crystallizes the power of militant groups and advances the reproduction of militarization and conflict.

To reassert the state requires a similar control of the landscape. However, stabilization must go one step farther to define the government from the non-state actor by negating the conditions that give rise to militancy. The distribution of governance, economic resources, and institutions of discipline must be widely distributed. The nature of these institutions must likewise hold the mutual interests of the state and the local population. The state must be reflexive to the terrain and vigilant to the polities of power contained within the landscape. The architectures of militarization and conflict are formulated through historical production, yet they are malleable. It is unclear if the state has a viable means to identify and reterritorialize the matrix of local institutions as the local actor has the advantage. Yet for any actor within the conflict, it is certain that controlling the milieus will lead to the control of the battlefield.
Bibliography


