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The Somali Media, Diaspora communities and the concept of conflict re-creation

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Abstract

Somalia has for more than two decades been in a perpetual state of conflict and more than a million Somalis have fled the initial civil war. They have formed a substantial diaspora community and have set up their own websites and TV stations to remain engaged with the happenings of their homeland. Diasporic media is often hailed as a medium that allows immigrants to maintain their identity in their host country as well as providing a platform to sustain ties with their homeland. However, if these ties are being maintained with a homeland that is in a state of conflict, there is very much a possibility that the dynamics of the conflict will be transported and re-created amongst the diaspora audiences. This article illustrates how diasporic media can re-create conflict, through a theoretically developed and empirically informed argument that provides three distinctly analytical approaches, referred to as the three politics of non-recognition, solidarity and mobilisation. The article argues that diasporic media is more complex than existing scholarship has demonstrated and that there is a need to broaden the scope of current academic debates concerning the interplay between diasporic media, transnationalism and conflict.

Contributor Note

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Introduction

Diasporas have existed in one form or another for centuries, but with the rise of new patterns of conflict, the increased speed of communication and mobility and the proliferation of cultural and political boundaries from the latter decades of the 20th century, their importance with respect to conflict has gained weight. From the Tamil Tigers in Europe financing terrorist activities in their home territories and American Jewish groups supporting right-wing extremists in Israel, to German Croats supporting the collapse of Yugoslavia, diaspora groups have come to play a crucial role in feeding and prolonging conflicts (Demmers 2002). According to the World Bank report on this subject in 2003 (World Bank 2003), if a country which has recently ended a conflict has a large diaspora in the West, its risk that the conflict will resume is sharply increased as diasporas tend to be more extreme than the populations they have left behind.

The Somali diaspora is particularly well-positioned to engage with homeland activities. Since fleeing from civil war in 1991, the Somali diaspora has integrated into the West, used the opportunities of better infrastructure and technologies presented by its new environments and thereby attained information vital to remaining connected to its homeland (Issa-Salwe 2011). In this, it has become part of what Appadurai refers to as the 'emerging new global cultural ecumene' (Appadurai 1990: 5). The Somali diaspora has established diasporic media, which is often used and remediated by the domestic media in Somalia. This means that domestic Somali media can act as an echo-chamber for views that originate from outside the country. It also warrants diasporic media a certain level of

influence and allows them to occupy a hegemonic position within the Somali media landscape (Gaas, Hansen and Berry 2012: 6).

This article sheds light on diasporic media's potential to re-create homeland tensions and conflicts amongst diaspora communities and seeks to broaden current scholarly debate surrounding diaspora communities and their media. Current scholarship often focuses on diasporic media's importance in maintaining ties of kinship, homeland relations and the receiving of information in the community's language. Whilst the research that this article is based on has reconfirmed these notions, it has also shown that diasporic media is doing much more, necessitating an all-encompassing, holistic research approach to deepen our understanding of diasporic media capabilities.

The Somali diaspora and globalisation

The Somali diaspora maintains links with family members back home primarily through economic support, but is also active in the general reconstruction of the country. It makes a major contribution to the Somali economy, sustaining livelihoods through remittances, humanitarian assistance and participation in recovery and reconstruction efforts (Menkhaus 2009). It is commonly acknowledged that the most successful migrant businesses arise in the crevices created by transnationalism – for example, shipping and cargo companies, import and export firms and labour contractors (Glick, Schiller et al. 1995). This is also true for the establishment of the money transfer companies known as 'hawilad'. The hawilad is an informal system of value transfer that operates in almost every

part of the world (Horst 2008). It is run by Somalis and mainly used by Somalis; both for remittance-sending and business transactions. The recent clampdown by US and UK banks has therefore caused much concern since it is anticipated to have devastating effects on the millions of Somalis who rely on remittances to survive.

The close-knit relation that the diaspora Somalis have with their homeland makes diasporic media a vehicle for direct participation in the mediated communications process, as well as for the extension of the voices of Somali diaspora groups. Diasporic media has given them a platform to inform one another of Somalia, its changing political dynamics, humanitarian conditions and warring ideological affiliations. It has presented an opportunity for the Somali Diaspora to become what Fathi (1979 cited in Sreberny-Mohamadi and Mohamadi 1994: 4) refers to as a 'public coming into being' and to voice its own opinion. Whilst the Somali Diaspora has grown adept at adapting technologies to its situational needs (Issa-Salwe 2011), communicative technology has been used to articulate placeless imaginings of identity (Gilroy 2000). When this 'coming into being' unfolds in a fragmented environment, especially as in the Somali case, diasporic identity becomes what Paul Gilroy refers to as 'a question of power and authority when groups seek to realise themselves in political form' (Gilroy 2000: 99). Moreover, if, as McLuhan famously argued, the 'global village' makes of us nobodies desperate for a sense of identity, this process may be all the more intense, as people seek to retrieve who they used to be as a protection of their fading identities and the old sensibility, values and enmity prevail over democratic awareness and commitment (McLuhan

et al. 1995). The same communication technology provides platforms for dominance to those who have access to better technological infrastructure and democratic environments. Diasporic media in this context have become a powerful tool as it enables diaspora communities to negotiate and exert authority that carries political, financial, human and social capital. The diaspora is both informed and motivated by discourses and ideologies produced at the homeland 'centre' (Demmers 2007), and this can influence it to engage with homeland activities. As Somalia is still marred by conflict, reliance on the diaspora has gradually become more significant, especially in relation to funding warring clans in the Somali territories (Horst and Gaas 2008). It is this reliance, coupled with the communicative opportunities that diasporic media provide, which produces the concept I refer to as 'diasporated conflicts'. In sum, diasporated conflicts are conflicts where there is a dominant involvement from and reliance on the diaspora, enabled and empowered by diasporic media.

According to scholars such as Chandler, Kaldor and Keane, the key point of the globalised world is that territory is no longer especially significant (Chandler 2009). Due to globalisation, we no longer live in a territorialised world where we are mapped in terms of bounded political communities with clear points of connection between states and citizen-subjects (Chandler 2009; Ruggie 1993; Scholte 2002). Whilst this may be true for societies that have submitted to 'civilising processes' in Norbert Elias's terms (1939), arguably, for societies that have not, connections between citizen-subjects abroad and territorially-based political communities not just limited to the state are very much alive. At the

same time, the intensification of worldwide social relations linking distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many thousands of miles away, and vice versa (Giddens 1991), means that diasporic media is (very possibly) enabling transnational connections. Technologically-engaged diaspora communities can be seen as networks which constitute the new social morphology of our societies (Castells 1996), making it more likely for global clusters of groups to exist. Through diasporic media, diaspora communities maintain local identities and reproduce localised nationalisms transnationally. For diaspora communities negotiating their identities through this prism of globalisation and amidst sentiments of placelessness, national belonging is often rediscovered through distance and feelings of difference (Trandafoiu 2013). As such, it is highly likely for diaspora communities to re-embrace their homeland and all that comes with it.

Globalisation has created possibilities for global democratic progress as well as for the globalisation of violence and conflict. Somali diaspora communities settled in the West have the advantage of living in technologically and democratically advanced environments, which puts them in a position to engage with homeland politics and vie for prominence amongst the hegemonic elite. The most powerful tool that enables this prominence is the financial support they give to political actors at clan level. According to Horst and Gaas, 'Tensions and conflicts between sub-clans are faced by relatives and friends directly and the level of influence diaspora support can have on the outcome of these conflicts is much greater' (Horst and Gaas 2008: 16). Horst and Gaas elaborate further, stating that 'clan

leaders can expect financial support from clan-members in the diaspora and manpower from clan members in Somalia and these disputes often lead to the two clans in question taking up arms against each other' (Horst and Gaas 2008: 17). Often both clans would be mobilising each other in Somalia, which would have significant implications for both clans' members in the diaspora and their local relationships with each other. According to Horst and Gaas, funds sent to support clan conflict have been estimated to have been between \$500,000 and \$5million over the past two decades, and have been used for fighters to be paid and weaponry to be bought (Horst and Gaas 2008). As such, the diaspora is a significant contributor to the cycle that is part of the phenomenon that Collier refers to as the 'conflict trap' (2003). In addition to clan support, diaspora Somalis have also sent remittances to Islamist groups that they ideologically support. The emergence of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2006 was largely enabled by the financial means of diaspora members (Menkhaus 2007) Diaspora support, in fact, enabled the rapid expansion of the ICU as they took control of the whole of Mogadishu and are considered to have brought some semblance of order in less than 6 months (Horst and Gaas 2008). Furthermore, posting information about their movement and its development on Somali websites helped to recruit many Somalis from the diaspora to join the ICU (Horst and Gaas 2008).

Diasporic media and the concept of conflict re-creation

The collapse of the state fractured Somali society and its common bonds of nationhood. In their place came factionalised enmities and conflicts

based on traditional clan alliances. The conflict perpetuated existing social inequalities and unequally shared resources. It also drew a foray of international actors, each with vested interests, engaging and intervening in multifaceted ways, including western-centric approaches that were often incompatible with existing local politics, social norms and cultures. These various groups have engaged diasporic media to further their political ambitions, clan interests and ideological causes. The diaspora communities are therefore not only receiving information on progress and happenings in their homeland; they are also encouraged to engage with the dynamics of the conflict. Between 1989 and 2004, 94% of worldwide violent conflicts revolved around inter-group or group-state disputes (Harbom and Wallensteen 2005). As identity groups are at the core of most contemporary conflicts (Demmers 2007), analysing how diaspora groups are invited to participate in conflicts through diasporic media is especially important in modern times.

Conflict re-creation becomes a possibility when the sentiments and dynamics forming the root causes of the conflict are reproduced through the media. The Somali conflict is rooted in poverty and unequal access to resources, clannism and international community interventions. When the media re-enacts the silencing of the poor and marginalised sections of society, it reinforces the injustices already established by the conflict. Equally, when media platforms reproduce existing clan structures and alliances, they can encourage relationships of connection with or disconnection from other human beings, laying the foundation for the practice of mediated inclusion and exclusion. When this is applied to existing clan tensions

and conflicts, it can reproduce clannism practices that have been part of the Somali conflict's root cause. The mediated operationalisation of conflict root causes that encourage the enactment of existing conflict dynamics can lead to the conflict being re-created through the media.

A note on method

To examine the extent of diasporic media involvement in the Somali conflict and the role(s) they play with regards to conflict re-creation, an overview of all existing Somali websites and television stations was carried out between 2012 and 2013. This overview of 748 websites and 10 television stations identified the conflict dynamics that had the potential to be reproduced. These were conceptualised as three overarching and analytically distinct forms of politics: *the politics of non-recognition*, *the politics of solidarity* and *the politics of mobilisation*, which engage with the conditions of possibility of the Somali conflict.

In order to examine how these politics may variously be at work or contribute to the re-creation of conflict within and through Somali diasporic media, I conducted an extensive content and discourse analysis of the 748 websites and 10 television stations between May and September 2013. Data from a selection of key content analysis variables are presented here, including the frequency of representation of prominent and marginalised social actors, solidaristic invocations in audio-visual news coverage and current affairs material (including documentaries, talk shows and debates), clan alignment in advertising, and possibilities for audience interactivity through the 'sharing' of media content online. As the findings

show very few differences between television and website representations, the presentation of this data has, largely, been combined. Alongside the content analysis findings, some illustrative examples from a wider Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) study are included which pay particular attention to lexical choices used to represent ideological dispositions and alignments.

Politics of non-recognition

The politics of non-recognition takes its cue from Taylor's 'politics of recognition' in emphasising the media's central role in contemporary times in silencing the most marginalised and powerless members of society. In today's mediated societies, the media is arguably the principal means by which cultural differences and agendas can be acknowledged and recognised (Cottle 2006), putting minorities in a position where they can be misrecognised or devalued or worse, not recognised at all. The media operates in fields structured by dominance (Cottle 2006). The key

issue with regards to the politics of non-recognition is the absence of a given content in the media, since what does not exist in the media does not exist in the public mind (Castells 2007). The mediated silencing of discourses and issues relevant to minorities and marginalised sections of society inevitably reinforces the cognitive manifestation of existing marginalisation that is often prevalent in conflict environments.

The content analysis findings used here focus upon the representation of social actors and, first, highlight the most marginalised groups in the Somali conflict, including women, youth, the economically marginalised and minority clans. These groups, overall, were also marginalised in the Somali diasporic media, appearing far less often and less prominently than males, those identified with majority clans, elites (such as politicians), or those associated with the international community. Of the marginalised groups, women were the most represented, as 25% of diasporic media content featured women's issues.

Marginalised social actors	Number of appearances	Percentage of appearances
Women	49	25.8%
Human rights activists	36	18.9%
Youth	30	15.8%
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	22	11.6%
Children	13	6.8%
Women's rights activists	13	6.8%
Disabled people	11	5.8%
Orphans	6	3.2%
Elderly people	3	1.6%
Homeless people	3	1.6%
Fishermen	3	1.6%
Street children	1	0.5%
Beggars	0	0%
Street vendors	0	0%
Total	190	100%

Table 1: Marginalised Social Actors

This may be illustrative of some of the progress that has been made by the efforts of the international community and Somali women’s organisations to promote women’s prominence in Somali society. Efforts such as the women-only ‘6th clan’ which responds to the 5 traditional male-led clans that dominate Somali politics, and the 30% quota of seats designated to women in Parliament as set out in the 2012 draft constitution, are notable examples (although this has not, to date, been implemented, since only 5% of the Somali Parliament is currently female)

(World Bank 2013). However, as the chart shows, women’s rights activists feature far less often in the media (only 6.8% of the marginalised social actors represented), which suggests that the media is much more interested in representing women in their traditional roles, rather than as actors with political, social and economic potential within the Somali society.

The social actors who were most often represented in the media were male, and especially males featured in a political context underpinned by clan-centricity:

Social Actor	Number of appearances	Percentage of appearances
Somali president	106	14.4%
Clan members	82	11.1%
Clan poets	78	10.6%
Regional officials appointed by regional administrations	77	10.4%
Local officials appointed by regional administrations	70	9.5%
Clan elders	66	8.9%
Prime minister	56	7.6%
Cabinet members	52	7.0%
Artists engaging in clan discourse	49	6.6%
Parliamentarians	41	5.6%
Female clan members	27	3.7%
Youth clan members	27	3.7%
Minority clan members	2	0.3%
Minority clan elders	2	0.3%
Total	738	100.0%

Table 2: Prominently represented social actors

Here we can see the deep-rootedness of clannism through the popularity of clan-related sources, which includes the Somali President as he too has been selected based on clan politics. But we can also take note of how under-represented minority clans are, with their members and elders appearing a total of only 4 times.

The continuation of male dominance in Somali affairs at the expense of the Somali women is likely to remain unchallenged when the media perpetuate the silencing and misrecognition of women. Similarly, the sidelining of minority clans may propagate existing forms of marginalisation that have been part of the root cause of the conflict. These examples of the politics of non-

recognition represent small but important elements in the reproduction of existing structures of dominance that underpin the conflict, and thus in

providing the conditions of possibility for conflict re-creation.

Solidarity categories	Number of appearances	Percentage of appearances
Solidarity with clannism	68	34.7%
Other	48	24.5%
Solidarity for international engagement	38	19.4%
Mobilising for clannism	21	10.7%
No audio-visual material	12	6.1%
Solidarity for marginalised groups	5	2.6%
Mobilising on behalf of marginalised groups	3	1.5%
Solidarity against poverty and unequal access to resources	1	0.5%
Mobilising against poverty and unequal access to resources	0	0%
Mobilising for international engagement	0	0%
Total	196	100%

Table 3: Solidarity exhibition in Somali diasporic media

Politics of solidarity

Solidarity in its broadest form has multiple meanings but essentially denotes a relation or unity between people, usually where the fellow feeling of a group takes shape from a shared ideal (Scholz 2007). Anderson (1991), in relation to nationalism, notes that it is simply not possible for every individual to know and directly engage with each other on an everyday basis, even in the smallest of nations. Yet there remains a feeling of being bound to one another, with mutual obligations and the expectation of solidarity from others. The politics of solidarity acquires new meaning when applied to transnational movements based on faith, perceived ethnicity, generation or cultural affinity - especially with respect to societies where ethnicity is more important and/or where the home state has collapsed. According to Anderson, under

these conditions people tend to become more territorial and defensive of what they consider 'belongs' to them in collective cultural terms - a unifying force which is at the the same time exclusionary. In the context of state collapse, regional connections based on existing traditional structures such as the clan become more poignant. It is this transnational solidarity, constructed primarily around clan, rather than national, identity, which, I argue, is fortified by diasporic media. The Somali diaspora is dependent on the media for information (Issa-Salwe 2011: 56), but how the media decide to represent unfolding events can lead to judgements mediated through clan identity and loyalty. Through such events, people in the diaspora and in the homeland are invited to establish relations of connection and disconnection, practices of inclusion and exclusion and emotional attachments to others sharing clan

culture and values, based upon dignity, honour and pride.

The production of the politics of solidarity in Somali diasporic media content was most commonly found within clannism. The table below illustrates that nearly 35% of all the news and current affairs audio-visual material that appeared online and on television exhibited solidarity with clannism:

Material exhibiting solidarity for clannism appeared most frequently. When sentiments reinforcing clannism are reproduced in media content, it can

reinforce clan allegiance and, as a consequence, a society without a common bond. Societal fragmentation is both reflected in and reproduced through mediated pockets of clan clusters, each vying to further their interests and, in the process, producing the politics of solidarity that can re-create conflict.

Similar clannist alignment was found in the advertisements that appeared in Somali diasporic media:

Advertising categories	Number of appearances	Percentage of appearances
Clan/regionally linked	51	28.3%
Other	50	27.8%
Religious organisations and businesses	29	16.1%
Websites/TV without advertising	27	15.0%
International community	15	8.3%
Somali NGOs, women's groups, youth groups	5	2.8%
Entertainment ads. i.e. concerts, sports etc.	3	1.7%
Total	180	100%

Table 4: Groups represented in Somali diasporic media advertising

As we can see again, the largest number of advertisements that appeared on Somali media promoted goods and/or services that had a clan-based nature. It further exemplifies the entrenchment of clan solidarity to the detriment of a common bond of nationhood.

Politics of mobilisation

The *politics of mobilisation* is the mediated operationalisation of existing dispositions to provide human, financial and/or social capital. This could involve, for example, offering oneself as manpower, sending and raising funds and goods, raising awareness and/or rallying others to become involved. The

media can reproduce the politics of mobilisation by calling for action and providing a platform to engage with and operationalise these dispositions. Stremblau and Price (2009) speak of the Kenyan 2008 post-election violence and how media narratives mirrored, enabled and exacerbated said violence during and after the elections. The authors outline how grievance, suspicion and beliefs about vote-rigging were the factors largely responsible for Kenyan post-election violence; sentiments advocated and instigated by the media as a key agent in public mobilisation. Similarly, in former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic sparked ethno-political conflict chiefly through the use of mass media. Milosevic took control of the most

influential Serbian media including television, radio and the largest newspapers in order to ensure popular support and political legitimacy for his causes among the Serbian public, leading to the mobilisation of hatred towards Albanians and the spreading of aggressive nationalism (Bozic-Robertson 2004).

The mobilisation of conflict-related dynamics was mostly found on Somali diasporic websites, including, importantly, the mechanism of social media sharing, meaning that website content can be shared on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Google+:

Social media sharing	Number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences
Site facilitates sharing	104	66.2%
Site does not facilitate sharing	53	33.8%
Total	157	100%

Table 5: Media content sharing

Of the 157 Somali diasporic websites included in the analysis, two-thirds allowed for content to be shared. Sharing is significant as it creates the possibility for content to appear on multiple platforms, to reach bigger audiences and thereby the potential to engage more people. Shared content calling for solidarity and support for an ongoing conflict, such as the fighting between the Ethiopian government and Somali liberation fighters in the Somali region of Ethiopia known as Ogaden, for example, goes beyond evoking solidarity, or a shared community of feeling, to actively encourage offline action to occur. The website Ogaden.com, for example, allows content-sharing and overtly supports the Ogaden clan (which is split into various political branches) and specifically advocates support for the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) movement, which seeks secession from Ethiopia to form an independent state. In the following example, the call for direct engagement with conflict is very clear:

Ethiopian Scorched-Earth Policy in Occupied Ogaden and the Liyu Police Militia

Conceived and materialized exclusively for the prolongation of the Ethiopian Occupation of Ogaden, Liyu Police has recently played an active role in the implementation of the Ethiopian scorched-earth policy across the vast, Somali-speaking, Ogaden region. The role played by Liyu Police in the destruction of Ogaden and the Ogadeni society is revealed by a testimony paper composed by a number of recently defected former Liyu Police officers whereby are given details about atrocious incidents, dates and criminal perpetrators. Such is the extent of the horror and the evildoings that the perpetrators have to be persecuted wherever at anytime...

The call for action is buttressed through the generation of solidarity and an

implicit call for collective condemnation of the alleged atrocities that the Liyu police are committing, but this escalates sharply with the unambiguous demand for the 'persecution' of 'the perpetrators', 'wherever at anytime'. The forceful rhetoric of the politics of mobilisation plays on the emotional currency rooted in clannism to re-create conflict – a potential which is further amplified when shared multiply.

The transformative nature of the three politics

The three politics of conflict recreation in Somali diasporic media are analytically distinct, but as the findings highlight, they are not always mutually exclusive. In other words, one politics can be found to 'progress' onto another politics, or in some cases to multiply combine. Below is an example of how this progression can occur:

Digil&Mirifle kaalinta uu ku lahaa dowladdii milliteriga ahayd ee jirtey 21-ka sano ma ahayn kaalin u qalanta. Digil&Mirifle laga soo bilaabo 1991-da dagaaladii sokeeye markii ay dalka ka bilowdeen oo dhibaataada ugu badneyd ay ku dhacdey bulshada Digil&Mirifle wuxuu muujiyey isku duubni, wada tashi iyo dadaal badan oo uu ku doonayey in uu ka tashado masiirkiisa aayihiisa uuna sameysto dowlad goboleed uu hogaanka u hayo waxaa dadaaladaasi ka mid ah Shirweynihii MAAY NIING DANG EH oo dowladdii ka soo baxdey uu hogaaminayey AVW Xasan Sheekh Ibraahim. Hadana xalka wuxuu ku jiraa in la abaabulo shirweyne u gaar ah wax garadka Digil&Mirifle oo lagu xalinayo loogana heshiiyo

khalalkii iyo ismaan dhaafkii gogoshii la furay 20/01/2013 ku yimid.

[Translation: the Digil & Mirifle clan did not get a worthy share in the military government that lasted 21 years. When the civil war broke out in 1991, the Digil & Mirifle people faced the biggest backlash but we stood together in unity and we engaged in dialogues with each other to find ways to manage our affairs. These efforts bore fruit and we held a big conference called Maay Niing Dang Eh and at the conclusion of that conference, we formed our own regional administration led by advocate Hassan Sheikh Ibrahim. The solution now lies in organising another big conference where the disagreements that came from the meeting we had on 20/01/2013 are resolved.] (Ogaden.com archive accessed September 2013)

The article begins with the politics of non-recognition – outlining that the clan didn't feel they received a fair share of the political power-sharing under the Siyad Barre regime. This is then followed by the politics of solidarity – highlighting the brunt of violence felt by the clan as a consequence of the civil war, and the memory that this didn't deter them from coming together as a clan. Finally, it is noted how these efforts resulted in a wide consultation-based conference that led to the formation of a regional administration, and the solution advocated for their problems is the organisation of another conference to resolve previously unsettled disagreements. As a typical case example, we can see the direction of 'progression' from the politics of non-recognition to solidarity and then

mobilisation. However, it is important to recognise that the politics of mobilisation here is non-violent – a call for discussion rather than, as in the previous Ogaden.com example, aggressive or oppressive acts. Whilst we have seen the potential for conflict recreation in the politics of non-recognition, solidarity and mobilisation, it should also be acknowledged that this is not a necessary outcome of their deployment. Conflict management or even the suppression of conflict may be possibilities inherent to these dynamics of the diasporic media conflict discourse.

Conclusion

Diaspora communities have seen their political weight grow in the 20th and 21st centuries (Demmers 2011) and this is partially related to the changing patterns of conflict and the increasing flexibility and speed of technology and transportation, global human mobility and connections. However, the argument often brought forth by scholars of globalisation that groups are much less territorially bounded needs further scrutiny. The opportunities presented by globalisation in fact open greater possibilities for territorially-bounded connections, facilitated by online platforms, where people who are attached to particular homeland territories engage with one another politically in ways that can translate to offline activities. In the Somali case, there is a deeply-entrenched imagined connection to the homeland territories that is reinforced and fortified by diasporic media. Diasporic media play a pivotal role in enabling the advancement

of political and ideological agendas with clannism being at the core.

Current academic discourse regarding diasporic media often centres around its capabilities to help immigrants preserve their identities and maintain ties with their homeland. It is considered to be responding to the specific needs and conditions of immigrant communities (Bailey et al. 2007), as well as allowing a transnational bond to be created with countries of origin and therefore to sustain ethnic, national and religious identities and cultures (Aksoy and Robins 2003: 93). While these notions hold much truth, diasporic media is doing more than that. This particularly requires attention when the diaspora community in question is connected to a homeland in conflict. Diasporic media enable the diaspora community to attain and exert power and prominence in the homeland by providing a platform that showcases their political, financial, social, and human capital, facilitating the occurrence of diasporated conflicts. The three politics I have outlined demonstrate how diasporic media can reproduce ideas of existing inequality, exclusion and marginalisation. It can be a tool to invoke solidaristic inclinations and most dangerously, diasporic media is used to mobilise existing hatred and tensions that can quite easily culminate in violent outbreaks. Together and separately the three politics of non-recognition, solidarity and mobilisation showcase how diasporic media can lead to conflict re-creation, but also, more hopefully, that a diasporated conflict is not a necessary or inevitable outcome of their deployment.

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