IMPACTS OF TRIBALISM ON SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SOMALIAN SOCIETY

Abdullahi Mohamed Mohamud
International Islamic University Islamabad
Dr Saeed Akbar
International Islamic University Islamabad
saeed.akbar@iiu.edu.pk
Dr. Anwar ul haq (Corresponding Author)
(Lecturer, Government Associate College Daultala)
Haqanwar11@gmail.com

Abstract
Tribalism is an ethnocentric feeling of integration and solidarity with one's tribe. Tribalism influences the lives of people, shapes, reshapes and de-shapes nation states, affects family and politics and incites young people to commit crime or face violence. The major focus of this study was to investigate the role of tribalism in affecting social cohesion, young people and criminality in society. Using the quantitative methodology sample of 160 Somalian students was selected who are studying in Pakistan. Questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. It was found that tribalism negatively affects the young people, and youth are most vulnerable to civil war and violence. Criminality in Somalian society increases and young people fall into the trap of terrorism due to tribalism. Social Cohesion and families suffer due to civil war, and it is also linked with tribal values. It is recommended that tribal rivalries should be diminished so that Somalian society can achieve development.
Key Words: Tribalism, Somalia, Tribe, Tribalism in Somalia, Africa, Africans in Pakistan

1. Introduction:

Research related to Africa mostly negatively portrays tribalism and tribes in Africa. Tribalism is often associated with primitiveness and backwardness. However, tribalism is not only a negative concept. In reality tribes are common categorization in Africa and Arab world. Before moving further towards the impacts of tribalism on social relationships in Somalian society, it is important to understand the concepts of tribe and tribalism in detail. Tribe is difficult to define because of its many shapes and blur boundaries.

The word tribe is derived from the Latin word "tribus" which means factions formed by solidarity or integration. As per rivers "tribes have three common characteristics living in distinct area, speaking same mother tongue and ability to unite in time of crisis". Likewise, Reichard defines tribe as classification of people who speak similar language, who are not economically dependent on each other and who cooperate with each other in many ways that not defined and often involves sudden situations (Biebuyck, 1966). People who share cultural background and history are also considered as tribes by some scholars. These clan members share folk lore and events and customs with each other unique and customized only for that tribe (Noor, 2013). All these definitions point towards a common understanding of the word tribe "Tribe is a loose set of individuals who speak common language, have similar culture, usually live in a common area, help each other in emergency situations and involve economic transactions but are not dependent on each other in economic ways and often belong to one ancestry".

The word tribe is called "Qabeela" in Arabic language, whose plural is "Qabaa'il". This division of clans, groups, sets of individuals is an old tradition in the Arab world. In divine guidance holy Quran also mentions the word "Qabaa'il" in surah Hujrat. Holy Quran quotes "O men! Behold, we have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and **tribes**, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, Allah is all-knowing, all-aware" (Al Quran, 49:13). In this verse of holy Quran Allah mentions the word

tribe as source of identity or recognizing each other and its not a matter of pride. It has been reported in the "Seerah" literature and in the Hadith as well, that Arabs initially were divided into three tribes and later emerged different branches of these tribes denoting themselves as separate tribes. Tribal rivalries and divisions in Arabs were common before Islam, and even today the tribal divisions among Arabs are present.

As the word or concept "tribe" has been defined, now it is pertinent that we should define what tribalism is. Tribalism is an ethnocentric feeling about one's tribe that I am member of that tribe, I identify myself with that tribe and have well-fortified belongings with the tribe with a notion that those who do not belong to my tribe are inferior. Members of the tribe identify themselves and associate their pride, dignity and meaningfulness of life with the tribe (Julie, 2018). There are many criteria to define tribalism such as kinship, perceived or real blood ties, reciprocity etc. Tribalism, like the word "tribe" in contemporary times, has negative connotations associated with it. Although the notion of ethnic divineness is considered negative in recent epoch, such divisions based on genealogies exist. Tribalism can be further divided into many forms such as traditional tribalism, customary tribalism and modern tribalism (James, 2006).

Tribalism is often associated with integration or solidarity within the members of a tribe. Earliest accounts of studying social integration or solidarity can be traced back to Ibn Khaldun in sociological tradition. Ibn Khaldun used the word "Assbiyah" to refer to solidarity. The Arabic word "Assbiyah" means being biased towards one's own group and having a strong sense of belonging with the group. Tribes also have strong sense of "Assbiyah" or solidarity (Halim, 2014). Later in sociological tradition Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand tonnies extended the concept of solidarity by introducing the concepts of "mechanical solidarity" and "gemeinschaft". Tribal ties can be referred to as mechanical solidarity in Durkheimian terms.

Even today, tribal identities play an important role in Arab world. Tribalism influences lives of people, shapes, reshapes and de-shapes nation states, affects family and politics and incites young people to commit or face violence (Del Río, 2019). Contemporary changes in Arab world such as Tunisia, Iraq, Syria and Libya that faced the rise of Arab spring and rise of violent movements tribal identities also played a significant role. Tribalism although difficult to define is yet a potent force in Arab regions of Asia and Africa (Al-Kuwari, 2019).

Before moving towards the impacts of tribalism in Somalia and nearby countries in Africa, it would be beneficial to understand some of the basics about Somalia. Somalia is a federal republic located in eastern Africa with largest coastline with indian ocean spanning 3,333 km in mainland Africa with population of around 14 million people. Somalia is low-income country where there is conflict and war and faced a long dictatorship for decades after 1970s. This country though has challenges is extremely homogenous religiously with 99% population as Muslims (Castagno, 1960). Tribalism and clans are present in Somalia and influences its politics like in many other Arab and African nations (Mohamed 2017).

Political power, prestige and wealth are being enjoyed by many tribal elders in parts of west and east Africa (Isabirye, 1999). Tribalism is not limited to rural areas but also present in urban areas where tribal elders have gained political power (Wallerstein, 1960). In many African nations these tribal political powers and structures are also associated with corruption and nepotism. Positions of prestige and power that are for individuals are considered collective in tribal societies and all the members of the clan consider themselves eligible for that privilege (Abdelrahim, 2020).

Problems of civil war, political instability and violence are widely prevalent in Somalia and other neighboring regions. In the pre-colonial Somalia households were the most important division and local heads have no control over water and grazing the two most important resources. Although there were conflicts between tribes in precolonial Somalia, yet these

conflicts never turned into a long civil war (Samatar, 1997). Tribes in post-colonial Somalia have notable role in political affairs at every level of government's hierarchy. In federal, provincial and local governments there is formula for power sharing among tribes. The influential and noteworthy tribes hold major positions of power and smaller tribes are ostracized (Schwoebel, 2010). Somalia is extremely homogenous society with majority of people belonging to same ethnicity, speaking same languages Somali and Arabic and upholding same religion yet the area is conflict ridden. One of the reasons behind these conflicts is tribalism and this weakens the government and society at large (Makinda, 1991). The last three decades in Somalian history were full of conflict, violence and civil war resulting in great human and economic losses. There is trouble and distress in society which can be attributed to bad governance. The bone of contention in Somalian society is inequalities between tribes. Almost all tribes are fighting for more share in power and resources (Osman, 2006).

As Somalian tribes are being discussed here, it will be beneficial to understand the tribes of Somalia in detail. There are four major tribes in Somalia which are called Dir, Isaaq, Darod and Hawiye. Dir and Isaaq tribes main Somali or Samaale tribes. Darod and Hawiye tribes married with the tribes Isaaq and Dir to enter into higher hierarchy. Other major tribes include rahanweyn, Saransor, Mayle and Ashraf.

The major focus of this was to probe and dissect the role of tribalism in affecting cohesion, young people and criminality in society. It focused on understanding the impacts of tribalism on social relations and suggesting key changes for better Somalian Society.
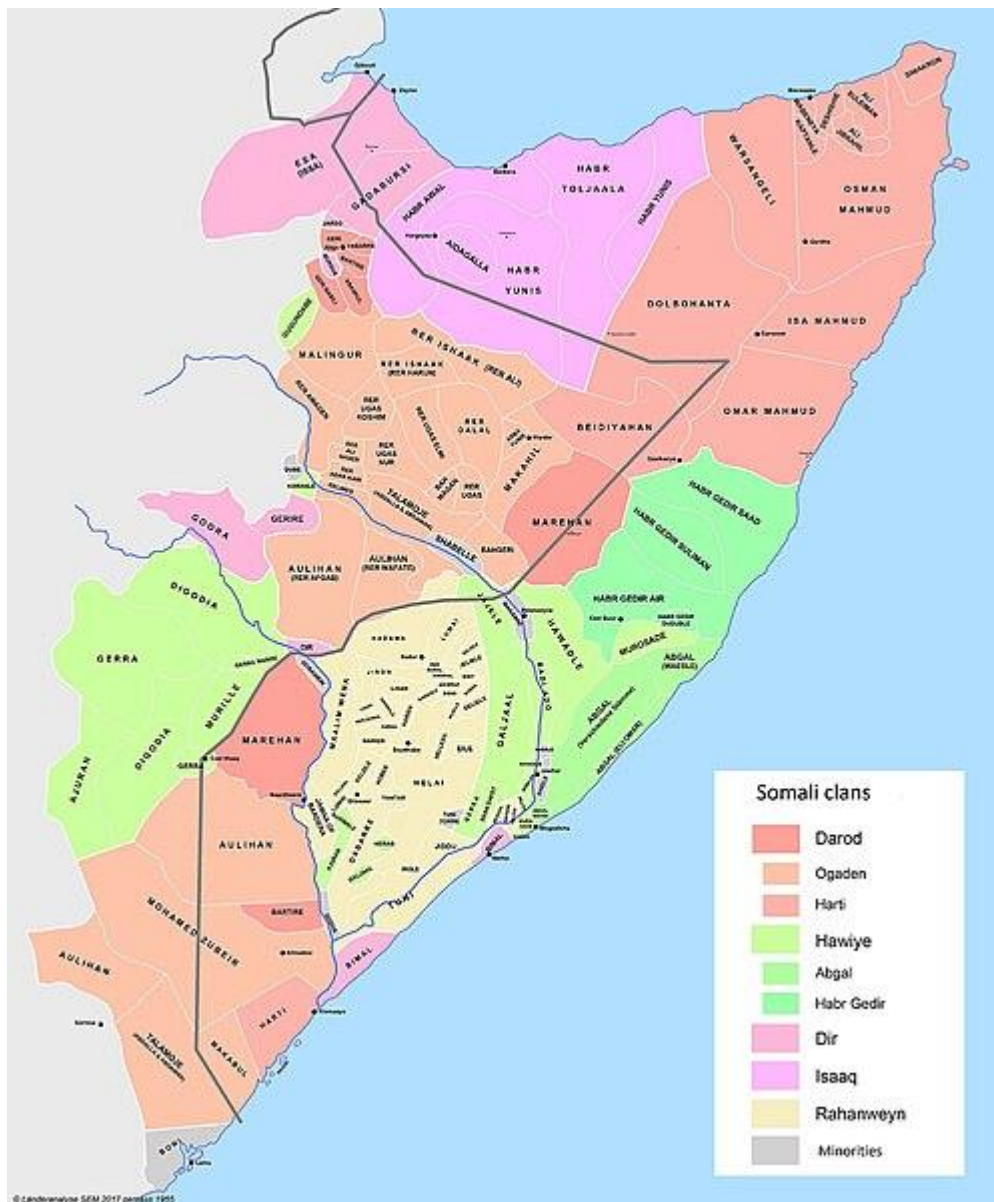
Figure 1: Map of Somalia showing tribal distribution by provinces (Somali clan map, 2024)

1.1.Problem Statement:

Somalia has been facing tribal conflicts and civil war for last three decades. Survival of Somalia as a state and society is at stake due to these noxious conflicts. In the beginning years the conflict was between the government and militants but now this has become a war between the tribes. Tribes in their dominant areas have established direct or proxy governments. These tribal conflicts and absence of solidarity have resulted in poor healthcare, education and economy. There are various research works that explored the effects of tribalism in Somalian society. However, almost all this research only focused on political aspects and ignored the social relationship component. This study will examine the role of Tribalism in shaping the social relationships among the Somali individuals. Impacts of tribalism have been investigated by focusing on cohesion, trust and communication issues between members of different tribes. One of the unique advantages of this study is that it has been conducted with Somali students studying in a foreign country Pakistan. For Pakistanis, All the people of Somalia no matter they belong to which tribe are Somalis and this also have an impact on students understanding and

thinking that their tribes are not important and only one Somalian identity is important. These students realize the importance of unity. Another added advantage of this study is that these students now away from toxic tribalism and have interacted with members of other tribes as well, which makes them a unique community to answer the questions related to tribalism.

2. Methodology:

This research uses quantitative methodology to examine the impacts of tribalism on social relationships. The target population for this study was Somalian students living in Pakistan.

2.1. Sample:

There are around 400 Somalian students in Pakistan. These 400 students are located in various cities of Pakistan, majority residing in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar. Sample size of 160 students was selected from three cities using the convenient sampling as the students in Karachi were difficult to assess. These 160 Somali students constituted the sample of the study. Out of these 160 students, 92 are located in Islamabad, 60 in Lahore and 8 in Peshawar.

2.2. Instrument:

To achieve the study objectives a questionnaire was designed consisting of 53 questions which included background information of the respondents and their views about tribalism. This questionnaire was administered to the students in hard copy and with face-to-face interaction with the researcher. Author one of this study belongs to Somalia and his sister is also studying in Islamabad. She also helped with data collection.

2.3. Data Analysis:

This extensive data gathered from questionnaires was added in the SPSS and using univariate analysis techniques data was analyzed. In the following research results of the univariate analysis have been represented.

3. Results:

The results section is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the background variables, and the second section details the impacts of tribalism on social relationships. Background variables will help us understand the population.

3.1. Features of studied population:

This section discusses the features of the sample studied. Among the 160 respondents around 50% of the respondents were 22-25 years old. 42% of the respondents were 26-29 years old. Around 18% of respondents were between the ages of 18 years to 21 years. Only 5% of the respondents were older than 29 years. Gender of 83% respondents was male and 17% was females. Number of female students from Somalia as compared to male students is less that's why this number is majorly in favor of the males. Only 10% of the respondents were married among the selected sample, while the majority 90% of them were single. A significant majority of these students 75% are studying in BS/MA classes which is equal to 16 years of education. Only 25% of the respondents were studying in MS/M.phil classes. Around 98% of these students are full time students and do not do any job in Pakistan. Majority of the students studying in Pakistan belong to affluent families. Around 65% of the respondents' families are earning more than 1000$ a month. Around 14% of the respondents are earning more than 5000$ and 15% of the respondents are earning less than 1000$ dollars per month.

3.2. Tribalism and Social Relationships:

Various indicators of Tribalism are associated with different forms of social relationships in Somalian Society. The first measure of social relationships is the impact on life of the youth.

3.2.1. Tribalism and youth:

Tribalism has impacts on life of youth in Somalia. These impacts are explained in the table below. Concerns related to Somalian youth are civil war, vulnerability and youth's vision about their role in Somalian society.

Table 1

Distributions of the respondents by impacts of tribalism on the youth

Indicators		S. Ag	Agree	Neut	Dis	S. DA	Total
Tribalism has reduced the role of youth in society	F	58	49	30	16	7	160
	%	36.3	30.6	18.8	10	4.4	100
Majority of the people effected by civil war is Somalian youth	F	90	49	13	4	4	160
	%	56.3	30.6	8.1	2.5	2.5	100
In civil war youth are more vulnerable	F	52	67	31	6	4	160
	%	32.5	41.9	19.4	3.8	2.5	100
Tribalism has destroyed social interactions among Somalian youth	F	48	62	30	16	4	160
	%	30	38.8	18.8	10	2.5	100
Somalian youth have no role	F	48	61	25	15	11	160
	%	30	38.1	15.6	9.4	6.9	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by impact of tribalism on the youth. Around 36% of the respondents agreed, and 30.6% respondents strongly agreed that Tribalism has diminished the role of young population in Somalian society; so, it indicates that 66% of the respondents agreed that tribalism has lessened the function of youth in society. The second indicator in the table is that civil war has mostly affected the young Somalians. In response to this 56.3% agreed and 30.6% strongly agreed to this question that youth is most disturbed section of society due to civil war in Somalia; it means that total 86% of the sample population agreed with this statement. The third indicator of the table shows that 32.5% agreed and 41.9% strongly agreed that youth are more vulnerable in civil war. In total around 73% of the sample population agreed that youth are more vulnerable to civil war. In the next indicator 30% respondents agreed and 38.8 strongly agreed that following the tribal identity has deteriorated sociality among youth, which means that the total of 68% agreed that social interactions among youth have been wrecked badly by tribalism. In response to this question that do Somali youth have any role in the future of the country 30% respondents agreed and 38% strongly agreed that Somalian youth have no part in the future of the country; so, it can be said that the Somalian youth have no part in country's future.

3.2.2. Tribalism and Crime:

Table 2

Distribution of the respondents by impacts of tribalism on crimes in Somalian society

Indicators		S. Ag	Agree	Neut	Dis	S. DA	Total
Tribal conflicts raise street crimes	F	41	55	29	20	15	160
	%	25.6	34.4	18.1	12.5	9.4	100
Tribes safeguard criminal tribes	F	55	48	34	12	11	160
	%	34.4	30	21.3	7.5	6.9	100
Injustice and oppression in the country contributes to the rise of terrorism	F	44	72	28	10	6	160
	%	27.5	45	17.5	6.3	3.8	100
Unemployment of Somalian youth leads them to being used by terrorist groups	F	45	51	33	16	15	160
	%	28.1	31.9	20.6	10	9.4	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by tribalism leading to crimes in Somalian society. The first indicator in the table is that tribalism leads to a rise in street crimes. Tribal conflicts lead to street crimes in society. The percentage of agreed respondents with this statement is 25.6% and the percentage of strongly agreed respondents is 34.4%; the sum of the percentage is 59% that shows the occurrence of street crimes is due to strife between tribes. However, around 21% of the respondents were confused that either tribalism is a cause of street crime or not. The second indicator shows that criminal elements in the society are protected by the tribes to which they belong. Around 34% of the respondents said that criminals are protected by tribal values and tribal elders. Around 30% of the respondents agree with this statement that tribalism protects criminals. This means that 64% of the respondents think that tribals protect the criminals. The third indicator focused on this table is that injustice leads to the rise of terrorism. Around 27% of the respondents strongly agreed that injustice in Somalian society results in increase of the terrorism. To make the same statement 45% of the respondents also agreed with. This means that 67% of the respondents think that injustice in society leads to crime. The last indicator in this table is that unemployment results is terrorism and terrorists' groups hire unemployed young people. Around 28% strongly agreed and 32% agreed with the statement that unemployed young people are being used by terrorist groups. This means that 60% of the respondents agreed with this statement that unemployed young people are recruited by the terrorist groups. However, around 21% of the respondents were unsure and they opted for a neutral response.

3.2.3. Tribalism and Social Cohesion:

Table 3

Distribution of the respondents by impacts of tribalism on social cohesion in Somalian society

Indicators		S. Ag	Agree	Neut	Dis	S. DA	Total
Civil War in the Country Effected Families	F	82	51	13	10	4	160
	%	51.2	31.9	8.1	6.3	2.5	100
Most of the Somalian Society is merged with Tribalism	F	42	67	27	16	8	160
	%	26.3	41.9	16.9	10	5	100
There is Discrimination in the Country based on Tribalism	F	42	67	27	16	8	160
	%	26.3	41.9	16.9	10	5	100
Tribalism Caused Conflict and Instability in the Country	F	66	50	28	10	6	160
	%	41.3	31.3	17.5	6.3	3.8	100
In Somali Society, there is Prejudice and Stereotypes Towards other Tribes.	F	32	54	45	24	5	160
	%	20	33.8	28.1	15	3.1	100

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by tribalism and its role is deteriorating social cohesion of Somalia as a country. In the first indicator respondents were asked that civil war in Somalia has effects on the family life. The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 51%, strongly agreed with this statement that civil war has disturbed the families. In a similar tone 31% respondents agreed with this statement. In total it means that around 82% of the respondents think that civil war in Somalia is harmful for families. When asked about the prevalence of tribalism in Somalian society 26% strongly agreed and 42% agreed that Somalian society is full of tribalism. This means that a significant majority of the respondents, 68% of the respondents, think that Somalian society is submerged into tribalism. In response to questions related to discrimination, similar number of respondents 68% agreed that it is responsible for discrimination in society. As there is conflict and instability widely prevalent in Somalia, when asked that tribalism causes instability in the country 41 strongly agreed and 31% agreed which means 72% of the respondents agreeing to the statement that tribalism is the cause of the conflict and instability in Somalian society. When asked about stereotypes and prejudices related to other tribes 20% strongly agreed and 33% respondents agreed that stereotypes about other tribes exist in Somalians. However, 28% of the respondents replied with a neutral response that they are not sure about the existence of stereotypes and prejudices.

4. Discussion:

The results section of the paper shows three main variables focused on the study of the impact of tribalism on youth, tribalism and crime and tribalism and youth. When we focus on tribalism and youth, we come to know that youth of Somalia see no future of the country if the tribalism will go on. If tribalism will continue to exist as its prevailing these days youth see

very few opportunities in Somalia. Young Somalians think that they are the most vulnerable group and especially unemployment leads to conflict and civil war. Unemployment is a reason behind terrorism and civil war is considered by most young Somalians. Young people are also facing many difficulties in establishing identities beyond their tribes. Tribal identities are hindering the progress of youth in Somalia.

Another aspect of tribalism and its relevance to crime. In lieu of freedom fighting and civil war there are criminal elements that are being bred or protected by tribes to challenge the government's authority or gain political and monetary benefits. Earlier research related to civil war has also supported this concept (Barrow, 2019). Most of the respondents agree that tribalism has a role in promoting crime in Somalia. Somalia as country has an image of crime because of different tribes fighting with each other. There is wide prevalent injustice in the country as well which leads young people to crime and terrorism. Terrorism and tribalism are associated in earlier studies as well (Farah, 2022).

The third most important variable focused by the study was social cohesion among Somalians. Civil war in Somalia had negative consequences for the family life in Somalia. Families have been impacted due to terrorism, violence and conflict. Whole families got disturbed or destroyed due to conflicts in the region. Similar findings related to conflict has also been reported in earlier research (Clark, 2019). Life of women in Somalia due to conflict and civil war is also disturbed by a huge degree (Ingiriis, 2013). As most Somalian society is filled with tribalism there are a lot of prejudices and stereotypes among the tribes. Tribes think about other tribes in prejudiced and stereotyped ways. This finding is also supported by another psychological study that people see what is different in identity from them as stereotyped and prejudiced (Duckitt,1992. This response is important as well because now the students from different tribes have seen each other living together in Pakistan and come to know that other tribes are just similar to them.

It can be concluded that overall tribalism is thought of as social problem by the participants of this study. Tribalism has hindered the progress of young people. Tribalism has challenged the youth and pushed it out of the mainstream. Tribalism has supported crime in society and promoted terrorism and civil war. Finally, Tribalism has caused instability in the country and is source of discrimination in the Somalian Society.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations:

This study investigated a complex and politically hot subject related to Somalia. Tribalism is not only still prevalent in Somalia, but it's harming the society at large. Somalians are facing many political, economic and social challenges due to tribalism. Although, this system once served Somalia well has now hindered its progress and development. It can be concluded that overall tribalism is thought of as a social problem by the participants of this study. Tribalism has hindered the progress of young people. Tribalism has challenged the youth and pushed it out of the mainstream. Tribalism has supported crime in society and promoted terrorism and civil war. Finally, Tribalism has caused instability in the country and is source of discrimination in the Somalian Society.

To reduce the challenges posed by Tribalism there are three main recommendations. One, Tribalism the pure ethnocentric feeling that my tribe is superior and other tribes are inferior can be reduced by two things. One is promoting inter marriages between tribes. Second, Government opening such schools and centers where members from different tribes must join that organization. Second, the issue of tribalism is not only limited to politics, and it should not

be only limited to political explanations. Third, further research related to tribalism is also needed.

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