



SOMALI RESPONSE TO DROUGHTS

# SOCIAL TIES AND PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Ahmed M. Musa

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
Understanding social ties through the lens of social capital theory	5
Pierre Bourdieu	5
James Coleman	6
Robert Putnam	6
Social capital: dimensions of inclusion and exclusion	7
<b>Inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian response</b>	<b>7</b>
The effect of the Somali social, political and economic contexts on the humanitarian sector	8
<b>Somali humanitarianism: activation of social ties in response to droughts</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The basis of inclusion in the Somali drought response</b>	<b>11</b>
Social ties transcend power dynamics between kinship members	11
Inclusion is a feature of drought response mobilised on close social ties	12
<b>The basis of exclusion in the Somali drought response</b>	<b>13</b>
Distant social ties	13
Intermediaries	15
Disregard for women	18
<b>Social mechanisms that mitigate exclusion in drought response</b>	<b>20</b>
Social contract mitigates exclusion of kinship members	20
The familiarity between kinship assistance providers and recipients prevents exclusion	21
Social sanctions as deterrents to kinship exclusion	21
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

Principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence guide international humanitarian response. Despite being bound to these principles, international humanitarianism faces challenges of implementation within complex and protracted humanitarian crises. The Somali response to emergencies, such as droughts, takes place in parallel with international humanitarianism but it is not guided by such written principles. Also, there is limited understanding of the operations of the Somali response. Drawing on fieldwork in Hargeisa, Burao, Borama and Gargaara in November 2020, this working paper analyses inclusion and exclusion in the Somali drought response. The paper makes two contributions. First, it contributes to the crisis response literature, specifically the burgeoning literature on 'civic humanitarianism'. Second, it examines factors that contribute to exclusion and social mechanisms that mitigate it, arguing that these have direct relevance for discussions on humanitarian practices in areas of protracted and complex crises.

## INTRODUCTION

‘Drought-prone rural settlements are segmented on clan and kinship structures. Primarily, blood relations remain the criterion of inclusion of the affected people in the Somali emergency response [organised and delivered based on social ties]. My kinship group faced the question of whether to include or exclude the *inan layaal* households [headed by a male who lives with their in-laws] in the drought response, notably food. During the 2017 drought, kinship women from the diaspora who contributed to the response basket raised that some of them were married outside the kinship but still made contributions. So why would the affected women who are married outside the kinship be excluded from the distribution. This triggered a discussion and eventually, the kinship members on the WhatsApp group, who were mobilising the drought response, consented that *inan layaal* households are included in the distribution’ (interview, Hargeisa, 25 November 2020).

This quote indicates two main things. First, it suggests that the humanitarian response that drought-stricken communities receive is based on social ties. Second, it suggests that the strength and distance of the social relations influence access or no access (exclusion) to this type of humanitarianism. To some degree, the social ties influence access to and exclusion from international humanitarian response in crises protracted areas.

During crisis, such as droughts, the international and Somali responses are two forms of emergency response common in the Somali territories. Key players in the international response include international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), local non-governmental organisations (LNGOs) and intergovernmental agencies such as the UN. Their main sources of funding include voluntary contributions and donations by network of states and donors. Generally speaking, the international response should be guided by key humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality (Humanitarian Coalition, n.d.). However, implementing these principles does not always trickle down to the operation sites (The New Humanitarian, 2012). Malpractices from lack of adherence to the principles are more prevalent in areas of complex crises, post-war and fragile contexts (see Jaspars et al., 2019).

Somali response is underpinned by social networks of ad hoc ‘volunteer’ groups. These include neighbours, kinships, locals and diaspora that are the first responders, before the arrival of the international humanitarian actors (Maxwell et al., 2016; Ikanda, 2019; Roepstorff, 2020), or when conventional channels of help, typified by the international humanitarian response, are not enough (Brković, 2020). In their study of the 2011 famine in South Central Somalia, Maxwell et al. (2016) identified three overlapping circles of social ties activated to respond to the famine crisis.

Like other Somali regions, Somaliland has been recurrently struck by various crises, such as droughts.<sup>1</sup> However, unlike other Somali regions, notably South Somalia, the recurrent droughts have not developed into famine. Considering the similarities between the Somali territories, including the limited role of the state, it is less clear how access to social support dampens the drought crisis in Somaliland. We already understand that there are regional and social dimensions of support such as remittances, where, on average, Somaliland households receive more remittance than households in South Somalia (Majid et al., 2018). Wetterberg (2007:585) points out that understanding how different socioeconomic groups deal with crises present an opportunity to explore the role of social connections in cushioning their economic impact. It is also less clear how various communities and households affected by crises have access or not to humanitarian response mobilised based on social ties. Evidence from South Central Somalia and Indonesia suggest that not all people affected by crises have access to social connections (Wetterberg, 2007; Maxwell et al., 2016). In this paper, I build on the approach of Wetterberg (2007) and Maxwell et al. (2016) of employing social capital theory to analyse the inclusion and exclusion of crisis response mobilised and delivered based on social ties.

The methodology employed for this study was qualitative. First, I used the 2016/2017 major drought in Somaliland as the main case study. Second, I conducted thirty-three purposefully sampled semi-structured interviews, which were designed to address clan, kinship, gender, and different forms of assistance. Those interviewed included Somali drought response actors at regional and kinship levels, kinship-charity organisations, neighbourhood assistance groups, staff from international aid organisations and drought-affected people. I conducted the interviews in Burao, Hargeisa, Borama and Gargaara between May and November 2020. The study sites represent three regions: Togdheer, Maroodijeh and Awdal, respectively. The first two regions are predominantly pastoral, and the last is predominantly agro-pastoral. While data collection was undertaken in Somaliland, the findings may be relevant for the wider Somali speaking regions due to the purported shared social and cultural heritage.

Drawing on the empirical material, this paper makes four complementary points. First, in the Somali response, different forms of inclusion and exclusion are influenced by social ties and institutions (norms and contracts). Two, inclusion and exclusion correlate with the strength and distance of social ties. Close (strong) ties, notably based on blood, often promote inclusion while distant (weak) social ties often foster exclusion. Three, the social institutions and practices that prevent exclusion are most effective at the close ties, such as response mobilised based on family, kinship and sub-clan ties, and they become less effective at the distant ties, such as response mobilised and delivered on clan, cross-clan, and Somali-ness ties. By extension, these observations are relevant to the other forms of emergency response, notably, international, since the local actors involved in this response

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<sup>1</sup> British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland united in 1960. British Somaliland unilaterally declared its independence from the Italian Somaliland on 18 May 1991.

have varied social ties with different affected communities. At the distant social ties, the multiplicity of actors and interests and ambiguous and less effective complaint and enforcement mechanisms contribute to exclusion. Fourth, the Somali response mitigates the negative effects of exclusion of the affected people from international response as many access the Somali response even if they are excluded from international aid. However, those excluded from both forms of emergency response are more likely to be impacted most by the crises.

To elaborate these points, I first introduce social capital theory which guides the analysis. Second, I briefly introduce the inclusion and exclusion concepts and the context within which inclusion and exclusion take place. Third, I discuss the Somali drought response emphasising its organisation and social ties. Fourth, I explore the inclusion and exclusion practices in the Somali drought response. Fifth, I discuss the factors that mitigate exclusion at the kinship level response. I conclude by discussing the implications of the paper's main findings in designing and implementing other forms of response to emergency crises, notably international response.

### **Understanding social ties through the lens of social capital theory**

Social science scholars, such as political scientists, economists and sociologists, used the concept of social capital to analyse how variations in social relations could explain varied development outcomes (Wetterberg, 2007). The concept has not been free from criticism (see Foley and Edwards, 1999; Glaeser et al., 2000; Sobel, 2002), including that 'almost everyone who writes about social capital finds it necessary to provide some definition' (Sobel, 2002: 146) and that it has theoretical, methodological and empirical variations that affect its generalisations (Folley and Edwards, 1999). Despite these and many other criticisms, social capital is still influential among social scientists. Political scientists and economists employ the concept to 'analyse relationships among associations, trust and other attitudes and norms' that produce economic or political outcomes (Foley and Edwards, 1999:145), while sociologists 'adopted versions of the social capital concept more in keeping with the social structural versions enunciated by Coleman and Bourdieu..[to] empathise individual and organisational social ties in predicting individual advancement or collective action (Folley and Edwards, 1999:145). Although the origin of the term remains unclear, Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam have done the most influential work contributing to social capital theory (Wetterberg, 2007; Maxwell et al., 2016).

#### **Pierre Bourdieu**

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital' (Bourdieu, 1986:248). Bourdieu makes three emphases; first, the relationships are *durable* in the sense that they are practically, symbolically, materially or socially maintained because of the benefits



they accrue for the members. Second, the relationships are *institutionalised*, such as family, tribe, kinship (based on genealogy), workplace or neighbourhoods, producing lasting relations that people invest in for their use in short and long term. Third, 'the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent...depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilise' (249).

### **James Coleman**

Sociologist James Coleman, one of the earliest users of social capital, states that 'social capital is defined by its functions. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common – they all consist of some aspect of a *social structure*, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence...A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others. Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among (Coleman, 1990:302). The definition highlights social structures to be an asset that facilitates action, sometimes undesirable. For Coleman, social relations that constitute useful capital for individuals, inhere the following: Obligations and expectations,<sup>2</sup> informational potential,<sup>3</sup> norms and effective sanctions,<sup>4</sup> authority relations,<sup>5</sup> appropriable social organisation<sup>6</sup>and intentional organisation.<sup>7</sup>

### **Robert Putnam**

Political scientist Robert Putnam defines social capital as 'features of social life – networks, norms and trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam, 1995:664–665). Like Coleman, Putnam states that the common goal could be desirable or undesirable. Putnam states that networks, norms and trust can provide 'bridging' by overcoming social cleavages. Social capital provides civic engagement which Putnam defines as 'people's connection with the life of their communities, not merely with politics (665). It is also important to note that Putnam states that social capital can be weakened by factors such as 'the growth of the welfare state' (667). While Bourdieu and Coleman emphasise that individual capital influences social capital,

<sup>2</sup> 'If A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B to keep the trust. This obligation can be conceived of as a "credit slip" held by A to be redeemed by some performance by B' (Coleman, 1990:306).

<sup>3</sup> The potential for information provides an important form of social capital that inheres in social relations and is important in providing a basis for action (Coleman, 1990:306).

<sup>4</sup> Established norms are important for the social capital, and sanctions give it effectiveness. Effective norms constitute a powerful social capital (Coleman, 1990:311).

<sup>5</sup> 'If actor A has transferred rights of control of certain actions to another actor, B, then B has available social capital in the form of those rights of control' (Coleman, 1990:311).

<sup>6</sup> 'Voluntary organisations are brought into being to further some purpose of those who initiate them', after achieving their goal, they remain active to keep improving social life (Coleman, 1990:312).

<sup>7</sup> 'A major use of the concept of social capital depends on its being a byproduct of activities engaged in for other purposes' (Coleman, 1990:312).

Putnam emphasises that social capital is a 'production of collective goods such as civic engagement and is available to a large group (Folley and Edwards, 1999:142).

### **Social capital: dimensions of inclusion and exclusion**

As stated by Maxwell et al. (2016:7), 'the potential negative aspects of social capital, such as the exclusion of outsiders, excess claims of group members, are largely ignored'. The question of whether social capital is private (benefits are individually differentiated), public (benefits are not individually differentiated) or quasi-private (some benefits are individually differentiated while others are not) has been studied in several empirical analyses (Narayan and Pritchett, 1999; Fafchamps and Minten, 2002; Adger, 2003; Maxwell et al., 2016). One study on the social capital of agricultural traders in Madagascar finds that traders with more social capital had higher access to benefits than those with less social capital (Fafchamps and Minten, 2002:173). A study on the 2011 famine in South Central Somalia also finds that social capital influenced the coping strategies of those affected by the famine (Maxwell et al., 2016:18). Interestingly, social capital was used to access external resources such as international humanitarian assistance (ibid). Using the case of the 2016/2017 drought in Somaliland, in this paper, I nuance the influence of social ties on inclusion and exclusion to Somali drought response.

## **INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

An important aspect of international humanitarian action is its sensitivity to inclusion. Before diving deeply into a discussion of inclusion and exclusion in the Somali drought response, it is worthwhile to briefly introduce how the concepts of exclusion and inclusion are discussed in international humanitarian action. It is also important to briefly introduce the wider Somali power and political economy and how these intersect with both Somali and international responses to droughts.

The notions of exclusion and inclusion are discussed in several disciplines. In the context of international humanitarian action, inclusion is understood as the process of 'ensure[ing] that all people affected by disaster receive access to information, protection and assistance on an equitable basis, without any exclusion or restriction based on their age, sexual or gender identity, disability status, nationality, or ethnic, religious or social origin or identity' (Searle et al., 2016:3). In the international humanitarian action, inclusion can be achieved by

upholding principles such as ‘impartiality’,<sup>8</sup> ‘participation’,<sup>9</sup> ‘accountability’,<sup>10</sup> ‘protection’ and ‘rights’ that promote humanity (Barbelet and Wake, 2020). However, Barbelet (2018) highlighted that it had been a challenge for the international humanitarian action to uphold these key elements of humanitarianism, raising questions about the ‘effectiveness’ and ‘ethical essence’ of the humanitarian action.

Exclusion ‘is the effect of othering, on the basis of cultural, social and/or racial identity’ Khan and Fraser (2015:14–27). Exclusion is a *deliberate action*, that is economically and politically motivated, against relatively powerless or vulnerable groups (Le Billon, 2000). Furthermore, exclusion is ‘*multidimensional*’, i.e. it encompasses social, political, cultural and economic aspects, and ‘*relational*’, i.e. is the product of unequal power relations in social interactions resulting in a lack of social participation, protection, integration and power (Khan and Fraser, 2015:3). Practices that result in social exclusion include institutional bias such as mobilisation of institutions to benefit one group at the expense of another, and social closure such as mobilisation based on group attributes such as kinship, clan, race, ethnicity, language, religion and geography (Kabeer, 2000). Social (identity, ethnicity, clannism, race), political (power, interests) and economic (pursuit of material benefits, opportunities, livelihoods) factors influence the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion.

### **The effect of the Somali social, political and economic contexts on the humanitarian sector**

In Somalia, the social, political and economic factors affects aid and raises wider issues for the humanitarian actors. In South Central Somalia, examination of the political economy of international aid, especially food aid, shows aid manipulation ranging from exclusion, looting, diversion, marginalisation, exploitation and commercialisation by aid contractors, terrorist organisations, business and political elites (Jaspars et al., 2020). These aid manipulations affect ‘certain population groups’ as the emergency crisis has become ‘not only a way of maintaining aid but also a business opportunity and a political tool (Jaspars et al., 2020:iv). In the context of crisis, political economy seeks to understand the political and economic aspects and how their combination affects power and vulnerability such as exclusion (Collinson, 2003).

Furthermore, the political economy sometimes contributes to or produces the humanitarian situation. For instance, in South Somalia, the armed groups destroyed the economies of the vulnerable groups, caused displacement and constrained humanitarian access (Maxwell and Fitzpatrick, 2012; Samatar, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> requires assistance to be strictly needs-based, i.e. the most affected and vulnerable people are prioritised, making the crisis response more humanitarian.

<sup>9</sup> focuses on the ‘relational element’ of inclusion and exclusion, and requires that the affected people be involved in decision-making and the direction of the response through community engagement (Searle et al., 2016).

<sup>10</sup> simply put, is that the affected people receive information and remove any barriers to access and to sharing information so that the affected people hold the aid providers accountable, therefore promoting inclusion (Searle et al., 2016).

Once aid is delivered to the affected people, local powerholders, such as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) gatekeepers, engage in aid diversion and manipulation (Achilles et al., 2015). In conflict or post-conflict contexts, manipulation and diversion of international humanitarian and development aid are one form of war economy where aid often benefits the most influential actors (Christopoulou, 2013). While there is considerable literature on how the political economy influences international aid and development, there is less understanding of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the Somali emergency response mobilised on social ties.

## **SOMALI HUMANITARIANISM: ACTIVATION OF SOCIAL TIES IN RESPONSE TO DROUGHTS**

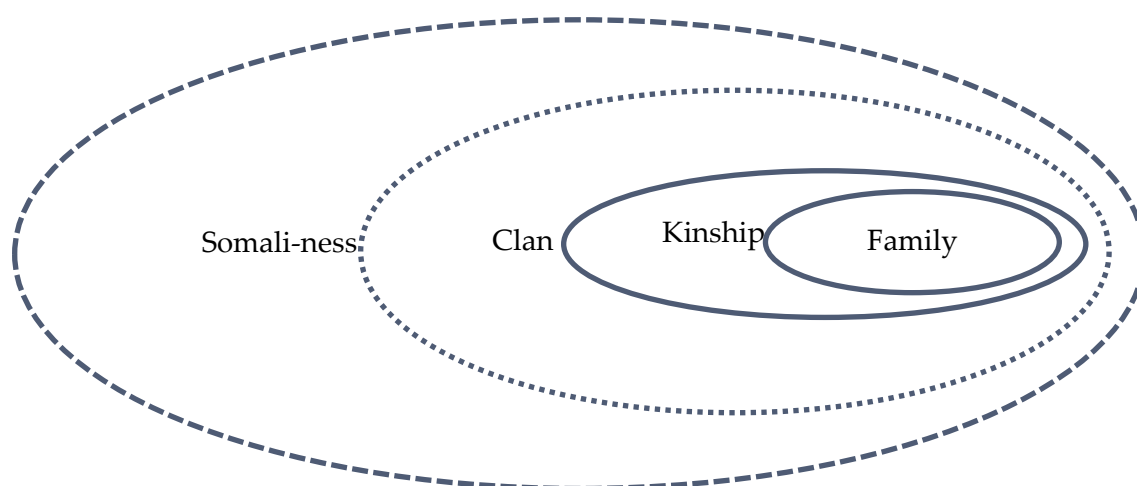
During droughts, the affected people receive assistance from different actors. Terms such as '*samofal*' (humanitarian), '*gargaar*' (relief), '*deeq*' (aid) or '*caawimo*' (assistance) are used to describe different forms of assistance to the affected people. The local and diaspora Somalis are the first responders and their intervention is described as *caawimo* and *samofal*. The study 'Cash and compassion: the role of the Somali diaspora in relief, development and peace-building' (2011) estimates that Somali diaspora humanitarian and development assistance was between USD 130 and 200 million annually (Hammond et al., 2011). The figures could be significantly higher when local and in-kind assistance are considered. Somali response is rapidly mobilised and delivered based on social ties such as kinship, clan, personal, professional, religion and 'Somali-ness'. It is primarily mobilised and implemented through (un)registered 'hometown associations' (HTAs) with transnationally connected members in the home country and diaspora. During the 2011 famine in South Central Somalia, the clan-wide response was activated to contain the worsening situation (Maxwell et al., 2016). Evidence shows the generosity of assistance providers. For example, to assist famine-affected kinship members, the local and diaspora members of one clan raised USD 1 million in three months, of which one clan member donated USD 200,000 in one go (Maxwell et al., 2016:13). Similarly, estimates from my study show that during the 2016/2017 drought crisis in Somaliland, hundreds of kinship groups each raised between USD 20,000 and 50,000 to provide assistance to thousands of affected rural households.<sup>11</sup>

An essential characteristic of the Somali response to droughts, which precedes or occurs in parallel with international humanitarian response, is that it is underpinned by social ties. In their study of the 2011 famine in South Central Somalia, Maxwell et al. (2016) identified three overlapping circles of social ties which defined who is in what network and that were activated to respond to the famine crisis. The first circle includes immediate family or kinship relationships.

<sup>11</sup> Key informant interview, Hargeisa, 25 November 2020.

The second circle includes sub-clan or close community linkages. In other words, people who know each other through social linkages. The third circle includes the wider clan or community. Once the preceding social support circle became under extreme stress, the next circle was activated (Maxwell et al., 2016). As I illustrate in Figure 1, my study identified four similar social support circles based on the strength of the social relations: the family, kinship, clan and 'Somali-ness'. For small scale and less severe droughts, the close (family and kinship) ties were activated to respond; for large scale and more severe droughts, the distant ties (clan, 'Somalinimo'/Somali-ness and religion) were activated by the responders.

**Figure 1. Somali social support circles during drought emergencies**



Source: Author's adaptation of Maxwell et al. 2016

Social ties are an integral part of the Somali response to droughts and have desirable and undesirable outcomes. On the one hand, these ties influence collective action and inclusion of the affected kinship members regardless of power, age and largely gender. On the other hand, the social ties influence exclusion in the Somali response and by extension, the international humanitarian response. To briefly introduce these social ties, the British social anthropologist I.M. Lewis (1961), who extensively wrote about Somali segmentation and social ties, especially in former British Somaliland, stated that the clan family (*tol*) is an essential feature that defines Somali social relations. Most Somalis are genealogically connected to a broad network of blood-based relations through the father's side. This creates hierarchical social segments such as *beel*, *jilib* and *jifo*, indicating blood relations at different levels and divisions (Lewis, 1961). My findings show that major clans (*beel*) are divided into sub-clans (*jilib*), which is further divided into smaller and more extended kinship members (*jifo* or *ardaa*). Major clans that inhabit Somaliland have up to 100 *jifo/ardaa* which comprise several hundred households mainly found in the clan-inhabited urban, rural

settlements and in the diaspora.<sup>12</sup> Smaller clans may still comprise a dozen of various extended kinship members. It is noteworthy that while ties based on blood relations are major drivers of Somali assistance, maternal relations also influence assistance, especially at the family level. These hierarchal social ties provide 'social capital', which is pivotal to the adaptive capacity during drought emergencies. Unlike Western countries, where the nuclear family has replaced the extended family, such ties are strong in many African countries and influence social support systems (Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997:421).

## THE BASIS OF INCLUSION IN THE SOMALI DROUGHT RESPONSE

In the absence of written inclusion standards and guidelines in the Somali response, many may not understand how inclusion takes place. One can even assume that inclusion does not exist in the Somali response. This section seeks to nuance the practices of inclusion in the Somali response to droughts.

### **Social ties transcend power dynamics between kinship members**

Understanding social exclusion entails focusing on power relations (Khan and Fraser, 2015). As might be presumed, the Somali response is not the exclusive business of one privileged group such as the diaspora. It is a partnership between the locals, including the affected, and the diaspora. The locals play a crucial role, without which drought response would not have been efficient. However, often the role of locals becomes invisible in the discussion of Somali response. There is, however, a distinct role differentiation; the locals dominate in the in-kind contribution (identifying and listing the affected households, assessing the drought scope and magnitude, recording appeal testimonials (*qaylodhaan*), transporting, and distributing assistance and accountability. While the diaspora dominate in the financial contribution; several research participants have estimated that the diaspora donates 70% of the kinship response funds.<sup>13</sup> Many local kinship members are unemployed, which limits their cash contribution. The kinship drought response committees comprise members with various power relations. For example, committees have members drawn from the local people (*xubnaaha gudaha*) and diaspora (*xubnaha dibada*).<sup>14</sup> This is important for inclusive decision-making and the effectiveness of the response. The responses at the family and kinship levels are based on more 'durable' and 'institutionalised' social capital

<sup>12</sup> One interviewed informant said that Somaliland has around 600,000 households of which 40% are in the rural areas. The population of Somaliland is estimated between 3 and 4 million, and the average household size is 5. Considering these estimates, the 600,000 households seem a realistic estimate.

<sup>13</sup> In one case study on the financial contribution of diaspora versus locals, a kinship group was targeting to raise USD 28,000 for the construction of a borehole in one of the kinship's rural settlements, the members in the UK contributed USD 4,100 compared to USD 930 raised by the locals. This means that the diaspora raised 81% and the locals 19%.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, one association has a five-member executive committee: 2 in the UK, 1 in the US and 2 in Somaliland.

which inspires inclusion in decision-making, contributions and accountability because of the benefits it accrues to the family and kinship members.

### **Inclusion is a feature of drought response mobilised on close social ties**

Strong social ties such as those between well-defined groups is the result of 'a combination of the amount of time, emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie' (Granovetter, 1973:1361). The practices of inclusion and exclusion in the Somali response is greatly influenced by social ties between the response mobilisers and the affected people. This response is primarily organised and delivered around social ties, starting with close ties such as family and kinship, to distant ties at the clan and Somali-ness levels. Ironically, social ties activated for drought response weaken with the severity of the drought crisis, which requires the activation of more distant relations.

The findings from my study show that the different layers of overlapping social ties activated for response mobilisation produce varied degrees of inclusion and exclusion. For instance, assistance could be mobilised and delivered based on close blood ties (*dun-wadaag*) between kinship members, spatial relations (*degaan-wadaag*), alliance relations (*dan-wadaag*), faith relations (*diin-wadaag*) and 'Somali-ness' (*Somali-nimo*). The Somali-ness and faith relations are the highest order social relations and encompass all other ties. This is because Somalis are largely one ethnic group, inhabit adjacent territories, and are adherent to Sunni Islam. Nevertheless, other than blood ties between family and kinship members, other relations do not guarantee non-excludable access to assistance. Assistance based on distant ties- *degaan wadaag*, *dan-wadaag* and *diin-wadaag*- can be fraught with malpractices such as exclusion based on identity, geography and power. Social support is embedded in the *dun-wadaag* (family and kinship) relations or what Maxwell et al. (2016) labelled as the 'first circle' ties. The blood related kinship members draw on each other during emergencies to mobilise response (Ikanda, 2019) but they also take all affected people into account.

Hundreds of kinship-based hometown associations (HTAs) operate in Somaliland, like other Somali territories, and in the diaspora. Many of these HTAs are not registered as charity associations in the host or home countries, and contributions are drawn from transnational clan members (Hammond et al., 2011). My general observation shows that the HTAs have more inclusive names such as *Tabantaabo* (togetherness) and *Wadajir* (unity), denoting sustaining kinship ties and inclusion. The HTAs vary in size, resources and capacity to respond to drought emergencies. This is influenced by factors such as the number of kinship members, access to economic opportunities including diaspora, urbanisation, cohesion and leadership at the kinship level. Commenting on this, a key traditional elder and a volunteer during the 2016/17 drought said:

'A local saying goes, *togba taagtii ayuu rogmadaa* [literally, during flooding, a dry river receives a volume of water equal to its size], the

size of drought response assistance varies according to the capacity of the kinship'.<sup>15</sup>

Not everyone affected by droughts is a member of a strong and resourceful kinship group. During the 2011 famine in South Central Somalia, different kinship groups were hit hard by the crisis; some groups, such as the Murasade, that belong to the Hawiye clan, were able to cope – or at least survive – while other groups, such as the Jiddo, belonging to the Rahanweyn clan, became destitute and/or suffered high levels of mortality (Maxwell et al., 2016:16). Social group characteristics, such as urbanisation, business and diaspora communities and connectedness, influenced the difference in coping capacity between the two kinship groups (Maxwell et al., 2016). My study shows similar findings. For instance, an interviewed informant from the minority *Gabooye* group opined,

'My kinship does not engage in humanitarianism during drought emergencies since we lack factors such as belongingness to a settlement (*degaan*), resources and cohesion. Also, affected households from the Gabooye community are mostly not included in the assistance because the Somali people are losing their good virtues since the war in 1980'.<sup>16</sup>

## THE BASIS OF EXCLUSION IN THE SOMALI DROUGHT RESPONSE

### Distant social ties

During drought response, and after the severe stress of the close social ties (family and kinship), responses mobilised and delivered based on distant social ties (larger clan, cross-clan, Somali-ness, and religion) are activated. The activation of distant social ties is common during severe droughts, notably, when the drought is not widespread but rather striking specific geographic locations. Mark Granovetter stressed the 'cohesive power' of weak social ties (between people who do not share social connections) including that they can serve as 'bridging bonds' between two social groups (Granovetter, 1973). However, this requires social capital resources (Meagher, 2010). It should be noted that certain Somali groups, such as the Rahanweyn (Digil and Mirifle) and Bantu in southern Somalia have been marginalised from drought responses and consequently they were most affected by droughts and famines (Maxwell et al., 2016). These groups have different dialects and have been described as 'second' and 'third' class citizens, respectively (De Waal, 1994).

Mobilisation of drought response based on distant ties is open for all Somalis and takes place in public spaces such the mosques, in the media and through door-to-

<sup>15</sup> Traditional elder, Buro, 3 November 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Gabooye rights activist (follow up interview), Hargeisa, 15 December 2020.



door mobilisation. Numerous actors, including the diaspora, business community, religious leaders and youth volunteers, mobilise this form of drought response. They raise considerable resources, which are delivered through ad hoc emergency committees, individuals and local non-governmental organisations.

It is in this form of response where practices of leaving out needy people are common. During fieldwork, I overheard of food aid sold in the local markets at lower prices because of the exclusion of affected communities and individuals that had no relationship to the implementing actors. Unlike drought response mobilised on close social ties and like the international aid and government response, drought response mobilised and delivered based on distant social ties has weak accountability caused by lack of access to information, lack of clear feedback channels, poor enforcement and multiplicity of actors. Different levels of ad hoc committees in the affected and response mobilisation areas with limited oversight are involved in drought response mobilised and delivered on distant ties. A female volunteer in a community relief initiative in Borama stated:

‘In the Somali-ness [Somali level] response, the committees that assistance has been directed to leave out some of the most vulnerable people or most affected areas or communities that do not have a voice or a representation in the committee or the government’.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, a youth volunteer who was part of the Somaliland committee that delivered assistance to Somalia during the Beledwene floods in 2019 recounted:

‘During the 2019 Beledwene floods, Somaliland formed a crisis response committee of 18 members, including youth, religious leaders, businesspeople and the media. The task of the committee was to mobilise a humanitarian response for the flood-affected people. In 2019, our target was to raise USD 1 million from businesspeople, the diaspora and the communities in major urban areas. We then realised general economic hardships in Somaliland. A company we expected to contribute USD 50,000 contributed USD 1,000. We raised USD 380,000 from the businesspeople. We then had a meeting with the president of Somaliland, who, on behalf of the government, contributed USD 220,000 to complete USD 600,000. Selected committee members representing the media, youth, businesspeople and religious leaders took assistance to Somalia. When we reached Mogadishu, we found that several committees had been formed to respond to the floods. There was a federal government committee, a committee of businesspeople and a local committee in Beledwene. We requested the local disaster response committee to allocate the money from Somaliland to something more sustainable that could prevent future floods. We agreed to build barriers between the river and the town, estimated at around USD 3

<sup>17</sup> Chairlady of charity foundation, Borama, 15 October 2020.

million. The Djibouti government also promised USD 2 million and the federal government USD 3 million. We then decided to utilise our USD 600,000 for the project's foundation stone. However, we received numerous complaints from local clans, different from the main kinship group in Beletwene, that they were excluded from the flood response by the local committee members who represented the dominant clans. As a result, we decided to distribute USD 200,000 to the affected households who had complained of exclusion and allocated USD 400,000 for the construction work'.<sup>18</sup>

The above quote provides several insights. First, the substantial humanitarian response from Somaliland, Somalia and Djibouti exemplifies the Somali-ness response. According to Lindley (2013:297), 'Somali-ness inspires decent treatment of the fellow Somalis across social divides'. Second, the multiplicity of ad hoc emergency response committees mainly from the dominant clans with limited or no oversight are responsible for response manipulation. Ironically, the committee members are selected based on their good virtues such as social status, trustworthiness, reputation and religious background. These characteristics seem not enough to guarantee neutrality and impartiality in the higher-level Somali response. The next section focuses on the role of intermediaries in the exclusion of emergency responses.

### **Intermediaries**

Somali emergency response is not new. Nevertheless, its size and administration have considerably transformed over time. In the past, the head of the family befallen by calamity visited immediate communities and households to receive assistance. However, in the last three decades, Somali response to those affected by crisis largely takes place through an intermediary. These could be reputable and respected individuals or committees at different levels of social support and in the assistance mobilisation hubs and affected sites. Two main factors contribute to the emergence of intermediaries. One, the transnational dispersal of Somalis (the assistance providers) necessitates facilitation and coordination. Two, the limited connection of affected people to the assistance providers. Most of the time, the intermediaries in the Somali assistance are 'volunteers' in the sense that they do not expect material rewards but are motivated by other factors such as the expectation of religious rewards or non-material gains such as building their social capital. The role of the intermediaries includes advocacy such as publicising the plight of the affected people or areas and mobilising and delivering assistance.

As previously discussed, exclusion is not a major concern within the family and kinship level response that is mobilised and delivered based on close social ties. However, exclusion becomes a major concern within the assistance mobilised based on distant social ties such as the clan, cross-clan and Somali-ness. This contrasts the assumption that a more general inclusion mechanisms would mean

<sup>18</sup> Somali-led relief response activist, Hargeisa, 21 June 2020.

less exclusion. Various forms of exclusion take place in Somali assistance mobilised and delivered on distant ties. One dimension of this is an institutional bias that can take place at different levels: national, regional and local. In its most pervasive form, intermediaries influenced by '*degaan-wadaag* [spatial relations] and *dun-wadaag* [social relations] exclude some affected settlements and communities while including others.

During the 2016/2017 drought, rumours were that key intermediaries in the ad hoc national drought committee<sup>19</sup> delivered aid to communities less affected or not affected at all. An interviewed intermediary said, 'powerholders at national and regional levels divert more aid to their settlements while giving peanuts (*cawri gaf*) to crisis-affected settlements that are not inhabited by their kinship group'.<sup>20</sup> A member of the 2016/17 Togdheer Regional Drought Committee interviewed for this study claimed to have resigned from the committee due to malpractices:

'Whether from the diaspora or the local people, the assistance delivered through national or regional committees might not reach the needy people to whom aid has been intended. In the 2016/2017 drought, the diaspora and businesspeople handed over their assistance to the national and regional drought emergency committees, which did not distribute well. I was a Togdheer Regional Drought Committee member, but I resigned!' <sup>21</sup>

From the informal interviews conducted for this study, exclusion practices are common in the drought response delivered through the national and cross-clan drought committees. However, these practices sometimes result from the fact that the drought committees are not established institutions with operating procedures and standards, such as drought severity and vulnerability assessment procedures and transparent assistance distribution criteria. During the 2016/2017 drought, I heard that it was common for the committees to dispatch assistance in response to distress calls without assessing the situation. A member of the regional drought committee in Borama also told me that during the 2016/2017 drought, they contacted religious individuals or businessmen in the affected areas to assess the situation and then directed the assistance to them.<sup>22</sup> Due to the absence of procedures, standards and needs assessment, the committees make less informed and spontaneous decisions.

It is not only the national and cross-clan drought committees that are responsible for exclusion but also the affected rural settlement has local permanent committees (*guddi deegaan*) that act as gatekeepers. These local committees also contribute to the exclusion practices, 'the head of the village committee exaggerates the drought severity in some areas over the other areas, depending on

<sup>19</sup> During emergencies, due to weak and less trusted state institutions, Somali authorities create ad hoc committee of business and religious leaders.

<sup>20</sup> Civic aid volunteer, Burao, 8 November 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Active member in Togdheer community engagement/former member of Togdheer regional emergency committee, Burao, 8 November 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Regional emergency committee member, Borama, 13 October 2020.

his relations'.<sup>23</sup> When assistance is delivered, informants stated that the committee members prioritise their close kinship members to be beneficiaries. Commenting on this, a community member in Gargaara village in the Awdal region that was hit hard by the 2018 cyclone said, while lowering his voice and checking over his shoulders to ensure that no community member could hear him:

'Like any other village, our village has a committee [of men]. During the 2018 cyclone Sagar, those who assisted us tasked the local committee to select the most affected households. However, the community had levelled criticism (*dhaliiil*) against the committee for prioritising themselves and close families'.<sup>24</sup>

The cyclone was limited to specific geographic areas in the western parts of Somaliland. Therefore, the response was largely cross-clan and Somali-ness. A local businessman in Gargaara village consented that '*assistance came; however, much of the assistance had been diverted (leexasho) because good morals have been lost while there is no oversight (dabagal) in this form of assistance*'.<sup>25</sup> A female volunteer in Borama said, 'We do not hand over assistance directed to us to other committees; we deliver it ourselves. Village committees base their selection of the affected people on close social ties, not necessarily on [a]need basis'.<sup>26</sup>

The kinship humanitarian actors bypass the national, regional and village committees since they have a close relation with the affected communities. Where the village committee was involved in kinship response, there were no reports of exclusion as the committee members wanted to protect their image and status within the kinship since they knew that the exclusion complaints could reach the kinship members and assistance providers.<sup>27</sup> The irony that the village committees may exclude less connected and vulnerable members in the affected community from all other forms of assistance (the cross-clan, Somali-ness, government-led and international aid) but not the kinship assistance indicates that clarity of complaint mechanisms and effective enforcement of those accused of malpractices and manipulation could deter exclusion and other aid malpractices.

When the gatekeepers commit exclusion, the actors of assistance delivered based on distant social ties, such as the international humanitarianism, either ignore the malpractice so as to not upset the gatekeepers or fail to take notice of the exclusion since they are outsiders. To reduce exclusion in international humanitarianism, a field officer of a well-known aid agency reported cases where they agreed to allocate 10% of the aid to the village committee to give to their relatives with the

<sup>23</sup> Regional emergency committee member, Borama, 13 October 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Community member in Gargaar, 150 km north of Borama, 14 October 2020.

<sup>25</sup> Businessman in Gargaar, 14 October 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Chairlady of charity foundation, Borama, 15 October 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Chairman of a kinship association, Borama, 17 October 2020.

condition that the committee distributes the remaining 90% on a need basis but still there was no grantee for need-based distribution.<sup>28</sup>

### **Disregard for women**

Traditionally, patriarchal structure and values have been the hallmark of Somali society as households were male-headed. In this context, the role of women in assistance mobilisation or as recipients was limited. However, society has changed in the last three decades. The 'impact of war on men' (Gardner, 2016) has produced female-headed households in urban and rural areas. In addition, more women have started to have access to and make decisions on resources. While society is still male dominated, women's role in society has increased, notably their role in the Somali response. Women in the diaspora, for example, make noticeable contributions to crisis responses as women are said to be '*more caring than men*'<sup>29</sup> or are touched more when they see destitute women and children affected by emergencies.

At the kinship level, women, including those married outside the kinship, are members of WhatsApp groups (*golaha reerka*), virtual spaces of connectivity where kinship information sharing and mobilisation takes place. However, women are rarely included in the committees where the decision on resource distribution is made. In all the discussed three social response circles, male members influence the decision on who should receive support and how much assistance to raise. Besides the patriarchal tradition, familial and domestic responsibilities prevent women from playing an active role in emergency response. As mentioned by an interviewed volunteer, 'Women exclude themselves from assistance delivery to rural settlements due to family commitments since this would require travel and absence from their families'.<sup>30</sup> An interviewed elder also said, 'As women could be wives and mothers, they may not want to go the affected rural areas'.<sup>31</sup>

Women's exclusion in decision-making in the emergency response has implications. Interviewed female humanitarian worker and a member of a neighbourhood assistance committee complained, 'During the Beledweyne floods in Somalia in 2019, female volunteers raised three full trucks of food, clothes and other essentials such as utensils to the Beledweyne flood victims. We handed [it] over to men to deliver. We have no idea how that assistance was delivered'.<sup>32</sup> Whether women's exclusion in relief decision-making is out of their familial responsibilities or not, their absence has two broader implications. First, women in affected areas might have needs not limited to food, water and health that male intermediaries may not consider. Second, considering the widespread belief among research participants that women have a higher moral compass than men,

<sup>28</sup> Active member in Togdheer community engagement/former member of Togdheer regional emergency committee, Burao, 8 November 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Chairlady of charity foundation, Borama, 15 October 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Chairman of a kinship organisation, Hargeisa, 19 May 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Chairman of a kinship organisation, Burao, 3 November 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Female employee of an international humanitarian organisation/chairlady of a women neighbourhood association, Burao, 4 November 2020.

more women's participation in decision-making might have increased the effectiveness of the Somali response, notably increased inclusion of the affected women and accountability.

It is, however, fair to say that inclusion of women in decision-making does not automatically guarantee increased inclusion of affected women. A good case in point is the emerging neighbourhood assistance groups in Somaliland's major urban settlements, where neighbourhood women mobilise assistance for the needy households in the neighbourhood. A female neighbourhood assistance volunteer in Burao noted:

'Our group has 58 women. To prevent the influence of family ties, we define a needy household as a household that does not have electricity or piped water; any household that could not afford electricity and piped water must be impoverished. However, some group members submit names of households with electricity and piped water whom they want to benefit from the little assistance we raise from our members, simply because they are related to them. This is a major challenge; it leads to the collapse of many local assistance initiatives'.<sup>33</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the inclusion of the drought-affected people is highest at the kinship and sub-clan levels; however, women in the affected areas might still be left out in this form of assistance due to their marriage outside the kinship or sub-clan or being the head of a household as female-headed households are not yet counted during the needs assessment stage. When a woman marries outside her kinship, her children will take their father's kinship lineage while the mother will retain the kinship lineage of her father (Renders, 2006). In the kinship system, the right of women who marry outside the kinship is a grey area not only in receiving assistance but also in political representation. During response mobilisation, the male-led committees identify and list the kinship households in the affected areas. Blood relations and male-headed households are two criteria used to identify and list the affected people. However, this leaves out specific households in the affected areas, including those with mothers from the kinship and fathers outside the kinship and female-headed households. The former households are locally known as *inan layaal* [men who live with their in-laws].

The dilemma of exclusion of the affected women in kinship and sub-clan assistance partly arises from women's lack of attachment to kinship settlements. First, unlike men, who usually move with their spouses to the kinship settlement after marriage, women who married outside the kinship more commonly move to the settlement of their spouses. Consequently, kinship women might be scattered outside kinship settlements. Considering that kinship assistance is limited to their settlements, this automatically leaves out more women who married outside the kinship compared to male counterparts. Second, the traditional social structure

<sup>33</sup> Female employee of an international humanitarian organisation/chairlady of a women neighbourhood association, Burao, 4 November 2020.

still assumes that households are male-headed, leading to the exclusion of female-headed households. Commenting on this, an interviewed informant stated:

‘Women in the affected areas might be excluded because, traditionally, households are assumed to be male-headed. However, this reality has changed in the last three decades as many households are female-headed. Yet it is still assumed that all households are male-headed. Consequently, it is common that female-headed households are not counted when assessing kinship households affected by droughts’.<sup>34</sup>

## **SOCIAL MECHANISMS THAT MITIGATE EXCLUSION IN DROUGHT RESPONSE**

One of the key challenges in humanitarian responses is the exclusion of the affected people. However, just as there are formal mechanisms that aim to mitigate exclusion in international humanitarianism, there are social mechanisms (institutions, practices and norms) that might mitigate exclusion in the Somali response, notably at kinship or sub-clan levels. Somali rural settlements are segregated mainly based on kinship and clan lines. The only exception is non-kinship households outside their kinship dominated settlements because of intermarriage (*inan layaal*) or because of being a minority or a small clan that does not have exclusive kinship settlements. When crisis response, exclusively mobilised based on kinship or sub-clan ties, gets to the affected settlements, social institutions and practices guide inclusion.

### **Social contract mitigates exclusion of kinship members**

Various kinships and sub-clans have transnationally connected urban, diaspora and pastoral households and mobilise a response to their members in the affected settlements. However, unlike other forms of humanitarianism, the social contract is a principal factor that mitigates exclusion at the kinship and sub-clan levels. At this level of social support, today’s assistance recipients could be tomorrow’s providers or protectors since there is a social contract and insurance between assistance providers and recipients. For example, when droughts strike a rural community, the urban and diaspora members mobilise a response. Similarly, during clan conflicts, *diya* (blood) payments or elections, the recipients are expected to contribute their manpower, livestock or votes. The social contract is similar to Bourdieu’s two descriptions of social capital: *durable* and *institutionalised* relationships. Durable because such ties are practically, symbolically, materially or socially maintained because of the benefits it accrues for the members, and institutionalised because they are based on genealogy such as family, tribe or kinship. The social contract and insurance between assistance providers and

<sup>34</sup> Key informant interview, Hargeisa, 25 November 2020.

recipients create a sense of obligation and reciprocity that does not exist in any other forms of aid and incentivises that kinship assistance actors include the affected kinship members regardless of their power or social status.

### **The familiarity between kinship assistance providers and recipients prevents exclusion**

A plausible explanation for limited malpractice in crisis response in kinship assistance is the familiarity between assistance providers and recipients. As discussed above, response intermediaries contribute to exclusion. However, the kinship response mobilisers happen to be familiar with the affected people and settlements and hence do not need gatekeepers or intermediaries to access the affected areas and assess the affected people. According to a professional aid worker interviewed in Burao:

‘Unlike the international aid, Somali response mobilisers bypass national and regional intermediaries, sometimes even the village committee, because they know the affected people and areas’.

Familiarity is an accountability mechanism where the affected people know the individuals responsible for the assistance mobilisation and delivery and also know reporting channels in case of malpractice. Familiarity provides a complaint mechanism; the affected people complain to their close kinship members in the urban areas or the diaspora who hold those individuals accused of malpractices into account. Furthermore, knowing that humanitarian actors in international and Somali-ness emergency response are not familiar with them, the affected people can exclude others from the humanitarian assistance. During the assessment and delivery stages, the involvement of responsible individuals who are familiar with the affected people and whom the affected people are familiar with might mitigate exclusion practices.

In cross-clan or Somali-ness assistance, much like international aid, the local community and actors may be aware of exclusion and aid malpractices and manipulation, but they might not know reliable and efficient reporting channels, implying that those involved in exclusion and other aid malpractices in the international and cross-clan aid realise they can get away with their malpractice possibly without negative consequences. In international humanitarianism, feedback from the community takes the back seat compared to the feedback from the aid actors (Ebrahim, 2003). In other words, upward accountability to donors is emphasised while downward accountability to the recipients tends to be under-emphasised. Despite recent efforts to strengthen community feedback, the findings from this study show that local affected people are hesitant to use feedback mechanisms set up by NGOs; either they do not trust their effectiveness or do not want to complain and upset the aid actors whom they fear will exclude their settlements from future interventions.

### **Social sanctions as deterrents to kinship exclusion**

There must be either legal or social sanctions or both to reinforce accountability. Those accused of aid manipulation such as exclusion of kinship assistance face



unpleasant consequences from the kinship group. These include naming and shaming (*ceebeyn*) and prohibition from participating in future community initiatives. The notion of shaming is sometimes extended to the exclusion of fellow Somalis in settlements other than their own. Many of those interviewed for this study stressed that there is no outright exclusion of the non-kinship households in the affected areas from the assistance that kinship members have mobilised to their fellow kinship members. One key informant said,

‘It does not happen that non-kinship households are completely excluded from the assistance that a kinship delivers to their affected settlements. The affected people might see the total exclusion of the affected non-kinship households as a shame (*ceeb*) and suggest that some of the most vulnerable households are included in the assistance distribution. If this does not happen, households that have received kinship assistance provide a small portion to those who did not receive assistance because of their belongingness to a different kinship’.<sup>35</sup>

This quote reveals a number of observations. First, social norms promote inclusion at the kinship and sub-clan level assistance. Second, it reveals the existence of secondary humanitarianism, i.e. affected households that received assistance from their kinship sharing their ration with their excluded neighbours. Third, the quote also indicates the power of social enforcement; locals do not want to be ashamed for their outright exclusion of needy households outside their kinship. Unlike the other types of humanitarianism (international, Islamic, Somali-ness, cross-clan), local mechanisms are activated to mitigate exclusion in kinship humanitarianism. The chairman of a kinship association who explained how local institutions mitigate outright exclusion in their settlement said,

‘Suppose there are two different communities in one affected settlement, one community received assistance mobilised by their kinship members while the other community did not; the community that has received assistance should give *ciyi* [a portion of the food] to the most vulnerable households from the other community’.<sup>36</sup>

The *ciyi* is the social norm in the pastoral areas that creates an expectation that the households that had slaughtered an animal or made a feast should provide a portion to the neighbours without delay. It is socially unacceptable not to give your neighbours. According to a UN employee,

<sup>35</sup> Chairman of a kinship organisation, Hargeisa, 19 May 2020; UN staff, Hargeisa, 20 May 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Chairman of a kinship organisation, Hargeisa, 19 May 2020.

‘This social norm is applied to the kinship assistance in the pastoral areas where it is a shame that a community that has received assistance does not consider the neighbouring needy families’.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, kinship members do not want their members in other kinship settlements to be mistreated because they mistreat those who live alongside them. Explaining this, the UN employee said,

‘Most of the time, clan X is dominant in location A, but at the same time, some families from clan X could be found in other locations of clan Y. If clan X mistreats members from clan Y in their location, then clan X should expect that clan Y will reciprocate the mistreatment by starting from clan X families in their stronghold’.<sup>38</sup>

From the above quote, it is not apparent if the kinship members give similar treatment to households of smaller kinship groups with no exclusive settlement they dominate. A human rights activist from the Gabooye community stated:

‘No Somali social institution or norm can force those who mobilise kinship assistance to include the Gabooye households in the affected areas. While Islamic-based values would have inspired the inclusion of Gabooye households who do not receive kinship assistance, the providers are not necessarily guided by Islamic values but by social relations, which give unfair treatment to the Gabooye community’.<sup>39</sup>

It is important to note that while the social norms might mitigate outright exclusion, their role is limited to food and water relief. When the kinship mobilises non-food response, such as relocating the affected households or their animals to safe areas, it is uncommon that non-kinship households are included in this type of response. Therefore, those who do not access kinship-based assistance are more likely to lose their livestock, pushing them to the IDPs; even if they access some aid later, it will not be sufficient to help them recover from the disaster.

## CONCLUSION

In the face of crises, such as droughts, Somali people are the first responders. Their response precedes or occurs in parallel with international humanitarian response. Social ties underpin the Somali response; these include close ties such as family and kinship and distant ties such as clan, cross-clan, and Somali-ness. While the study explored the inclusion and exclusion practices in the Somali response to droughts. The findings have implications for humanitarian responses mobilised and delivered based on distant social ties. These include international and

<sup>37</sup> UN staff, Hargeisa, 20 May 2020.

<sup>38</sup> UN staff, Hargeisa, 20 May 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Gabooye rights activist (follow up interview), Hargeisa, 15 December 2020.

government-led humanitarian responses. The Somali response mobilised and implemented based on close social ties voluntarily observe the same principles as those of humanitarian action – impartiality, participation and accountability. However, in humanitarian responses, such as Somali-ness, government-led and international response, which are mobilised and delivered based on distant social ties, there are several factors that contribute to malpractices such as exclusion and diversion. One such factor is the power relations between, on the one hand, international and local actors, and on the other hand, between aid providers and recipients. A second factor is the intermediaries who are inherent in the system and play important roles such as coordination, advocacy and delivery but also, many times, operate under the influence of social and power relations.

There are three lessons that humanitarian interventions can learn from Somali response, notably kinship humanitarianism. One, access to aid information, clear feedback and sanction mechanisms mitigate exclusion and other humanitarian malpractices. Two, the importance of reducing intermediaries and working with local aid actors who are familiar with the affected people and whom the affected people are familiar with can improve operations as neither the local people nor aid actors leverage their power to engage in malpractices. Three, specific groups or households are more likely to be excluded from the kinship response. Other humanitarian interventions should consider these individuals and households, including *inan layaal* (men who live with their in-laws), households from minority or small clans that may not have exclusive kinship settlements of their own or have limited social and financial capital to mobilise a response, and women-headed households.

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