

Legitimacy and Continuity in The Horn: A Conceptual Analysis of Alex de Waal's Political Marketplace

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Abstract

In this dissertation I critically engage with Alex De Waal's understanding of the nature of legitimacy in the Horn of Africa and the concept he formulates to understand it and explain political behaviour in the Horn: the political marketplace. Through this process of critical engagement, I clarify the concept and make it more useful by embedding it within the social and religious realities of the Horn, which results in a reconceptualisation of the concept, which I call the political bazaar. This reworked concept is then used in conjunction with Talal Asad's discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and Peter Ekeh's primordial public to more parsimoniously, accurately and comprehensively conceptualise legitimacy in the Horn and explain why its pervasive political behaviour is bargaining. Ultimately, I attempt to both abide by Raymond Geuss's first thesis: 'Don't look at just what they say, think, believe, *but at what they actually do, and what actually happens as a result*',¹ and heed the warning he gives: 'It is no sign of gimlet-eyed realism to deny the enormous real significance of religious practices, beliefs and institutions in the world, past and present, but rather a sign of simple blindness.'²

¹ Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 10–11.

² *Ibid.*, 11.

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List of Acronyms

CPA	Comprehensive Peace Act
SSA	sub-Saharan African
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The question of how political legitimacy is understood by the *inhabitants* of the Horn of Africa is an important one and it is commendable that De Waal asks it in *The Real Politics of The Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*. This question's focus on the inhabitants' understanding of legitimacy is important, as most questions and answers pertaining to political legitimacy in the Horn, in the existing literature, leave it out. De Waal's approach of a political ethnography is what prompts him to ask the right question regarding a region that has struggled to achieve and maintain political order since the early 1990s.³ Finding out how legitimacy is understood by those who reside in the Horn is important, because much of the governance reform efforts in the region have been disconnected from the region's own understandings of legitimacy. Most analysts and policy makers in the region focus on building and bolstering state institutions such as the legislature, judiciary and executive, while simultaneously attempting to convince the local inhabitants of these institutions' legitimacy.⁴ Asking how the Horn's inhabitants understand legitimacy is therefore the first step towards an understanding of the region that has its own system of governance based on its inhabitants' ideas and understanding of legitimacy.

I analyse the answer that De Waal gives to his own question and offer an alternative explanation to his reasoning. I share De Waal's understanding that bargaining, or in his terms, the buying and selling of power and loyalty, is the predominant political behaviour in the Horn. However, the explanation of why this is the case in my work differs to that given by De Waal. I argue that historical and anthropological evidence shows that bargaining has been, not only the predominant political behaviour, but the predominant social action in societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition.⁵ This is in contrast with De Waal, as his explanation excludes Islam as the dominant discursive tradition of the Horn and relies on material change, self-interest and monetary values to explain why bargaining is the predominant political behaviour

³ See the abundance of literature on the crisis of governance and 'state failure' in the Horn post-1990.

⁴ Alex De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2015), 16.

⁵ Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Talal Asad, 'The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,' *Qui Parle* 17, no. 2 (2009): 1–30; Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz and Lawrence Rosen, 'Suq: The Bazaar Economy in Sefrou,' in *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 123–313.

in the Horn. Although, there are many areas of disagreement between De Waal and I, the product of my critical engagement with the concept of the political marketplace in the Horn - my own explanation - undoubtedly builds on his work.

The Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Somali, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti ('the Horn') is the geographical area on which De Waal focuses. His analysis leads him to construct the concept of the political marketplace, which he uses to explain political behaviour in the region. Given that my work is a conceptual analysis of De Waal's political marketplace, I offer an alternative understanding of this region, in order to analyse how *clear* and *useful* the political marketplace is in explaining political behaviour here. This extensive analysis allows for an assessment of the concept's potential to lead to theorising (i.e. its connections with other concepts) and offers a better theoretical analysis of political behaviour in the Horn. De Waal arrived at the concept of the political marketplace through his observation that the buying and selling of power and loyalty was the most pervasive political behaviour in the Horn. De Waal then conceptualised this type of political behaviour as most similar to marketplace behaviour. I interpret De Waal to be arguing that the political marketplace is the *most* useful concept to understand political behaviour in the Horn, as he argues that legitimacy in the Horn resembles a marketplace. Accordingly, I critically engage with this argument and its central concept.

I begin the process of critical engagement by answering the question of what the political marketplace's strengths and weaknesses are as a concept for understanding political behaviour in the Horn. This process begins in the next section with the stating of the research question and the defining of several key concepts, and concludes at the end of chapter two. Chapter two begins with what other scholars have identified as weaknesses and strengths of the political marketplace and concludes with the strengths and weaknesses I identify. This chapter also foregrounds the alternative explanation I offer, which uses an embedded version of De Waal's concept in conjunction with several other concepts to explain legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn. Chapter three begins this explanation by embedding De Waal's concept within Sunni Islam and its political culture. Chapter four gives an account of how an amended and clarified political marketplace might be used in connection with two other concepts to generate a more accurate conceptualisation of legitimacy and, accordingly, a more grounded theoretical analysis of political behaviour in the Horn. In doing so, I engage

with De Waal's claim that the political marketplace is 'a system of contemporary governance'.⁶ Finally, I conclude in chapter five by reflecting on my critiques of De Waal and my own alternative explanation, to make suggestions about how the political marketplace might be used going forward and how best to understand legitimacy in the Horn of Africa.

1.1 Research Question and Key Concepts

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Alex De Waal's concept of the political marketplace and the marketplace as a form of legitimacy?

There are two questions contained in the above formulation of the research question. The first seeks to critically engage with De Waal's concept of a political marketplace, and assess its strengths and weaknesses as a concept of political science and international relations when applied to study legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn. The criteria for assessing the political marketplace will be its *clarity, usefulness* and *capability of being used in connection with other concepts to generate theory*. The second question seeks to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the marketplace as a form of legitimacy or, differently put, as viewing legitimacy in the Horn as resembling a marketplace.

To answer these two questions, I must first clearly define the key concepts that are embedded within them. These key concepts are legitimacy and the political marketplace. Given that the political marketplace is the subject of my conceptual analysis, a clearer definition of it will be offered during the process of my argument. The definition given for it here is that given by De Waal and will be critically engaged with. The definition of legitimacy will not be critically engaged with, as it is not the concept being analysed. Its definition will be given and justified, and then it will be applied.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a contextual belief that is synonymous with what is fitting and proper.⁷ Accordingly, political legitimacy is present in a society when the dominant way of

⁶ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 30.

⁷ Raymond Guess, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 11.

exercising power is deemed fitting and proper by those who use it and by those who it is used upon.⁸ Firstly, I have chosen this definition because it interested in whether the people of the Horn perceive the political marketplace place as legitimate, not whether others outside of the Horn think it is or whether it is in a universal sense. Secondly, I have chosen this definition as it emphasises that legitimacy is a belief and, thus, that ideas of legitimacy interact with other beliefs and concepts. Thirdly and finally, De Waal's ethnographic approach to understanding governance in the Horn implies a very similar understanding of legitimacy, although he does not define legitimacy in his book, a fact that does not help the clarity of his concept of the political marketplace.

The Political Marketplace

According to De Waal, the concept of the political marketplace is defined as 'a contemporary system of governance in which politics is conducted as the exchange of political services or loyalty for payment or licence'.⁹ He asserts that this system of governance exists where the following four conditions apply:

(a) political finance is in the hands of individuals with political, military or business interests; (b) control over the instruments of violence is dispersed or contested; and (c) political disputes are not resolved by institutional rules and procedures (law is subordinate to political contingency). Additionally, (d) these countries are integrated into the global political and economic order in a subordinate position.¹⁰

In contrast and to define the concept of the marketplace, as used in my argument, *the marketplace* is an institution that facilitates the exchange of goods, commodities, services and money.

In addition to the key concepts embedded in the research question itself, there are three other concepts that play a significant role in my critique of De Waal and in the formulation of my own explanation. These are concepts are: Talal Asad's Discursive

⁸ Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 1–5.

⁹ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

Tradition, Peter Ekeh's Primordial Public and Epistemic Relativism. I will define them in detail below.

An Islamic Discursive Tradition

This quote from Asad's *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* best defines the concept of a discursive tradition,

An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present. Clearly, not everything Muslims say and do belongs to an Islamic discursive tradition. Nor is an Islamic tradition in this sense necessarily imitative of what was done in the past. For even where traditional practices appear to the anthropologist to be imitative of what has gone before, *it will be the practitioners' conceptions of what is apt performance*, and of how the past is related to present practices, that will be crucial for tradition, not the apparent repetition of an old form.¹¹ (emphasis added)

The Primordial Public

I will also use a quote to define the primordial public, as I did the concept of a discursive tradition above, given that these concepts were formulated by Asad and Ekeh respectively. In defining the primordial public Ekeh writes the following:

At one level is the public realm in which primordial groupings, ties and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behaviour. I shall call this the primordial public because it is closely identified with primordial groupings, sentiments, and activities, which nevertheless impinge on the public interest.¹²

This quote needs to be supplemented with another of Ekeh's statements about the primordial public from the same piece of work, however, to complete the definition of the primordial public:

Most educated Africans are citizens of two publics in the same society. On the one hand, they belong to a civic public from which they gain materially but to which they give only grudgingly. On the other hand they belong to a primordial

¹¹ Talal Asad, 'The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,' *Qui Parle* 17, no. 2 (2009): 21.

¹² Peter P. Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 1 (1975): 92.

public from which they derive little or no material benefits but to which they are expected to give generously and do give materially. Their relationship to the primordial public is moral, while their relationship with the civic public is amoral.¹³

Epistemic Relativism

Epistemic Relativism is a concept that emphasises the importance of context in relation to knowledge and knowing. This epistemological position is best defined by Collier:

[...] the view that knowledge (and/or truth or justification) is relative – to time, to place, to society, to culture, to historical epoch, to conceptual scheme or framework, or to personal training or conviction – in that what counts as knowledge (or as true or justified) depends upon the value of one or more of these variables.¹⁴

Epistemological relativism does not argue, however, that you cannot come to know or create a new concept over time by building on and refining old concepts, just that the majority of human understanding occurs through the use of already known and familiar concepts.¹⁵

1.2 Research Background

Alex de Waal's concept of the political marketplace first appears as a complete conceptual framework in *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*, which was published in 2015. The context in which De Waal wrote this book and the purpose of its main argument – that legitimacy resembles a marketplace in the Horn – is important, as it helps understand the concept as well as the relevance of my work. The context of De Waal's book is the re-thinking of governance and legitimacy, given the continued failure of the state-centric model of

¹³ Peter P. Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 1 (1975): 100.

¹⁴ Harvey Siegel, 'Epistemological Relativism: Arguments Pro and Con,' in *A Companion to Relativism*, ed. Steven D. Hales (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 201–218.

¹⁵ Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London & New York: Verso, 1994), 90, 241.

governance in the Horn. De Waal writes to respond to this phenomenon and to offer his own account of the nature of governance and legitimacy in the Horn. He first explains why the state model is failing and then moves on to conceptualise what he thinks is the contemporary system of governance in the Horn, the political marketplace. He uses his concept of the political marketplace to argue that, rather than flogging the dead horse of the state model of governance, governance practitioners and theorists should acknowledge the political marketplace as a contemporary system of governance and seek to work within it and transform it.

The primary audience of De Waal's political marketplace is academics and analysts of the Horn who adhere to authoritarian high modernism, particularly those who apply it to answer questions around political order, governance and legitimacy in the Horn.¹⁶ This theory of governance argues that in order for legitimate governance to become a reality in the Horn, formal and modern state institutions need to increase in their efficiency, effectiveness and number.¹⁷ Furthermore, although his audience acknowledges that the application of this theory has not worked in the past, they maintain that it will *in time*. Understanding this audience helps one place De Waal's research and the concept of the political marketplace.

De Waal's concept of the political marketplace and the 'dollarisation' of politics have considerable explanatory power in a globalised world with an abundance of transnational actors and security patronage networks. Although conceptualising legitimacy as resembling a marketplace in the Horn has its strengths, it also has weaknesses; I aim to elucidate both as I analyse the concept of the political marketplace. My argument places the concept of the political marketplace in the literature that deals with the ideas of state failure, predatory states, neopatrimonialism, hybrid governance structures and so on.

¹⁶ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Princeton: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁷ C. Young, 'Zaire: The Shattered Illusion of the Integral State,' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no. 2 (1994): 247–263.

1.3 Relevance of the Research Question

The conceptual analysis of the political marketplace and the way it understands legitimacy in the Horn is relevant for two reasons. Firstly, there is currently no conceptual analysis of the political marketplace and, given the relative influence it has had in explaining political behaviour in the Horn, it needs to be systematically analysed. Secondly, the understanding of political legitimacy that is implicitly put forward deviates significantly from the understandings of legitimacy that have hitherto dominated in political science, which are centred around formalised state institutions. Thus, further analysis and clarification of this concept – and the second-order question of whether the political marketplace’s understanding of legitimacy is tenable and accurately describes the nature of legitimacy as perceived by those in the Horn – is relevant. This is especially true in the context of the Horn, given the many recorded and unrecorded failures of incremental state-building in the Horn and the belief among most of those involved in state-building initiatives that a legitimate monopoly on violence is a necessary condition for political order. De Waal’s concept of the political marketplace challenges this theory and argues that a system of governance already exists in the Horn. Further investigation and analysis of the political marketplace is relevant, because if De Waal is correct and the political marketplace and its understanding of legitimacy in the Horn best describes political behaviour within it, then this concept has deep implications for how political scientists interpret political behaviour in the Horn and how scholars of the Horn understand legitimacy.

1.4 Thesis

De Waal operates on two levels: ideas and their empirical manifestations. Accordingly, De Waal argues that, in the Horn, legitimacy resembles a marketplace and that this idea empirically manifests itself in the pervasive political behaviour of the buying and selling of power and loyalty. I, however, argue that marketplaces are always socially embedded in different political cultures and, thus, the notion that legitimacy resembles a marketplace is unclear given that there are different conceptualisations of the marketplace. Accordingly, before legitimacy is understood as a marketplace, De Waal needs to define which species of marketplace he is referring to and what primarily informs how it is conceptualised. I show that there is at least one other conceptualisation of the marketplace that needs to be considered if the

concept of the political marketplace is to be applied as a way of understanding legitimacy in the Horn. This alternative conceptualisation is the bazaar or souk. Accordingly, my work aims to:

- more clearly define a political marketplace
- identify a different conception of a political marketplace
- show that this different conception is closely related to the surrounding political culture, especially the religious dimension of political culture
- develop its own explanation of how legitimacy is understood by those in the Horn and why bargaining is the predominant political behaviour in the Horn.

I achieve the above through a conceptual analysis of De Waal's concept of the political marketplace. I use the religious dimension of political culture as the base for this analysis and show that there are different expressions of the marketplace according to which political culture it is embedded within, very similar to single genes having different species. My argument shows this by surveying how the marketplace is conceptualised differently within the Islamic political culture of Sunni Islam. As will be evident, I focus on the religious component of political culture and particularly on Sunni Islam. This focus was chosen as Sunni Islam is the predominant religious dimension of Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea's political culture and is also present in Ethiopia's (although it is not dominant, approximately 33% of Ethiopians identify as Muslim).¹⁸ I describe and analyse Sunni Islam's conceptualisation of the marketplace (the souk or bazaar), and then show how legitimacy in the Horn more closely resembles a bazaar than a generic marketplace. Once this is completed, my argument uses the concept of the political bazaar in conjunction with Sunni Islam and the primordial public to create my own conceptualisation of legitimacy in the Horn, which more parsimoniously and accurately explains why bargaining is the pervasive political behaviour of the Horn.

I use Haggai Erlich's understanding of the history of the Horn, which is that legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn have been predominantly determined by concepts

¹⁸ Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, 'World Profiles,' accessed September 8, 2017, <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries>.

embedded in Islam and Christianity, and the concept of pragmatism.¹⁹ It is evident from this that De Waal and I are in agreement about the pervasiveness of pragmatism in Horn politics, but my analysis differs from De Waal's significantly. I argue that in order to accurately understand the nature of legitimacy, an analyst must also look to people's metaphysical beliefs enshrined in the dominant discursive tradition of a society, as they are the root of people's beliefs around power and its use (legitimacy). I therefore argue that at this period in the Horn's history, Sunni Islam primarily informs how legitimacy is conceptualised and understood by those in the Horn. This does not make the concept of the political marketplace irrelevant, however; it merely means that the analyst must look to the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam to derive the rules and norms of the marketplace and reconceptualise it as the political bazaar. Additionally, I argue that the primordial public is also a source of legitimacy and that in the Horn the right to legitimate is bargained over by Sunni Islam, the political bazaar and the primordial public, with Sunni Islam having the most bargaining power at this point in time.²⁰ The differences between our theses may be made clearer in the following way:

De Waal

(Legitimacy/marketplace) → political behaviour

Capon

Religion → legitimacy and conceptions of the marketplace → political behaviour

¹⁹ Haggai Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2010), 1–11.

²⁰ This work maintains that Sunni Islam's influence is subject to a dynamic of ebb and flow, but that since the 1990s, it has predominately informed how legitimacy is understood. *Ibid.*, 154.

Chapter 2: Existing and New Critiques of Alex de Waal's Political Marketplace

Harry Verhoeven and Gérard Prunier have written the most thorough and insightful reviews of De Waal's *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*. They both point to the way in which De Waal's materialist, rationalist and political-realist assumptions cause him to over-determine the role of commercial or business logic and money in explaining political behaviour in the Horn. Both reviews are short, numbering between three and four pages in length, however, and so cannot fully respond to and analyse De Waal's concept of the political marketplace. As a result, they do not fully engage with De Waal's deeper argument that legitimacy resembles a marketplace in the Horn. This chapter gives an account of De Waal's argument and the concept of the political marketplace, as well as existing and new criticisms thereof. When formulating my criticisms and foregrounding my own explanation, reference will be made to De Waal's major intellectual influences. This is partly because his analysis is clearly traceable to their work; he explicitly references them. More importantly, I use more accurate interpretations of the work of De Waal's intellectual influences to construct an alternative explanation for why the predominant political behaviour in the Horn is bargaining.

2.1 De Waal's Political Marketplace

This section offers a more substantial explanation of De Waal's definition of the political marketplace given briefly in the previous chapter. This is made possible by referring to his own responses to reviews of his work. This exposition of his argument and his consequent clarifications of the political marketplace are important to understand before listing and assessing others' critiques of his work and before formulating my own new critiques.

The essence of De Waal's argument is that political legitimacy in the Horn resembles a marketplace. This leads him to conclude that, given that people's understandings of what is politically legitimate is what primarily informs their political behaviour, political behaviour in the Horn most resembles marketplace behaviour and its cost-benefit analysis/utility-maximising behaviour. For De Waal, power and loyalty are bought and sold in the Horn for purposes predominantly related to rational self-interest

and the accumulation of money. De Waal then moves on to the empirical plain and gives the four material conditions that must be present for a political marketplace-based system of governance to exist (given in the definition in the previous chapter). Once De Waal has moved out of the abstract into the empirical, we see that he commits to the marketplace not just as metaphor for explaining political behaviour in the Horn, but for the way politics is practised.²¹ Although he is clear about the commercial logic that dominates the political marketplace – ‘The political marketplace is a materialist, instrumental framework that provides little space for ideals and norms. Its values are monetary’²² – in a response to a critique labelling this analysis reductionist, he says:

It is important to emphasize that the thesis of the political marketplace does not require that all politicians are enslaved to material incentives. Rather, it is a hypothesis that political projects are subject to the laws of the political market: They survive or fail on the basis of its iron logic.²³

This quote is understood in the context of De Waal’s distinction between political circuitry and the public sphere. De Waal argues that political circuitry is where political business is transacted and the public sphere is where public debate is conducted.²⁴ This distinction, which separates political behaviour into two spheres, best explains how De Waal perceives the role of ideology, ethics and morality in the politics of the Horn. Accordingly, De Waal understands the buying and selling of power and loyalty to be the pervasive political behaviour in the Horn, and ideology, ethics, morality and religion to be either instrumentalised or mere rhetoric in public debate. According to De Waal, they hardly ever determine political behaviour in the Horn. Although De Waal argues this, he does not argue that those who engage in the political marketplace and have the necessary skills to navigate it cannot bend these same skills to ethical, religious, moral or ideological ends.²⁵ Rather, for De Waal, to be politically successful in the Horn, one’s political behaviour must be primarily

²¹ ‘The dominant, and growing, system that orders their behaviour is what I call the ‘political marketplace’. For the region’s political entrepreneurs and business managers, this is not a metaphor. They actually exchange services and rewards, loyalty and money, for prices that are set by the elementary principles of supply and demand, and also influenced by whoever is able to regulate the market.’ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 16.

²² *Ibid.*, 187.

²³ Alex De Waal, ‘Critical Dialogue: *The Horn of Africa*,’ *Perspectives on Politics* 15, no. 3 (2017): 813–814.

²⁴ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 187.

²⁵ De Waal, ‘Critical Dialogue,’ 813–814.

commercial in nature and stem from an understanding that political dynamics are most akin to marketplace dynamics.

2.2 Existing Critiques of the Political Marketplace

Prunier criticises the way in which De Waal dismisses the role of culture in explaining political behaviour in the Horn, and argues that instead of giving a specialist's analysis of the region which acknowledges its complexity and the multi-causal nature of its politics, he commits the mono-causal fallacy by asserting that the 'real' determinant of political behaviour in the Horn is money.²⁶ Prunier does, however, continue to argue that although the 'real' politics of the Horn of Africa are the political marketplace, it is not inhabited by pure incarnations of *homo economicus*, as De Waal would have us believe.²⁷ He then goes on to name just a few of the various ethnic groups and cultures that reside in the Horn to make the point that it is these people who make up the political marketplace and it is their cultures that determine the way in which they conceptualise the political marketplace and their decision-making, motivations and actions within it. Thus, Prunier asserts that another important determinant of political behaviour in the Horn, among others, is culture. Prunier also comments extensively on the relationship that De Waal had with the late Meles Zenawi (former Prime Minister of Ethiopia). He infers from the nature of this relationship that De Waal was a disciple of Zenawi and his simplified Marxism, and that he saw in Zenawi and *his imperative of avoiding a rentier state* the key to understanding the politics of the Horn and the reason for the endemic 'failure' of the state in the region. What Prunier is implying with this criticism is that although rents are an important feature of the political economy of the Horn, they are not as important in understanding political behaviour in the Horn as De Waal's arguments and concept of the political marketplace assert.

Prunier's review of De Waal's *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and The Business of Power* is ruthless in its critique of several of De Waal's major arguments. However, it does acknowledge the central role the concept of the political

²⁶ Gérard Prunier, 'The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power,' *Journal of the Middle East & Africa* 7, no. 2 (April 2016): 235–238.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

marketplace plays in explaining the politics of the Horn.²⁸ Prunier's proceeding qualifying statement, however, is extremely important and is what I attempt to respond to in many ways. Prunier's assertions that the political marketplace is inhabited by Nuer, Amhara and Oromo, and Dinka groups, among others, is important as it highlights that although the political marketplace is central to understanding political action in the Horn, its 'rules around bargaining and the flows of information'²⁹ are subject to the locality and culture in which that particular marketplace exists. Or, if the marketplace spans different localities, how those localities, identities and political cultures interact to shape the dynamics of a broader regional political marketplace. Prunier's acknowledgement of the usefulness of the concept of the political marketplace is important, as his review tempts one to 'throw the baby out with the bath water' with regards to the political marketplace's usefulness as a concept in explaining political behaviour in the Horn.

Verhoeven's review is much the same as Prunier's, except that he explicitly mentions the four authors and works that influenced De Waal's analysis of the Horn and his conceptualisation of the political marketplace. Although I had already done this in my own research and analysis of De Waal and the political marketplace, it is reassuring to have another scholar confirm the same major influences that my work did, barring Meles Zenawi and François Bayart. The authors that significantly influenced De Waal are Raymond Geuss, Mary Kaldor, Robert Bates, Douglas North and François Bayart. Discussing some of these authors and their influences on De Waal will be instructive, as my work develops its own critiques of De Waal's political marketplace and I foreground my own conceptualisation of legitimacy and my explanation of political behaviour in the Horn.

2.3 De Waal's Influences, My Critique and Foregrounding My Explanation

This section begins with Geuss, as his work, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, forms the philosophical foundation for De Waal's analysis of Horn politics, which according to De Waal are predominantly a-ethical. Geuss employs a Critical Realist methodology

²⁸ Prunier, 'The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa,' 235–238.

²⁹ De Waal uses this phrase on page 187 in his concluding chapter.

and adheres to the school of Philosophical Political Realism.³⁰ His influence on De Waal is made evident by their shared critique of the fixation that many political philosophers have with ethics. This notion, contained in Geuss' first thesis, is instructive: 'Don't look at just what they say, think, believe, *but at what they actually do, and what actually happens as a result*'³¹ (emphasis added). This statement, which refers to politics and how to best understand political behaviour, heavily informs the initial questions De Waal asks in his analysis of Horn politics and, accordingly, the concept he uses to answer these questions: the political marketplace. As I assert, the political marketplace is central to explaining political behaviour in the Horn, but De Waal forgets that Geuss also writes this: 'It is no sign of gimlet-eyed realism to deny the enormous and real significance of religious practices, beliefs and institutions in the world, past and present, but rather a sign of simple blindness.'³² My argument seeks to emphasise two statements equally, while navigating the tension that exists between them. It is De Waal's failure to acknowledge the influence of Sunni Islam on the 'rules for bargaining and flows of information' of the marketplace that weakens his analysis and the usefulness of his concept. Herein lies the major critique my work offers of De Waal's work: he fails to acknowledge that what predominantly determines the rules and values of a marketplace, and societies' political cultures, as well as what is deemed legitimate political behaviour more broadly, is the dominant discursive tradition of a society: Sunni Islam, in the case of the Horn. This will be clarified in the next paragraph, which further explores Geuss's political philosophy and epistemology.

If De Waal's reading of Geuss were more thorough, he would know that Geuss strongly emphasises the importance of context and history when attempting to explain the political behaviour of people. Reading Geuss more closely and more broadly and delving deeper into his emphasis on context in relation to knowledge and knowing, it is clear that he adheres to *Epistemic Relativism*. This epistemological position is:

³⁰ 'While critical realism may be a heterogeneous series of positions, there is one loose genetic feature which unites it as a metatheory: a commitment to formulating a properly post-positivist philosophy. This commitment is often cast in the terms of a normative agenda for science and social science: ontological realism, epistemic relativism, judgmental rationality, and a cautious ethical naturalism.' American Sociological Association, 'What is Critical Realism?' *The ASA Theory Section*, accessed May 26, 2018, <http://www.asatheory.org/current-newsletter-online/what-is-critical-realism>.

³¹ Geuss, Raymond, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2008. Pp, 10–11.

³² *Ibid.*, 11.

[...] the view that knowledge (and/or truth or justification) is relative – to time, to place, to society, to culture, to historical epoch, to conceptual scheme or framework, or to personal training or conviction – in that what counts as knowledge (or as true or justified) depends upon the value of one or more of these variables.³³

Epistemological relativism does not argue, however, that you cannot come to know or create a new concept over time by building on and refining old concepts, just that the majority of human understanding occurs through the use of already known and familiar concepts.³⁴ This position is important because, had De Waal adopted it, he would have acknowledged the importance of embedding his concept of the political marketplace in the Horn and its inhabitants' religious heritages that inform their conceptual reservoirs. This embedding would have enabled De Waal to see that his political entrepreneurs most likely draw on and adapt concepts that they already know to inform their political behaviour, and that in the Horn these concepts are most likely from the conceptual reservoirs of Sunni Islam and Christianity – more so from Sunni Islam than from Christianity, given its dominance in the region. The consequences of failing to recognise the importance of religion in explaining political behaviour and in determining the rules and values of the 'marketplace' are more drastic when it is noted that religious ways of ordering power are re-emerging and regaining legitimacy in the region.³⁵ Adopting this understanding of how the majority of human understanding occurs is important, as it provides the framework in which I develop the causal chain of my argument regarding how Islam (understood as a discursive tradition) and the concepts housed within it significantly influence political behaviour in the Horn by establishing with vitality what is and is not deemed legitimate political behaviour.

This chapter has discussed Geuss's work, his influence on De Waal and how my work uses Epistemic Relativism to argue that it is primarily the dominant discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and its conceptual reservoir that determines the rules that govern 'the marketplace' and what legitimate political behaviour is. This section now

³³ Harvey Siegel, 'Epistemological Relativism: Arguments Pro and Con,' in *A Companion to Relativism*, ed. Steven D. Hales (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 201–218.

³⁴ Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London & New York: Verso, 1994), 90, 241.

³⁵ Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 193.

turns to discuss two more of De Waal's intellectual influences: Kaldor and Bayart. In analysing their work and influence, I develop two further critiques of De Waal's work.

Mary Kaldor's third edition of *New and Old Wars* influenced De Waal, as suggested by Verhoeven, specifically her thesis about 'new wars' being largely criminal in nature and not a battle of wills in which the war is fought with the aim of victory or the restructuring of a society.³⁶ Rather, the state of insecurity is favoured and often times created by the participants, as it allows them to profit and, in a limited sense, to consolidate their power.³⁷ Adopting Kaldor's thesis on the shift in the nature and agenda of wars allows De Waal to conceptualise a new form of organised violence, albeit informally organised, that he names the political marketplace. Kaldor's work is important in understanding De Waal's dismissal of the influence that ideology has in determining political behaviour in the Horn.

This understanding of violence as primarily criminal in nature and devoid of any social purpose does not begin with Kaldor, however, and can be traced back to scholars of G.W.F. Hegel's work on the nature of violence in Africa and its 'absent' history.³⁸ This view on Africa's history and the nature of its violence is in contrast with Bayart's emphasis on the historicity of Africa and its ability to explain much of the variegated political behaviour throughout the continent.³⁹ This section focuses on the tension between these two influences, as instead of navigating this tension, De Waal adopts Kaldor's position on the criminal nature of violence in the Horn and negates the influence the history of the region has in determining why its current pervasive political behaviour is the buying and selling of power and loyalty. This decision to embrace Kaldor's thesis on 'new wars' leads De Waal to overlook how important the region's history of ideological and religious struggles have been – and continue to be – in determining its inhabitant's understanding of legitimacy and their political behaviour. Thus, my two additional criticisms of De Waal's work are, firstly, that he is too dismissive of the role that ideology, mediated by pragmatism, has in determining political behaviour in the Horn. Secondly, under-girthing this critique, he does not

³⁶ Harry Verhoeven, 'The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa. By Alex De Waal,' *International Affairs* 92, no. 4 (2016): 1021–1022.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ William Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa: New Approaches to African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³⁹ Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Polity, 2009).

appreciate the historicity of the region and how local histories influence people's conceptual reservoirs, their understanding of legitimacy and consequently their political behaviour.⁴⁰

I do not argue that religion is as influential in determining political behaviour in the Horn as it has been in other periods of its history, but that it is the most influential at this current time. I argue that Sunni Islam's conceptual reservoir, which is housed in people minds – especially those concepts pertaining to political power, social order and the marketplace – predominantly determines political behaviour in the Horn today, as it has significant legitimacy. A quote from Erlich's concluding chapter explains, in part, why it currently enjoys the most legitimacy in the Horn:

Since their first encounter, Islam and Christianity have shaped identities and histories in the Horn of Africa. Closer to our time, movements of modern nationalism and ideas of social revolution have attempted to replace religiosity as new and comprehensive ideologies for Ethiopians, Sudanese and Somalis. From today's perspective it seems they have failed; the secularist and materialist approaches barely proved helpful. Parliamentary Liberalism in Sudan and Somali were short-lived; revolutionary pan-Arabism fared no better. Marxist experiments similarly failed in Sudan and in Somalia, and were a total disaster in Ethiopia [...]. The return since the 1990's, of religious concepts as active factors in the dynamisms of politics, culture and self-identification of the peoples involved is perhaps more compatible with *local histories*. [...] it is safe to assume that in the coming years, Ethiopians, Sudanese and Somalis will continue to be inspired by their Christianity and their Islam; that they will meet and address their agendas, guided, among others, by the conceptual reservoirs of their religious heritages.⁴¹ (emphasis added)

De Waal need not and should not overlook the above, given the specialist knowledge he has of the region and the appreciation he has for Bayart's seminal work *The State in Africa: A Politics of The Belly* and its emphasis on the historicity of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in explaining its political behaviour. It appears that De Waal interpreted Bayart to be arguing that power exists primarily outside of state institutions in the

⁴⁰ Erlich, *Islam and Christianity in the Horn of Africa*, 193.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Horn and that, as result, it is concentrated in the hands of ‘Big men’, whereas Bayart argues something more nuanced. Bayart argues that power in the Horn is relational in nature as opposed to institutional.⁴² This interpretation would also be more congruent with the governmentality that Bayart uses to understand the nature of power in the Horn. Michel Foucault contrasts governmentality with institutional power in the following way:

While the theory of political power as an institution ordinarily refers to a juridical conception of the law, it seems to me that the analysis of governmentality – *that is, the analysis of power as a group of reversible relations* – must refer to an ethics of the subject defined by relation of self to self.⁴³ (emphasis my own)

Foucault’s concept of *governmentality* reminds us that power exists within and between people, that it is their personal relationships and their network of relationships that act as conduits for power and its accumulation, loss and application.⁴⁴ Given that formal state institutions in the Horn have little power to enforce their norms or ethics and the history of the region, this understanding of power is necessary to understand political behaviour in the Horn. De Waal understands Bayart’s point about the majority of power existing outside of formal institutions in the Horn, prompting him to form the concept of the political marketplace. However, he strays from Bayart’s position by mistakenly identifying money as the primary source of power and ultimate goal of those participating in the political marketplace. In contrast, I argue that an extensive and personalised network of interdependent interrelations is the means by which people come into power and that the end which this process of network building serves is the creation of social and political order, and the power and status this affords an individual in a society in which the dominant discursive tradition is Sunni Islam.

⁴² Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 15.

⁴³ Michel Foucault, *L’hermeneutique du sujet. Cours au Collège de France 1981-1982* (Paris: Gallimard Seuil, 2001), 241–242.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has served as a literature review that contains an exposition and elucidation of De Waal's work and concept of the political marketplace, and responses to and criticisms of it. It has also included a further exploration and critique of his ideas through his major intellectual influences. This particular process also served to foreground my own argument and explanation for why bargaining is the dominant political behaviour in the Horn.

Before moving on, it is important to summarise the strengths and weaknesses of De Waal's political marketplace and its underlying reasoning, and to explain how the following two chapters will address these and develop the concept further by using my own alternative explanation (briefly described in this chapter). In short, I have argued that although De Waal's rationalist methodology has enabled him to create the concept of the political marketplace, which has significant explanatory power, the same methodology also over-emphasises the role that money has in determining political behaviour, which limits the concept's usefulness. I respond to this shortcoming of De Waal's conceptualisation of the political marketplace by embedding it in the norms, principles and values of the dominant discursive tradition in the Horn, Sunni Islam. This is done to make the concept more useful and show that the concept, once embedded, is applicable in any country in which the dominant discursive tradition is Sunni Islam.

To conclude this chapter and with its contents in mind, I offer a cumulative critique of De Waal's political marketplace. De Waal does not give a definition of legitimacy in his book, which at its core deals with the issue of how legitimacy is perceived in the Horn and how this determines or explains the region's pervasive political behaviour. Although De Waal goes on to characterise political legitimacy as a marketplace, which is the central thesis of his book, he does not define what he means by legitimacy. The lack of a clear definition of legitimacy significantly weakens his analysis and concept, because it disables De Waal from understanding that the Horn's inhabitants primarily understand legitimacy through the concepts that they are already familiar with, most of which are from the conceptual reservoir of Sunni Islam. This leads De Waal to make the erroneous conclusion that it is the utility-maximising logic of the marketplace, its corresponding commodification of the human and its ultimate goal of the accumulation of money that best explain why the predominant political behaviour

in the Horn is bargaining. I will build on what I have already argued in the next two chapters to show why this is not the best explanation for why the most pervasive political behaviour in the Horn is bargaining.

Chapter 3: Sunni Islam's Political Culture and Bargaining as its Dominant Political Behaviour

This chapter presents anthropological evidence from Rosen and Geertz's works, and historical evidence from Erlich's work, to explain why bargaining is the most legitimate political behaviour in societies where Sunni Islam is dominant and, following on from this, why the pervasive contemporary political behaviour in the Horn is bargaining. I conceptualise Sunni Islam as a discursive tradition as defined by Talal Asad:

An Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present. Clearly, not everything Muslims say and do belongs to an Islamic discursive tradition. Nor is an Islamic tradition in this sense necessarily imitative of what was done in the past. For even where traditional practices appear to the anthropologist to be imitative of what has gone before, *it will be the practitioners' conceptions of what is apt performance*, and of how the past is related to present practices, that will be crucial for tradition, not the apparent repetition of an old form.⁴⁵ (emphasis added)

My argument supplements this evidence and the identified scholars' arguments and concepts, as well as those mentioned in chapter two, with the work of Mittelstaedt, Ellis and Polanyi to formulate my own explanation for why bargaining is the most pervasive political behaviour in the Horn today.

Before moving on, it is important as part of the introduction to this chapter to historically contextualise religion in the Horn, to understand why it is so influential in the contemporary politics of this region. The reason I include Ellis and Erlich's works in my explanation is because their arguments do this very well. I agree with Ellis and Te Haar's claim that the recent revival of public religion in the Horn is connected to the failure of formal state institutions and apparatuses, and I remind the reader that this observation is also made by Erlich in the quote used in chapter two.⁴⁶ Additionally,

⁴⁵ Talal Asad, 'The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,' *Qui Parle* 17, no. 2 (2009): 21.

⁴⁶ Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: Hurst, 2004), 193.

Ellis's work implies that given the failure of formal state institutions and apparatuses in the Horn over the last three decades, *religious ways of ordering power are being and have been perceived as alternative governance structures*.⁴⁷ Ellis and Erlich's works largely undermine De Waal's understanding of legitimacy in the Horn as resembling a marketplace and being most influenced by commercial principles, marketplace logic and monetary values. I, however, seek to embed De Waal's marketplace so that the evidence presented in Ellis and Erlich's works does not completely undermine De Waal's thesis.

My explanation, as will be fleshed out in the rest of this chapter, is that bargaining is perceived as the most legitimate political behaviour because it serves a social and political purpose within the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam: to re-establish and maintain social cohesion and political order.⁴⁸ It is because of this *social and political* behaviour's legitimacy (which is connected to its widely understood and desirable social purpose, and its presence in the conceptual reservoir of Sunni Islam) that bargaining is the most pervasive political behaviour in the Horn. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is to show that if De Waal's concept of the political marketplace is to be accurate and useful, it must acknowledge that Sunni Islam's concepts pertaining to legitimacy currently inform most people's understandings of what is and is not legitimate political behaviour in the Horn. Related to, but separate from, this, De Waal must acknowledge that given this position of Sunni Islam in the Horn, its conceptual reservoir also determines how its inhabitants conceptualise marketplaces and what they think of when they think of marketplace behaviour.

The most well-known work on the considerable influence that religious discursive traditions have on marketplace conceptualisations and the behaviour of humans within the marketplace is Max Weber's book *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. Although his work focuses on Protestantism, I use his methodology to argue more generally about the influence of discursive tradition on marketplace conceptualisations, and motivations for action both in and outside the marketplace. I adopt Weber's theory of action as its emphasis on motivation allows it to investigate

⁴⁷ Ibid., 193–194.

⁴⁸ Geertz, Geertz and Rosen, 'Suq: The Bazaar Economy,' 123–313; Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

the influence of religiosity on human's motivations for action, and not just on their decision-making. Weber's definition of motive is: 'motive is a complex of subjective meaning which seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate ground for the conduct in question.'⁴⁹ The essence of Weber's thesis is 'that particular psychological motivations [are] derived from religious beliefs'.⁵⁰ This approach to understanding human action in the Horn is necessary, given the significant role that religion plays in public and private life in the region. It also allows me to go beyond understanding religion's role in Horn politics merely as a value system that informs the interests that rational actors seek to maximise and realise. In so doing, my approach goes beyond the reductionist nature of the rationalist methodology applied by De Waal in his analysis of the role of religion in Horn politics. The rationalist methodology seeks to infer from an agent's behaviour what his rational interests might have been for acting in such a way (a Behaviouralist understanding). Weber's theory of human action, in contrast, argues that there are four different motivations for action (traditional, emotional, idealistic and rational) and acknowledges that there can be different motivations for the same behaviour and that not all human behaviour can be rationalised. This methodology enables me to argue that De Waal's conceptualisation of the political marketplace and what determines human behaviour within it does not allow him to see that there can be different motivations for the same behaviour, and thus he over-determines the role that rational-material motivations for action have in determining political behaviour in the Horn. Some motivations for action stem from relevant and corresponding religious beliefs which are rooted in the metaphysical beliefs of a discursive tradition and, therefore, what motivates an actor differ according to which religion is dominant in their society and informs their political culture. De Waal's rationalist methodology does not acknowledge this, which means that De Waal cannot see two important aspects of human action. Firstly, he cannot acknowledge that all human action is not the result of a *decision* to act and, secondly, he cannot acknowledge that discursive traditions do not just influence the content of human

⁴⁹ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 98-99.

⁵⁰ Campbell, Colin. 'Do Today's Sociologists really Appreciate Weber's essay "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"?' *The Sociological Review* 54, no. 2 (2006): 210.

rationality – they also influence the way humans think about their actions and give meaning to them, as well as their psychological motivations.

Thus, in line with Weber and in the spirit of Karl Polanyi, I argue that marketplace conceptualisations (their dominant behaviour, values and logic) are inseparable from the dominant behaviour, values and logic of the dominant discursive tradition of the society from which they emerge. It is important to expand upon this, as I do not argue that the marketplace is not a place in which individuals' motivation for action is the maximisation of their self-interest; rather, I argue that it is *one* of three motivations for action in the bazaar. Referring to Weber's four different motivations for action, I argue that the traditional, rational, emotional and idealistic motivations for action are often derived from the dominant discursive tradition of the society in which the agent is embedded. In the case of the Horn, the dominant discursive traditions are religious, either Sunni Islam or Christianity: 96.2% of those residing in the Horn identify as religious.⁵¹ This chapter and my work will focus on how Sunni Islam affects political behaviour and marketplace conceptualisations, as the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam is dominant in four out of the five countries in the Horn.

3.1 Sunni Islam and the Bazaar

De Waal's analysis is centred on Sudan and Somalia and the political dynamics he observed while working there. Although he did spend significant amounts of time in the other countries in the Horn, Ethiopia and Eritrea, he makes no mention of Djibouti and the empirical evidence he references is mostly gathered from Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. Sudan is dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, with approximately 90% of its population identifying as Sunni Muslims; Somalia is similar with 99% of its population identifying as members of Sunni Islam. In Eritrea, 50% of the population identifies as Sunni Islam and, in Djibouti, 94% of its population identifies as Sunni Islam.⁵² It is important to acknowledge these statistics as they

⁵¹ Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, 'World Profiles.'

⁵² United States Department of State, *Somalia 2016 International Religious Freedom Report*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268938.pdf>; confirmed by Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, 'World Profiles.'

represent how dominant Sunni Islam is in these Horn countries and why I have chosen to focus on De Waal's references to and analysis of Sudan and Somalia.

The focus on Sudan and Somalia is significant because it is primarily De Waal's political ethnography of Sudan and Somalia that informs how he understands the power dynamics of these countries, and prompts him to formulate the concept of the political marketplace.⁵³ I draw attention to this, as when it is noted that there is more than one way of conceptualising a marketplace, that the bazaar is one of these and that it has different values governing the practice of exchange, it is clear that the marketplace dynamics that De Waal ascribes to politics in Sudan and Somalia are actually bazaar dynamics. At this point, one might object and say the two are in essence the same, but they are not and noting that they are different is vital if De Waal's concept of the political marketplace is to be clear and useful in the Horn and beyond.

In this section, I show how the bazaar's organisational structure, the role of the merchant and the centrality of bargaining in the bazaar act together to differentiate a bazaar from a generic/Liberal marketplace. Accordingly, this section illustrates how the bazaar's primary function and the dominant behaviour within it are different from those of a generic/Liberal marketplace. This is done, primarily, by referring to the ethnographic evidence collected by Geertz and Rosen and with reference to their analysis and conclusions. This will contextualise De Waal's concept of the political marketplace and illustrate how one cannot ignore the influence of Sunni Islam and its political culture on how the marketplace is conceptualised in Sudan and Somalia and, more broadly speaking, those countries within the Horn and beyond in which the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam is dominant. In Ethiopia, only 33% of its population identify with Sunni Islam and so, although this is a significant proportion, it is not its dominant discursive tradition.⁵⁴ For this reason, I will not refer to Ethiopia in this section, as its conceptualisation of the marketplace is unlikely to be as heavily influenced by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam.

⁵³ De Waal's concept struggles to make sense of Ethiopian politics with the same ease and clarity.

⁵⁴ Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, 'World Profiles.'

The Merchant

I now turn to how Islamic political culture has shaped Muslims' perceptions of the merchant and the prestige of the role, as well as the union between religion, politics and commerce that is symbolised in this role. The religious, political and the economic have always been so deeply and obviously connected in Islamic history that to conceive of one as governed by different and contrasting principles from the other is absurd.⁵⁵ The merchant has always been a powerful and respected figure within Sunni Islam's political culture and the merchant class that has been credited with the expansion of Islam from its point of origin in Medina and/or Mecca to areas as far as Spain and Turkey.⁵⁶ This is in contrast to the rather dim view that Christianity had of commerce and its practitioners before the reformation.⁵⁷ To be a successful merchant was to be politically, religiously and economically well-connected and well-respected. These fields of human interaction were regulated by largely the same principles and were all positively responsive to bargaining as a form of exchange and social interaction. This meant that the skills of a merchant were transposable and so, therefore, also the skills of a politician. To be a merchant and apolitical was unheard of. Beyond this, the Islamic merchant had an almost mythological status, which gave him symbolic as well political and economic power.

The following quote illustrates that the merchant/businessman also has a form of moral authority within the Islamic political culture:

Finally, religious traditions differ in their view of the moral disposition of the merchant. Christianity tends to take a dim view of merchants and trade, while Islam sees no conflict between commerce and virtue. This model should serve as a vehicle for understanding how differences in moral teachings affect day-to-day market activity.⁵⁸

This is important to notice as the exchange skills and thriftiness that a merchant possesses have moral content in an Islamic political culture, as not only is commerce

⁵⁵ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 80.

⁵⁶ W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), 46–52.

⁵⁷ John D. Mittelstaedt, 'A Framework for Understanding the Relationships between Religions and Markets,' *Journal of Macromarketing* 22, no. 1 (2002): 6–18.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

not in conflict with virtue, but it is actively encouraged as one way of being virtuous. This element of Islamic political culture plays an important role in how those who participate in the political marketplace/bazaar are perceived and how they perceive themselves. This quote from De Waal is an example of the moral pride that a particularly successful participant of the political bazaar in Sudan has in his role:

He [Majzoub] returned time and again to his principles: he would not give in on a certain claim because it would have wider repercussions, and that would be a violation of the legitimate demands of others. Majzoub took pride in managing a complicated and perilous system: for him, it was not only a career but a calling.⁵⁹

The term ‘calling’ is best explained with reference to the historic role of the merchant in Sunni Islamic political culture because it locates De Waal’s political entrepreneur within the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. This section shows that rather than the political entrepreneur being a novel type of political actor in a contemporary system of governance (the political marketplace), there is, in fact, significant continuity between the merchant, his skillset and role in society, and De Waal’s political entrepreneur. A quote from Montgomery Watt is instructive with regard to how this process containing adaptation and continuation can be understood:

In general then, it may be concluded that the adoption of occidental ideas by Muslims has usually served some pre-existing Islamic purposes and that the political life of Muslims is controlled by age-old patterns. Two matters are specially prominent: first, the real solidarity of the *umma* or community of all Muslims; and secondly, the existence of the Shari’a as a divinely given *sunna* or model of social life.⁶⁰

Using my argument’s terminology, the term ‘age-old patterns’ could be replaced with the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam; this quote explains the dynamics of simultaneous continuation and adaptation well, if combined with the conceptualisation of Sunni Islam as a discursive tradition.

⁵⁹ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 203.

⁶⁰ Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, 123.

Given this background, it becomes clear why political leaders within the Sunni Islamic political culture have in most cases been astute and skilful merchants/businessmen; to be one and not the other is to be imprudent. Therefore, it is no surprise that the political leaders of Sudan and Somalia, in particular, are also astute businessmen and use these skills to manage their political affairs as well. This feature of Islamic political culture emerges from its conceptualisation of the 'marketplace' (the bazaar) as emergent from the social and political realities, and not as a distinct field of human interaction that is governed by distinct norms and values. Accordingly, the bazaar is conceptualised as a network of human interrelations, which must be actively and continually engaged with in a personable manner if one is to gain further economic and political prestige or maintain the prestige he or she already has. This is in contrast to the abstracted, idealised and mechanistic conceptualisation of the marketplace that is employed in the generic/Liberal conceptualisation of the market, and which informs De Waal's political marketplace.

Bargaining and the Bazaar

The most instructive source on the way in which the bazaar is different from what has become a generic/Liberal conceptualisation of the marketplace is Geertz and his study of a Moroccan bazaar. I will supplement this with Rosen's anthropological ethnography of the Moroccan city of Sefrou. Geertz's work is revealing, in that a close reading of his description and conceptualisation of the bazaar reveals that the bazaar's dynamics are far more similar to the power dynamics in Sudan and Somalia, as described by De Waal. If De Waal's concept is to remain useful, then the dynamics of legitimacy in the Horn are more like those of bazaar than those of a generic/Liberal marketplace. Thus, it would be more accurate to reconceptualise De Waal's political marketplace in Sudan, and the other countries in which Sunni Islam is dominant, as a political bazaar. Although Geertz's work has been the cause of much discussion, criticism and defence within the academy since it was written, most scholars agree with his observation (which has been further researched and validated by his students, one of whom is Rosen) that bargaining is the dominant social action in most, if not all, societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition.

Additional contextualisation of Geertz's study of Islamic society in his book *Islam Observed* is important, as it shows how influential the discursive tradition of Islam is in influencing marketplace conceptions and an agent's motivations for action across

different geographic and historical contexts. In *Islam Observed*, Geertz studies the two furthest apart Islamic countries: Morocco and Indonesia. The aim of this study was to learn and discern how influential the discursive tradition of Islam has been in shaping people's beliefs, motivations and actions, regardless of geographical proximity. This is the reason that he chose such otherwise different societies. He wanted to isolate Islam to discern what Sunni Islam did or did not influence in a society in which it was dominant. This finding and Geertz and his students' work is relevant to my conceptual analysis of De Waal's political marketplace, which concludes that bargaining is the most pervasive political behaviour in the Horn.⁶¹ This finding, which is connected to Geertz's work on what makes a bazaar distinct from a generic/Liberal marketplace, is used in this section to develop an alternative and, in some ways, novel explanation of political behaviour in the Horn.

Two of the most important features that differentiate the bazaar from the generic/Liberal species of a marketplace are: clientelisation (better defined by Rosen as the centrality of a network of interdependent interrelations between individuals in the bazaar) and bargaining's predominance as a form of exchange.⁶² Geertz refers to these features as 'search procedures': ways in which *bazaaris* (men who buy and sell goods or services in the bazaar) gather reliable information pertaining to the bazaar, a most important asset for a *bazaari* given the manifest lack of easily accessible and reliable information in the bazaar.⁶³ These two features are also the most important features of the politics of Sudan and Somalia, according to De Waal, and thus we see that it is necessary that if one is prompted to conceptualise legitimacy in Sudan and Somalia and other countries in which Sunni Islam is dominant as akin to a marketplace, then one should actually use the concept of the bazaar instead and not the generic/Liberal species of a marketplace.⁶⁴

A difference of the bazaar that is related to why bargaining is one of the central features of the bazaar is, as Geertz writes, 'The centrality of exchange skills (rather than production or managerial ones) puts a tremendous emphasis on knowing what

⁶¹ To be clear, the reason that ethnographic studies from Morocco and Indonesia are relevant when studying political behaviour in the Horn of Africa is because Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition in the Horn, just as it is in Morocco and Indonesia.

⁶² Clifford Geertz, 'The Bazaar Economy: Information and Search in Peasant Marketing,' *The American Economic Review* 68, no. 2 (1978): 28–32.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁴ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa* .

particular things are actually selling for and what sorts of things they precisely are.’⁶⁵ This preference for exchange and the pre-existence of exchange skills within the society that the bazaar emerges from more parsimoniously describe the continual exchange of power so prevalent in the politics of the Horn. This preference and aptitude for exchange makes the bureaucratic and managerial model of governance, such as the modern state, an unlikely choice. Instead, it makes the political bazaar’s logic of exchange and emphasis on exchange skills (bargaining and negotiation) a far more likely one. This difference between the generic/Liberal species of the marketplace and the bazaar supplies evidence about how different discursive traditions and their political cultures conceptualise the ‘marketplace’. It also reveals how, given the central roles that bargaining and clientalism play in De Waal’s political marketplace, it is more accurate to rename his concept ‘the political bazaar’ when applying it to the context of Sudan and Somalia and other societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition. Not only is it more accurate, but its usefulness will increase significantly, as it conceptualises politics with reference to a known and local concept: the bazaar.

‘Here, as elsewhere in the bazaar, everything rests finally on a personal confrontation between intimate antagonists.’⁶⁶ This quote from Geertz’s work emphasises the personal nature of interactions in the bazaar that makes defining features of the bazaar such as bargaining and clientship relationships possible. The centrality and importance of personal relations in the bazaar is in contrast to the impersonal relations idealised within generic/Liberal conceptualisations of a ‘marketplace’. In chapter two of his book, De Waal writes about the price of the commodities of loyalty and cooperation being determined by supply and demand.⁶⁷ The previous quote shows the problem with assuming the price mechanism exists in all marketplaces in the same form. In the bazaar, the interpersonal bargaining ultimately sets the price and although supply and demand may be one of the factors that determines the price, the two people, their personal networks of interdependent interrelations and their respective influence are what ultimately determines the final price. Additionally, the term ‘intimate antagonists’ speaks to the type of relationship that the *bazaaris* have; as De Waal notes, it is a paradox that denotes the personal, but simultaneously impersonal nature

⁶⁵ Geertz, ‘The Bazaar Economy,’ 28–32.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 30.

of the political marketplace.⁶⁸ Geertz's understanding of the nature of relationships in the bazaar, revealed by the previous quote, enables us to explain that relations are not impersonal and personal simultaneously; they are always personal, but defined by both adversary and cooperation.⁶⁹ If this relationship is understood in light of the nature of relationships between *bazaaris*, then one needn't characterise the nature of political relations in the political bazaar as paradoxical, as De Waal does. I have shown again why De Waal would improve the usefulness of his concept of the political marketplace if he reconceptualised it as a political bazaar and acknowledged that although legitimacy may indeed resemble a bazaar, it is not because power and loyalty can be sold to the highest bidder, but because bargaining and negotiation are the predominant behaviours in the bazaar.

Another important observation that Geertz makes, in connection with the clientelism that exists in the bazaar, is that, ‘“Adversaries” is the word, for clientship relations are not dependency relations, but competitive ones. Clientship is symmetrical, egalitarian, and oppositional. There are no “patrons” in the master and man sense here.’⁷⁰ This is an important observation about the nature of relationships between men in the bazaar, but it is not exclusive to relationships in the bazaar.⁷¹ Rather, relationships and networks of relationships between men in a society dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam are characterised by a process of bargaining and negotiation in all areas of social interaction: economic, political and religious. To explore why this is the case, what it means for a concept like the political marketplace, and how important it and related features of Sunni Islam are in furthering the present explanation of legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn, I turn to Rosen's work and ethnographic evidence contained in his book *Bargaining For Reality*.

3.2 Bargaining as a Dominant Social Action

Upon further reading of Geertz and his student's work (Rosen), I have understood that the behaviour of bargaining has shaped the very structure of the bazaar. This means that the bazaar should be understood as an entity that is primarily concerned with

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Geertz, ‘The Bazaar Economy,’ 28–32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 30.

⁷¹ Rosen, *Bargaining for reality*.

establishing conventions and values that facilitate bargaining, and not efficiency which the generic/Liberal species of the marketplace primarily facilitates. Bargaining is viewed as a legitimate form of social action in the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, and the bazaar has been and continues to be structured around facilitating this behaviour. Understanding this element of Geertz and Rosen's works prompted further research to see why bargaining is such a pervasive and highly regarded social behaviour within the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam that the bazaar has been structured around it. What was so informative and relevant for my main critique of the political marketplace and my own explanation for political behaviour in the Horn was that, rather than bargaining alone being the dominant behaviour in the bazaar and being primarily an economic behaviour, Rosen's work shows that it is the dominant social action in the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. This means that the political marketplace is not a *contemporary* system of governance; bargaining has been central to governance and the creation and maintenance of social cohesion and political order in societies dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam since its origins in seventh century Arabia.⁷² Therefore, this section relies heavily on quotes from Rosen's work that show how pervasive bargaining is in a society dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam: Sefrou city in Morocco.

Rosen and Geertz's works show that bargaining is the dominant social action in societies dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, and my work builds on their argument, arguing that this is the case because of bargaining's vitality, its openness to pragmatic considerations and the metaphysics of Sunni Islam. These factors make it the best behaviour to deal with uncertainty and a lack of reliable information, without violating the principle of *Gharar*. Saleh describes the principle of *Gharar* as prohibiting the sale of goods such as unripe and un-harvested dates for their future (ripe) value because of the uncertainty surrounding both their quantity and quality in the future.⁷³ This principle is related to the epistemology of Sunni Islam and the limitations of human knowledge, which asserts absolutely that man cannot know the future, only Allah can. Accordingly, humans cannot jeopardise social relations or the social cohesion and solidarity of their communities by making compacts in the

⁷² Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*.

⁷³ N.A. Saleh, *Unlawful Gain and Legitimate Profit in Islamic Law: Riba, Gharar and Islamic Banking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

present that need a certain uncertain future to be realised in order be equitable. The way this principle is applied is illustrated in the following quote:

Throughout the election candidates themselves avoided direct confrontations and refrained from phrasing their opposition to another's candidacy in terms that might appear impassioned or inflexible. They knew that to do otherwise might well alienate those voters who recognized that today's opponent might be tomorrow's ally and that strict alignment in this situation might damage the flexibility of social relations everyone was desirous of maintaining.⁷⁴

This observation of the behaviour of candidates and voters in the regional elections in Sefrou illustrates how people apply their judgement and reason to an uncertain future in a society dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. The way time is conceptualised and the prescriptions around how to interact with it, present in the metaphysics of the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, are vital in understanding why bargaining is its dominant social action. Gardet echoes this understanding:

As Gardet put it: 'Time is less the measurement of movement than an indisputable sign of the impermanence of things.' Unlike the prophet in Judeo-Christian thought who prefigures the future in the present, the prophet in Islam cuts into time to repeat and reaffirm the instantaneousness of God's creative power and His age-free compact with man.⁷⁵

This understanding of time prompts the individual to find a form of social behaviour that is alive and open-ended, and that deals with change and the guarantee of impermanence effectively. This form of social behaviour is bargaining. Understanding that the roots of bargaining's legitimacy as a dominant social action are in the metaphysics of Sunni Islam enables one to recognise why it is the pervasive political behaviour in societies dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, given the even more impermanent nature of political relations and alliances.

⁷⁴ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 116.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

With regard to how time is understood as an ‘indisputable sign of the impermanence of things’ within the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, De Waal’s thoughts around uncertainty and time in the Horn are that:

The stable, cumulative, and systemic concept of institutions is a reflection of a later Western world, more sure of its direction. It becomes, however, blunt and illogical when applied to a reality that seems, to those who live it, altogether less settled. Like pragmatists, they have to apply reason and judgment *to horizons of contingency* rather than applying a narrow calculative rationality to given variables.⁷⁶

I agree with this argument to a large extent, as is evident by the discussion around how bargaining lends itself to pragmatic considerations and an impermanent social world. However, I would add that in societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition, principles such as *Gharar*, with their roots in the metaphysics of Sunni Islam, heavily influence, along with pragmatism, the way reason and judgement are applied to the future. I find the influence of the principle of *Gharar* specifically evident in the preference of De Waal’s political entrepreneurs for short-term agreements within the political marketplace, and these agreements frequent re-negotiations. Rather than De Waal’s explanation that these short-term agreements are a result of the capricious and self-interested nature of political entrepreneurs and fluctuations in their ‘political budgets’, I argue that the prohibition of making exchanges based on future or unrealised value better explains why the mentioned political behaviour is so pervasive. Additionally, the practice within the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, of pursuing as many alternatives as possible in preparing for the heightened uncertainty of such an ‘unsettled’ world, is made clear by Rosen when he writes:

Faced with an economic and political environment of substantial uncertainty and a physical environment by considerable, though seldom debilitating, fluctuations of climate, [...] alliances will be formed with members of several different tribes or factions and a father may take care to place one son in a dominant political party and another in the opposition. In each of these instances the need to know the alternatives available and to distribute one’s risk within

⁷⁶ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 28.

and beyond the bonds of kinship, residence, and occupations is seen as preeminent.⁷⁷

This quote aptly describes the nature of political relationships and behaviour in the Horn and, rather than using the concept of the political marketplace to do this, it uses the assumption that bargaining is the predominant social action in societies in which the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam is dominant.

I do not maintain that bargaining is not present in other societies around the world, as it almost certainly is, but I do maintain that it is not the most pervasive political, social and economic behaviour in these societies, as it is in societies in which the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam is dominant. The failure of the Comprehensive Peace Act (CPA) in Sudan can in part be explained in light of bargaining's prevalence and perceived social and political purpose in an ever-changing world. The CPA was a peace agreement (effectively a truce) signed in 2005 between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the government of Sudan.⁷⁸ Originally and for some time, the various stakeholders of the agreement complied with the terms of the agreement, but as the political and economic environment began to change, so the stakeholders began to deviate from the terms of the agreement and seek out new agreements which more accurately reflected the new political and economic environment and which were not so rigid. To have a social compact that is completely set in stone outside of what is contained within Sharia is highly unlikely in a society that is dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and its predominant social action, bargaining. Furthermore, not only is it unlikely, it is undesirable for those influenced by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, given that so final an agreement would be imprudent given the way time is understood.

With this in mind, it is important to show how even the concepts used to understand social, political and economic relations are themselves up for negotiation and bargaining in these societies. What informs this process is usually a mixture of pragmatism, convention and creation.⁷⁹ Rosen shows how these concepts are up for negotiation with his analysis of the concept of *haqq*.

⁷⁷ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 63.

⁷⁸ De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*.

⁷⁹ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 140.

Haqq can be understood to mean: reality, right, duty, obligation, truth, title or claim.⁸⁰ With regard to which one of these English words best communicates the concept, Rosen writes: ‘In its most fundamental sense it means reality, but a reality that, because it centres on Allah and is suffused by Islamic doctrine, is not to be equated with Western conceptions of the real.’⁸¹ Having grounded the concept of *haqq*, he then goes on to speak about how it is most commonly understood in contemporary Sefrou: ‘To speak of *haqq* is, in short, to convey that sense of mutual obligation that binds men to men and men to God.’⁸² What is most interesting and relevant for our discussion, however, is that what is and is not a case of *haqq* is bargained over. Quoting Rosen at length is, again, instructive:

Indeed, we may characterize the process by which individuals construct a network of obligations as one of negotiation. For not only does each person seek to place his acts and concomitantly his obligations, where they may later prove most advantageous, but, as we have already seen suggested in other contexts, the very definition of a situation – as one involving one kind of obligation or another, as implying a *haqq* or merely a *fabor* [favour] – is itself open to bargaining.⁸³

The fact that not only is the content of one’s social obligation to another negotiated, but whether there is, in fact, an obligation or not is negotiated is important, because De Waal asserts that, along with power, loyalty is bought and sold to the highest bidder in the Horn. If the analyst acknowledges that the concepts that determine social, political and economic relations are themselves subject to constant bargaining, then one sees that the terms bought and sold are not entirely accurate, as they are too final. Loyalty is not bought and sold, *it is in a constant state of negotiation*, as is the concept of *haqq* each time it is employed. Consent in Sunni Islam’s world of social obligations is not final; it is ongoing and enacted through the process of continual bargaining.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁸¹ Ibid., 61.

⁸² Ibid., 62.

⁸³ Ibid., 69.

To further illustrate the pervasiveness of bargaining as a behaviour in societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition, this section will discuss the concept of kinship ties with reference to the following quote from Rosen:

It is not simply that individuals manipulate their ties of kinship – a feature common enough to virtually all societies. Rather, it is that at the very heart of the concept of kinship in Morocco lies the recognition that relational possibilities are inherently matters to be bargained over and that this is no less true of kin ties than of bonds of patronage, friendship, or political alliance.⁸⁴

De Waal argues briefly and dismissively that kinship ties are instrumentalised in the political marketplace and that political entrepreneurs use their kinship ties to decrease the cost of their kin's loyalty. Although we can see from Rosen's anthropological research that this might be true to an extent, it does not accurately describe or understand the nature of kinship ties in societies in which Sunni Islam is dominant. Rather than kinship ties being instrumentalised by those pursuing political power to attain the loyalty or support of a certain constituency or faction, Rosen's work shows that although kinship may be viewed as a political resource, it is also subject to the concept of *haqq* (social obligation) and, therefore, it is unlikely that an individual can actually instrumentalise it without both the concepts of kinship and *haqq* imposing constraints and obligations on him or her. Granted, if the individual who is employing kinship is a skilled negotiator and bargains well, he or she can decrease the constraints both social conventions impose, but they will not be able to escape their constraints entirely.

One might ask at this point why a member of such a society would not see the dominance of bargaining as a social action as deleterious to their society's social and political stability. This question, however, fails to understand that it is for the purposes of social cohesion and political order and stability that bargaining is the dominant social action in such a society. This is the case because if the world of social obligations (political, religious and economic) is too rigid and inflexible, then it is unable to adapt to change and change is a certainty, given Sunni Islam's conception of time as the sign of the impermanence of things. Thus, having bargaining as the dominant social action keeps the world of social obligations malleable and, therefore,

⁸⁴ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 71.

able to ensure that social cohesion and political order is maintained throughout the constant impermanence of things (time).

3.3 Conclusion

Having shown how pervasive bargaining is as a social action in societies dominated by Sunni Islam, and how it permeates all forms of social relations and the concepts used to define and understand them, it is important to reflect on what type of social, political and economic relations are most prevalent in such societies as a result. The first type of relation that must be discussed is the transactional relationship. This is because De Waal's political marketplace would have us believe that this is the predominant nature of political relations in the Horn. Given that the Horn and most of its countries are dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and, concomitantly, that bargaining is the dominant social action in these countries, I find De Waal's position difficult to agree with.

With section 3.2 in mind, it becomes clear that transactional relationships are highly unlikely, given that in societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition, one's social obligations to another are seldomly ever annulled. This is largely to do with the fact that it makes sense for a person in such a society to, through their powers of bargaining and negotiation, create a web of social obligations as a form of insurance against the guaranteed uncertainty of change and as a means to secure status. If relations were for the most part transactional in nature, then this web could not exist in these societies. And not only do we have extensive ethnographic evidence that these webs do exist, from Rosen and Geertz's works, we also know that the purpose of these webs is intrinsically linked to the metaphysics of the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, and so their presence and importance is assured in all societies in which Sunni Islam is the dominant discursive tradition – the majority of the societies that make up the Horn. Rosen expresses this understanding and function of social obligation well: 'Rather, the trick is to arrange ties [social obligations] in order to gain the highest possible degree of predictability, if not control, over the actions of others.'⁸⁵ This limited control of the social, political and economic world is seen as the best humans can do in the face of the guaranteed impermanence of things and, thus, to conclude

⁸⁵ Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality*, 71.

that transactional relations are the most prevalent relations in the Horn is to misunderstand its social, political and economic dynamics.

At this point, it is important to clarify that I argue that most people in the Horn seek out interdependent relationships with others and not transactional relationships – not that transactional relationships do not exist. I acknowledge that they do, but to argue they are the most pervasive is a mistake. Furthermore, it is a mistake that is brought on by De Waal's failure to embed his political marketplace. The generic/Liberal species or understanding of the marketplace assumes that transactional relationships between its participants are both the most prevalent and the best, given that they are seen as the most efficient, and should be promoted and facilitated by the marketplace as a result, given that efficiency is the organising principle of the generic/Liberal marketplace.⁸⁶ Linked to this clarification of De Waal's concept, it is important that the reader remembers that my work is primarily a conceptual analysis of De Waal's political marketplace and that it was this analysis that enabled and prompted me to offer the alternative explanation for why bargaining is the predominant political behaviour in the Horn, as has been given in this chapter. Furthermore, it will be evident from this chapter that rather than seeing the case of the Horn and its pervasive political behaviour of bargaining as a case to be best explained by theories of material change and their effects on the social, political and economic world, I have used the Horn's dominant discursive tradition to more parsimoniously explain why its predominant political behaviour is bargaining. In so doing, I have shown that theories that explain continuity are better suited for explaining the political behaviour of the Horn. This is the case only if 'continuity' is not conflated with 'unchanging': a conflation that the concept of a discursive tradition, here employed, is not vulnerable to.

This chapter has shown that Sunni Islam is a major source of legitimacy in the Horn and that De Waal's political marketplace and its conception of legitimacy in the Horn does not account for this. Consequently, this chapter has shown that the political

⁸⁶ Within Western/Liberal conceptualisations, the practice of exchange is seen as a mutually beneficial positive-sum game, but the principle of *Riba* shows that within Islamic political culture, exchange is seen as a zero-sum game and thus its practice needs to be regulated. In response to this assumption, the principle of *Riba* attempts to ensure that fairness or equity is present in each instance of exchange, as Islamic political culture knows that repeated instances of unequal exchange could undermine social, economic and political stability. Accordingly, it prioritises fairness of exchange over the principle of efficiency. The prioritisation of fairness or equity over efficiency is in stark contrast with the generic/Liberal species of the marketplace that prioritises the principle of efficiency and which De Waal fails to embed and reconceptualise in the Horn.

bazaar is a source of legitimacy in the Horn because it reflects the values and norms of Sunni Islam, primarily in its use of bargaining. This is important because although the political bazaar has its own form of legitimacy, it would not have this legitimacy in a society that was not dominated by Sunni Islam. Having identified the source of legitimacy that undergirds the political bazaar's form of legitimacy, it has become evident that there are at least two sources of legitimacy in the Horn that are interconnected: the political bazaar and Sunni Islam. This chapter has also shown how important context and history are in understanding how those in the Horn understand legitimacy. Given this, and the continuity over centuries that has been observed in terms of the dominance of bargaining as a social action in the Horn, I deem it necessary to employ a third concept to more accurately understand the nature of legitimacy in the Horn: the primordial public. The reason for this and the consequences it has for how I conceptualise legitimacy in the Horn will be made clear in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Continuity and Legitimacy in the Horn

This chapter aims to argue that the embedded political marketplace (the political bazaar) is one of the three major sources of legitimacy in the eyes of those residing in the Horn. It shows how the rational logic of exchange and the circulation of power which bargaining facilitates give the political bazaar its rational legitimacy. Its rational legitimacy is clearly rooted in the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and the pivotal role that bargaining plays within it, and the primordial public, but all three institutions operate interdependently to inform people's understanding of legitimacy in the countries dominated by Sunni Islam in the Horn. Sunni Islam and the primordial public's legitimacy, traditional and moral respectively, act in conjunction with the political bazaar's rational legitimacy to inform what it is that the people of the Horn consider legitimate and meaningful collective action. The primordial public is a concept that was developed by Peter Ekeh and is best understood by quoting him:

Most educated Africans are citizens of two publics in the same society. On the one hand, they belong to a civic public from which they gain materially but to which they give only grudgingly. On the other hand they belong to a primordial public from which they derive little or no material benefits but to which they are expected to give generously and do give materially. Their relationship to the primordial public is moral, while their relationship with the civic public is amoral.⁸⁷

The reason that the primordial public has been included in my work is because it, like the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam, is useful for explaining continuity and why pervasive behaviours, such as bargaining, persist in a society over time, and because it is present in most, if not all, of the societies that make up the Horn.⁸⁸ These three institutions have legitimacy in the Horn, and those that represent them and inhabit them are constantly bargaining and negotiating with each other over which form of legitimacy will be dominant and primarily determine what is considered legitimate behaviour in the Horn.

⁸⁷ Peter P. Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 1 (1975): 100.

⁸⁸ An example of how the primordial public would manifest itself in the Horn would be the moral and traditional ties a Somalian has to his or her clan.

4.1 Conceptualising Legitimacy and its Forms

I understand legitimacy to be a contextual belief that is synonymous with what is fitting and proper.⁸⁹ Accordingly, I understand political legitimacy to be present in a society when the dominant way of exercising power is deemed fitting and proper by those who use it and by those who it is used upon.⁹⁰ I have this understanding as legitimacy, like any belief, must be renewed and because shared needs and the meeting of them is not sufficient to create legitimacy. There must also be a sharing of values if legitimacy is to be present. Given this understanding of legitimacy, an important consideration of the following discussion on legitimacy will be the way in which one political culture might deem something legitimate that another would not. I will argue that legitimacy in the Horn is constituted and determined by three institutions (patterns of behaviour) and concepts: the political bazaar, the primordial public and the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. These three institutions have different forms of legitimacy that enable them to determine (interdependently and competitively) what is and is not politically legitimate. The different forms of legitimacy are: moral legitimacy (Sunni Islam), rational legitimacy (the political bazaar), and traditional legitimacy (the primordial public) they will be discussed in this section, respectively. To clarify, before moving on, these three institutions are stratified so that, on the one hand, they *conjointly* determine how legitimacy is understood in the Horn, in no fixed proportion; yet on the other, one of these institutions may be rooted in, emergent from and explained by the others.⁹¹

Sunni Islam and Moral Legitimacy in the Horn

The above understanding of legitimacy characterises it, essentially, as a belief. It is therefore important to be mindful of the other beliefs that are present in the minds of those in the Horn. As I have argued and shown in chapter three, a significant number of these beliefs in the Horn are derived from the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and its conceptual reservoir. I have also given an account, in chapter three, of the interdependent nature of the relationship between Sunni Islam and the political bazaar and the way the one informs the other via the dominant social behaviour of Sunni

⁸⁹ Guess, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 11.

⁹⁰ Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism*, 1–5.

⁹¹ Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London & New York: Verso, 1994).

Islam – bargaining – and the way the bazaar is essentially institutionalised bargaining. To expand on Sunni Islam as a source of moral legitimacy in the Horn and build on the arguments made in chapter three for what this might mean when it comes to conceptualising legitimacy in the Horn, this section will refer to Bayart and Foucault.

Although Bayart and De Waal agree in many areas of their analyses of the Horn, they depart at some important junctures. Bayart primarily uses Foucault's governmentality to understand political action, power and the state in Africa, whereas De Waal uses the concept of the political marketplace. This difference is important because although the political marketplace is an informal institution of power and is in some ways in line with Foucault's notion of governmentality, De Waal excludes other significant sources of legitimacy from his analysis, like the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and the primordial public. The Foucauldian conceptualisation of power that Bayart uses is more amenable to the influence that the religious component of political culture can have on structuring or regulating a subject's political action. De Waal's political marketplace, on the other hand, is not so amenable to such factors, as he focuses more on the material conditions that drive change, not the cultural or ideological factors that ensure continuity. It is this exclusion of other sources of legitimacy, such as the religious component of political culture (Sunni Islam), that limits De Waal's understanding of legitimacy in the Horn. Additionally, it is important to note an observation made by Ellis and Ter Haar that indicates the non-instrumentality of religion amongst the Horn's elites: 'While it is good politics for a politician to make a public profession of religious allegiance in order to be in popularity, there is abundant evidence that heads of state also practice religion in private for no obvious clientelist motive.'⁹² This is important to note given De Waal's argument that religion and other appeals to solidarity are mainly instrumental and used to drive down the cost of loyalty in his political marketplace

At this point, it is also important to remember that Foucault's understanding of how governmentality functions is derived from the way in which pastoral power and religious power function.⁹³ In the same way that religion prompts one to govern oneself in accordance with a conscience informed and guided by religious concepts, so the state seeks to do the same through a technology of power which Foucault calls

⁹² Ellis and Ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 189–190.

⁹³ Michel Foucault, 'The subject and power,' *Critical inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 777–795.

governmentality. This is conjoined with the belief that God or the state might be watching you at any given time, the ‘panopticon’. Given that in the Horn 93% of the population identifies as Christian or Muslim, there is a high chance that this technology of power operates, and in a similar way. De Waal does not account for this at all because he fails to embed his political marketplace in the existing social, political and religious reality of the Horn. If he had acknowledged this, then he would have seen the moral legitimacy that Sunni Islam has in the Horn and he would not argue that the accumulation of money and power are ultimate in the political marketplace and that political behaviour in the Horn is primarily determined by cost-benefit machinations. Instead, he would have seen that Sunni Islam’s moral dictates, metaphysics and political culture are a major source of legitimacy in the Horn and play a major role in determining its inhabitants’ political behaviour. The moral legitimacy possessed by Sunni Islam in the Horn is considerable and, when acknowledged, helps the analyst to more fully understand the nature of legitimacy in the Horn. It moves the analyst in the direction of a more holistic understanding of legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn that does not confine itself to rational motivations for action alone but includes moral motivations for action.

The Political Bazaar and Rational Legitimacy

The practice of exchange is first and foremost a way to regulate political behaviour. This assertion may seem both bold and misguided, but there is historical evidence to support it. In David Graeber’s book *Towards an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*, he makes this argument time and time again referring to many different anthropological and historical examples.⁹⁴ Contemporary examples of political order exist in the absence of a legitimate monopoly of violence like Somaliland, Bougainville and, some even say, Northern Kivu.⁹⁵ I use the example of the Five First People’s Nations (on the east coast of North America), however, to point out why the bazaar and the practice of exchange it facilitates is primarily a mechanism to regulate political behaviour – creating political order – a necessary condition for the creation of wealth, which in turn is used to practise exchange and

⁹⁴ David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

⁹⁵ Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan. *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context Of ‘Fragility’*. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2008.

reinforce, and augment the existent political stability. What occurs in the bazaar as a result of the practice and logic of exchange is an exchange and circulation of power, according to Graeber. This exchange and circulation of power makes it possible for political order to exist without a legitimate monopoly of violence being present. Bayart quotes Lonsdale: ‘the most distinctive contribution of Africa to the history of humanity has in fact been the civilised art of living in a reasonably peaceful way without a state [legitimate monopoly of violence].’⁹⁶ This quote, although general, brings to mind the political bazaar and resonates with both Bayart and De Waal’s criticisms of authoritarian high modernism and Bayart’s appreciation for Africa’s historicity which makes the formation of the modern state, in the Weberian sense, highly unlikely in the Horn. Beyond the improbability of the state emerging as a political reality in the Horn, Bayart and De Waal’s works both point to the fact that there are systems of governance that better suit the Horn and that pursuing the construction of a statist political order is unhelpful, if not irrelevant, in the Horn.

Graeber writes about the Five Nations and the way power was regulated through its symbolic exchange and circulation of power, and not a legitimate monopoly of violence. This was done through the giving and receiving of ‘wampum’ which were ‘small cylindrical beads made by North American Indians from shells, strung together and worn as decoration or used as money’.⁹⁷ This is an example of how the practice of exchange of items of value has been a way of regulating power for a long time and is not something novel, although it is definitely not prescribed today as a system of governance, given the state’s dominance. Graeber goes on to give many more anthropological examples of how the practice of exchange is used to regulate power. This understanding of the practice of exchange as existing for reasons other than the accumulation of wealth through trade surpluses is important to understand if we are to see how the political bazaar uses the practice of exchange to regulate power, in the same way the state might use its monopoly of power to regulate it. I will not spend too much of this chapter labouring this point, as De Waal has argued well and succinctly for it in his book. Given the arguments of De Waal and the previous example, one can see how the political marketplace has a rational form of legitimacy in that its processes can lead to political order through the exchange and circulation of power. Having said

⁹⁶ Bayart, *The State in Africa.*, 35.

⁹⁷ David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 124.

this, however, I elaborate on how the practice of exchange manifests itself as bargaining in the political bazaar and how this instils it with rational legitimacy.

By rational legitimacy, I mean the perceived rational nature of the logic of exchange of the political bazaar. It is because of this logic and the fact that bargaining is institutionalised in the bazaar that it is seen as source of rational legitimacy in the eyes of the Horn's public. The logic of the political bazaar is a logic of exchange and although not legal in its expression, it acts similarly to the law in that it constrains and enables actors within certain fields of action. This logic, although not codified and enshrined in law, is seen as legitimate and thus instils the political bazaar and its processes with rational legitimacy. At this point, I must show that I am aware that within Weber's three types of authority there is no rational authority *per se*, rather rational-legal authority.⁹⁸ I, however, do not see this as an issue, given the lack of formal institutions and laws in the Horn and my argument that the bazaar's logic of exchange mediated by its institutionalisation of bargaining acts in a similar fashion to the law or the judiciary and the separation of powers that it enforces and protects. Furthermore, within Weber's context of Western Europe, the legal was understood to be rational and vice versa. The law had legitimacy because those who it governed understood it as rational and because its power was validated through its enforcement. In the case of the Horn, the enforcement of the law is sporadic and, when it is enforced, it is often for personal gain rather than for the good of society. The relationship between rationality and legality therefore must be understood differently in the Horn. The logic of exchange and circulation of power has rational legitimacy because it endorses and facilitates the moral culture that is prevalent in the Horn that condemns and sometimes prevents the monopolisation of power by an individual or a group of individuals.⁹⁹ Additionally, given that the bazaar institutionalises bargaining and bargaining's position as the dominant social action in Sunni Islam, we see why the political bazaar is viewed as being a source of rational legitimacy. This understanding of law as culture is very interesting and applicable in the case of the Horn. Rosen

⁹⁸ Max Weber, 'The Three Types of Legitimate Rule,' *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions* 4, no. 1 (1958): 1–11.

⁹⁹ Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 243.

writes about it in *Law as Culture: An Invitation*.¹⁰⁰ Unfortunately there is insufficient time to explore it in this piece of work.

The Primordial Public and Traditional Legitimacy

Peter Ekeh argues that in the Horn there are two publics: the primordial public and the civic public. The primordial public is the effectively the local public and the civic public is the national public. He argues that the dialectic between these two publics accounts for many of the political phenomena and behaviour that we observe in the Horn. Ekeh grounds his argument in the historicity of the state in Africa in the same way that Bayart does, but he places more emphasis on the influence that the colonial period had on contemporary Horn politics. I have made use of Ekeh's work because it acknowledges an important feature of the Horn politics that De Waal's marketplace does not. By arguing that the dialectic between the two publics is a cause of many of the Horn's political dynamics, he brings the 'public' and its traditions into the study of politics in the Horn in an accurate and revealing way. This is something that De Waal does not do, and his analysis of the Horn and the concept of the political marketplace are worse off as a result. Ekeh argues that these two publics have post-colonial ideologies of legitimation that they employ to legitimate their hold on their own people.¹⁰¹ These ideologies of legitimation are still employed today and I will discuss them, as they are essential if one is to more holistically understand the nature of legitimacy in the Horn.

Ekeh's theoretical statement regarding the two publics in the Horn is important because it highlights that there are two spheres of political action and each sphere has different strategies of legitimation. Ekeh goes on to argue that these spheres of political action have different motivations for action. In the primordial or local public, morality and a collectivist sense of wellbeing primarily motivate action and accordingly are also used to legitimate action within it. In the civic public or national public, apathy and amorality and extractive self-interest primarily motivate action and accordingly are used to legitimate action within it. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, it explains the simultaneous moral and amoral nature of the Horn politics that De Waal struggles to comprehend. Secondly, and importantly with regard to the discussion on

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Rosen, *Law as Culture: An Invitation* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁰¹ Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa,' 100.

legitimacy, it helps us see that the primordial public has traditional and moral legitimacy in the eyes of those who inhabit it, given the moral and collectivist motivations for actions within it, the sense and foundation of identity (clan, tribe or son of...) that it supplies to its members and the way it services its members' material needs.¹⁰² This legitimacy is important, as the legitimacy of the civic public, which is conceptualised similarly to De Waal's political marketplace, is dependent on it. The political marketplace's legitimacy is dependent on this because it is a common understanding among people in the Horn that there are different primordial publics within a nation, region and subcontinent, and that they compete and at times collaborate with one another to extract as much as they can from the political marketplace/civic public. Thus, the reason amoral and apathetic behaviour is seen as legitimate in the civic public/political marketplace is because all of the participants know that this kind of behaviour will sustain their primordial public and that it is one's traditional duty to sustain and prioritize the primordial public. This adds nuance to De Waal's analysis of legitimacy in the Horn, as by acknowledging the two publics and how their presence affects the nature of legitimacy in the Horn, the role of money is not over-determined in explaining political behaviour in the region, as this explanation accounts for the influence local tradition has on what is deemed legitimate and how legitimacy is understood in the Horn.

I conceptualise the primordial public's legitimacy as being most akin to traditional legitimacy because of what its name suggests, but further explanation is required given the mention of moral legitimacy in the previous paragraph. Ekeh writes:

At one level is the public realm in which primordial groupings, ties and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behaviour. I shall call this the primordial public because it is closely identified with primordial groupings, sentiments, and activities, which nevertheless impinge on the public interest.¹⁰³

Although Ekeh emphasises the moral nature of political action in the primordial public, as mentioned above and earlier in this section, its legitimacy is not primarily moral in nature. Rather, as the above quote shows, its primary source of legitimacy is

¹⁰² Ibid., 107.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 92.

tradition and it refers to or employs this to compel people to act in accordance with tradition. Acknowledging not only that the Horn has two publics, but that the primordial public is an institution which has significant traditional legitimacy is important as it allows us to see that there are three institutions and sources of legitimacy that primarily inform how people living in the Horn understand legitimacy.

Understanding the primordial public as one of the three institutions that serve as sources of legitimacy in the Horn is important as it allows the analyst to see that morality, tradition and integrity are not absent from understandings of legitimacy in the Horn, which is De Waal’s lament. These three institutions all have considerable legitimacy in the eyes of people in the Horn. Figure 1 depicts the dynamics that have just been described and shows that the reason that legitimacy resembles a bazaar in the Horn is because of how the people within these institutions bargain over and negotiate with each institution’s concepts and understandings of legitimacy, in order to try to ensure that their concepts and understandings of legitimacy are the ones that inform most people’s motivations for action.

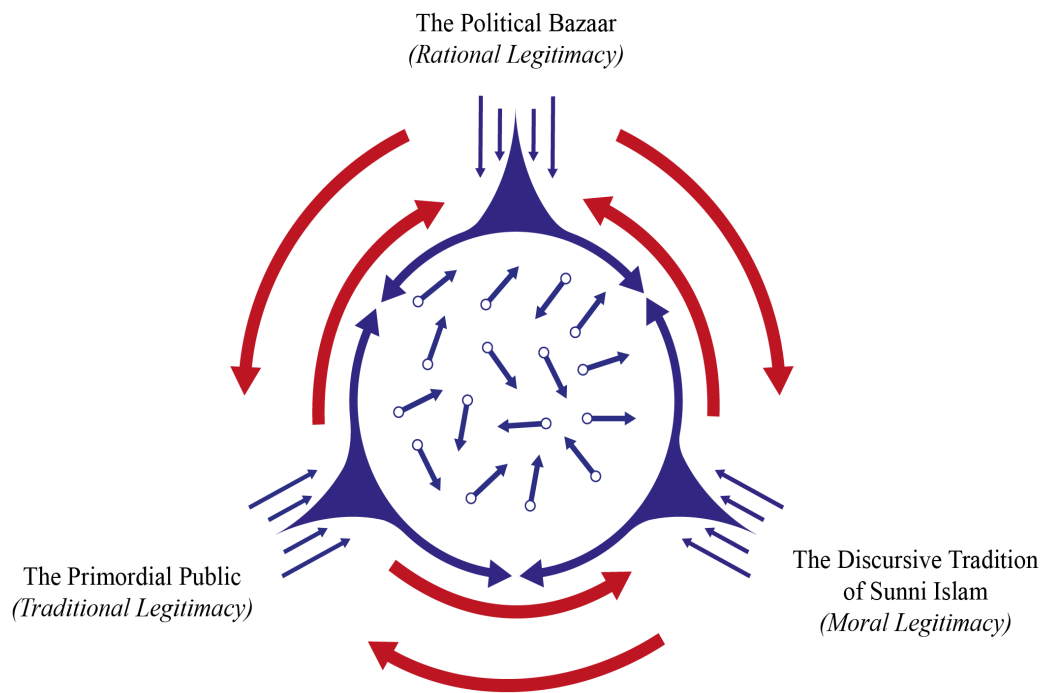


Figure 1

Figure 1 is essentially a visual representation of this entire work and its thesis, which builds on and develops De Waal’s political marketplace, while showing through its

critique that the political bazaar is only one of three institutions which serve as the major sources for legitimacy in the Horn. The smaller blue arrows within the circle represent individuals residing in the Horn, as actors are influenced at different times and with different degrees of influence by the three institutions of legitimacy. Given the importance of Figure 1, I will discuss some dynamics of legitimacy in Horn that it may not immediately communicate or cannot account for given its two-dimensional nature.

The first of these dynamics is that the question of which institution most influences people's understanding of legitimacy (the political bazaar, the primordial public or the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam) is the wrong question. Rather, Figure 1 should help one understand that a better question is *when* is one of the three institutions more influential than the others and why. This could be shown if the thick blue arrows of each source increased and decreased, depicting that no institution is without influence at any given time, but that their amount of influence is temporally and contextually determined and thus each institution's influence waxes and wanes. With this understanding of legitimacy in the Horn in mind, it is important to remind the reader that I answered the above question in chapter three, by arguing that the anthropological and historical evidence suggests that the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam most influences people's understandings of what is legitimate in the Horn today.

The second dynamic that is not immediately communicated is that each of the different institutions all have the three types of legitimacy mentioned (moral, rational and traditional) in some measure, but the type of legitimacy ascribed to them in Figure 1 is the predominant form of legitimacy they have in the understandings of the people in the Horn. This is important, as in order for the three legitimate institutions and their participants to negotiate and bargain with each other (the red arrows), there needs to be common reference points between all three of them and this is what a measure of each type of legitimacy present in each institution facilitates.

The third and final dynamic Figure 1 does not convey is that in each country (or even locality) in the Horn, the three institutions' concepts to interpret reality and inform action may vary. This would apply, for example, if this model were applied to Ethiopia, which has a different dominant discursive tradition. This means that my thesis is not a definitive description of the content of legitimacy in the Horn. Rather, this work has explained legitimacy's fluid nature by proposing that the people in the

Horn understand the process of legitimation as most akin to bargaining and, furthermore, I have described and analysed the inter-institutional dynamics of the three major sources of legitimacy that are called on by people in the Horn in the legitimation process.

4.2 Bargaining as the Predominant Process of Legitimation in the Horn

Conceptualising the process of legitimation in the Horn as one most akin to bargaining is congruent with my argument in chapter three that showed how and why bargaining is the dominant social, political and economic behaviour in the Horn. I hope that my argument prevents analysts from being stifled by an understanding of legitimacy that is too rigid. Conceptualising the process of legitimation as one of bargaining conveys the multitudinous nature of the possible sources of legitimacy one may observe or draw on to legitimate their group's or their own right to power over the other that are present in the social world of the Horn. It explains the hybrid blending of these sources and forms of legitimacy to justify one's power that is so pervasive in the Horn.¹⁰⁴ This section refers to Bayart's work extensively to make the case that the tireless efforts of modernist heads of states and developmentalists to finalise, rigidify and institutionalise legitimacy in the Horn will not work, given that the predominant process of legitimation in the Horn is bargaining and will remain so because, among other reasons, it is well-suited to the political, religious, cultural and geographic context of the Horn.

Bayart speaks about the supposed excess of power in the Horn and he argues that rather than there being an excess of power, power is decentralised and, therefore, there are more instances in which power is exerted or made to be visible as opposed to invisible. This greater number of instances makes the first-time observer think there is an excess of power when, in fact, it is because power is not centralised or institutionalised. This feature of power exists in the Horn mainly because of the immense geographic mobility of societies, which has allowed societies to escape the attempts of statist regimes to centralise power. Bayart refers to this as the 'exit option' in Horn politics and argues that its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial politics are

¹⁰⁴ Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 23.

heavily influenced by it. This – combined with the fact that pre-colonial and subsequently post-colonial elites’ power is not based on land ownership and their ability to alienate people from it – has meant that in the Horn the power to inflict violence does not translate into the power to force people to work.¹⁰⁵ Although the index of power in the pre-colonial period of the Horn’s history was more the control of people than land, this control was limited in that it could not be used to force people to work.¹⁰⁶ With Bayart and Rosen’s focus on the importance of networks of social obligation and interrelations in Horn politics, and Ekeh’s primordial public in mind, it would seem that the index of power is much the same in contemporary Horn politics: the control of people.

I have discussed how the exit option available to people in the Horn has affected its politics and what the index of power is, but more analysis is needed to better understand how this affects the legitimisation process in the Horn. To inform this analysis, it is necessary once again to refer to Foucault’s conceptualisation of power:

While the theory of political power as an institution ordinarily refers to a juridical conception of the law, it seems to me that the analysis of governmentality – *that is, the analysis of power as a group of reversible relations* – must refer to an ethics of the subject defined by relation of self to self.¹⁰⁷

Foucault argues that power can only exist where the possibility for freedom also exists; a condition for power is the possibility of freedom or the possibility of resistance. This understanding of power is salient given the widespread exit option that exists in the Horn and the high number of resistance movements recorded in its history. This understanding of power, however, has consequences that alter how the use of power is justified – the legitimation process.

What it means for the process of legitimation is contained in this phrase: ‘must refer to an ethics of the subject defined by relation of self to self’. As Foucault argues, rather than institutions and the law determining what is and is not a justified use of power

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 34.

¹⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, *L’hermeneutique du sujet. Cours au Collège de France 1981-1982* (Paris: Gallimard Seuil, 2001): 241–2.

between two people, the process of legitimating one's use of power over another is a process defined by the nature of the relationship that exists between the two parties involved. This very personal process of legitimation is what Foucault argues is the dominant form of legitimation when one does not conceptualise power as institutional and it is remarkably similar to how personal bargaining is as a process of legitimation. Consequently, the most legitimate way to exercise power in the Horn is by engaging an adversary or a friend in a process of bargaining in which you convince them, by using all the resources available to you, to perceive the situation in the way you do and to take a course of action that is to your advantage.¹⁰⁸

The amount of visible/physical violence committed by governments in the Horn does not contradict the nature of power and legitimacy within a governmentality understanding of power. Graeber speaks of Foucault and his idea of power moving from the visible and material to the invisible (governmentality) and the notion of omniscient vision, and largely agrees. However, rather than viewing this as a clean break between two entirely different regimes, as Foucault does, Graeber argues that these are two *different modalities of power*.¹⁰⁹ This is important with regard to the previous paragraph and in conceptualising power in the Horn, as power is still very much what is seen, as Foucault said about feudal power in *The Subject and Power*, but it is also about what is invisible, as Bayart, with reference to Foucault, emphasises.¹¹⁰ In the Horn, both modalities of power are operative: the visible exertion of power associated with a Feudal system and the invisible and relational form of power associated with governmentality and modern power.

4.3 Conclusion

In conceptualising the process of bargaining as the dominant process of legitimation in the Horn, I have grounded the understanding of legitimacy in the Horn in its dominant political, social, religious and economic behaviour (bargaining). In doing so, I have remained true to Geuss's first thesis: 'Don't look at just what they say, think, believe, *but at what they actually do, and what actually happens as a result*',¹¹¹ as did

¹⁰⁸ This course of action needn't be entirely disadvantageous for the other person involved.

¹⁰⁹ Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*, 95.

¹¹⁰ Foucault, 'The Subject and Power,' 777–795.

¹¹¹ Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 10–11.

De Waal. Why my explanation and analysis of legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn supersedes De Waal's, however, is because it heeds Geuss's warning: 'It is no sign of gimlet-eyed realism to deny the enormous and real significance of religious practices, beliefs and institutions in the world, past and present, but rather a sign of simple blindness.'¹¹²

Rather than formulating a new concept and using theories from the fields of marketing and business management to conceptualise legitimacy and explain political behaviour in the Horn, I take seriously the impact and 'significance of religious practices, beliefs and institutions in the world, past and present' in its conceptualisation of legitimacy and explanation for political behaviour in the Horn.¹¹³ The result of this is an alternative explanation, grounded in the Horn's social and religious realities and not just its political and economic realities. It is not money and the practices and values associated with it that *primarily* determine contemporary political behaviour in the Horn; at this point in the Horn's history, it is the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam.

The way I have, in this chapter, presented and formulated the understanding of legitimacy in the Horn is only made possible by combining Geuss, Graeber and Weber's understandings of legitimacy. Geuss builds on Weber's understanding and argues, along with Graeber, that value should be understood as the importance of actions, and that ultimately politics is concerned with legitimating different forms of collective action.¹¹⁴ This means that, within politics, legitimacy is present if the value system undergirding the governance structure symbolically represents to the people being governed the value of their own actions. These values do not need to have supreme authority (the state model of governance) or be universally accepted, as the normative understanding of legitimacy would have us believe. Rather, a governance structure can be made up of three different value systems, all of which are primarily influenced by different motivations for action and still be deemed legitimate by those it governs. This is the case because each of the three value systems reaffirms the importance of three different motivations for action, rational, moral and traditional – the three predominant motivations for political action in the Horn, each of which is

¹¹² Ibid., 11.

¹¹³ Ibid.,

¹¹⁴ Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*; Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 38.

institutionalised in the political bazaar, the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and the primordial public, respectively.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

I have sought to conceptualise how the majority of people living in the Horn understand legitimacy. The point of entry for this investigation was De Waal's concept of the political marketplace, given its initial usefulness throughout the Horn. Although this concept was the point of entry, it was made clear from the beginning of my work that the focus would be on critiquing, refining and further developing the concept and the understanding of legitimacy prompted by the political marketplace. This process led me to understand that the political bazaar is one of three major sources of legitimacy in the Horn and that these three sources of legitimacy are drawn on in combination by the Horn's inhabitants, to both understand legitimacy and legitimate their own actions in the eyes of others. Situating the political marketplace as one of three major sources of legitimacy enabled a clearer definition of what the political marketplace or more accurately the political bazaar is: an institution structured around facilitating bargaining and rational action. Furthermore, embedding De Waal's concept revealed that there are different conceptualisations of a marketplace and that these are primarily determined by the dominant religious tradition of a society: Sunni Islam in the Horn. Accordingly, I achieved my first three aims:

- to more clearly define a political marketplace,
- to identify a different conception of a political marketplace and
- to show that this different conception is closely related to the surrounding political culture, especially the religious dimension of political culture.

Having done this, I moved on to my fourth and final aim:

- to develop an understanding of why bargaining is the predominant political behaviour in the Horn and what this means for how legitimacy is understood by those in the Horn.

Achieving this aim led to the understanding of legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn that is depicted in Figure 1 and explained in chapter four. Further reflection on this understanding of legitimacy and how it affects political behaviour will help the reader comprehend the consequences of my work's conclusions, if accepted, for the study of legitimacy in the Horn.

The three forms of legitimacy ascribed to the three sources of legitimacy identified in chapter four (rational, traditional and moral) will remind the reader of Weber's three ideal types of authority and how they serve to both legitimate and inform different forms of political behaviour. My understanding of legitimacy and political behaviour in chapter four conveys how bargaining (legitimated by Sunni Islam) is the dominant process of legitimation in the Horn. This is not just because Sunni Islam legitimates it, however, as maintaining bargaining as the predominant political behaviour is also in the interests of those who would govern in the Horn. This is the case as it allows those who wish to exercise power over others access to numerous sources of legitimacy to justify this exertion of power. Concomitantly, it also means that when their exertion of power comes to be deemed illegitimate by one source of legitimacy, they shift their 'allegiance' and reconfigure their sources of legitimacy by bargaining with those who represent the three institutions in the Horn.

The reason I am revisiting this is because political actors in the Horn do not draw on predominantly one source of legitimacy to legitimate their rule; they draw on as many sources of legitimacy as they can, namely traditional, moral and rational, through a process of bargaining with each other, those who represent the three institutions and those they would exert their power on. Weber knew that his ideal types were just that, ideal, but he still argued that in Western Europe the state primarily legitimated itself through rational-legal authority. In the Horn, no such argument can be made, given that there is no consensus on what form of legitimacy should have ultimate authority in the social world or, at a metaphysical level, whether ultimate authority should lie in human hands or in their institutions, both formal and informal. This fluid and bargained-over nature of legitimacy prompts the analyst to understand legitimacy in the Horn as resembling a bazaar. Not for the reasons De Waal gives, however, but because of the dominance of bargaining as a social action in the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and the similarity between the dynamics that exist between the three major institutions and those that represent them in the Horn, and the dynamics of bargaining.

In light of this, the concepts that should be employed in conjunction with each other to best understand the nature of legitimacy in the Horn are: the political bazaar, the primordial public and the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. Additionally, I have found that the state competes for legitimacy in the Horn with the primordial public, the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam and, emergent from this, the political bazaar.

The questioning of the state model of governance that results from this competition should inspire those involved in governance in the Horn to take note and to understand governance as a far more decentralised phenomenon in the Horn, but not to conflate this decentralisation with anarchy.

Understanding legitimacy in the way argued for in chapter four means that those who mainly focus on governments' service delivery capacity in the Horn misunderstand the nature of legitimacy in the Horn as being primarily instrumental. Additionally, those who take issue with the value systems of governance structures in the Horn on normative grounds misunderstand that legitimacy is a contextual belief that is synonymous with what is fitting and proper in that specific context.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, I understand legitimacy to be present in a society when the dominant way of exercising power (bargaining) is deemed fitting and proper by both those who exercise it and those whom it is exercised upon.¹¹⁶ Thus, legitimacy needs to be understood substantively rather than instrumentally or normatively in the Horn. What is primarily meant by substantive, beyond its immediate connotations, is that legitimacy should be embedded and located in the political history and contemporary context of the Horn.¹¹⁷ This will give substance to the concept of legitimacy in the Horn and allow those studying it to see that the collective motivations for action in the Horn are not only rational, they are also moral and traditional. Furthermore, it will allow the analyst to understand that people in the Horn consider bargaining to be the best behaviour to navigate politics - the continual struggle to legitimate different forms of collective action - in the Horn.¹¹⁸ Not because of an understanding of politics as a marketplace, as De Waal argues, but because bargaining is the most legitimate way to exercise power in countries which still have an operative primordial public and are dominated by the discursive tradition of Sunni Islam. Conceptualising legitimacy in this way has significant ramifications for those tasked with creating and maintaining political order in the Horn. This task requires reimagining what constitutes political order and the conventional methods currently being used in attempts to bring it about.

¹¹⁵ Guess, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 11.

¹¹⁶ Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism*, 1–5.

¹¹⁷ Fabienne Peter, 'Political Legitimacy,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/legitimacy/>.

¹¹⁸ Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*; Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 11.

I have given an explanatory critique of De Waal's concept of the political marketplace. The results from this process along with other key concepts and scholar's work were used to build my own explanation for why the dominant political behaviour in the Horn is bargaining. Although, there are many areas of disagreement between De Waal and I, the product of my critical engagement - my own explanation - undoubtedly builds on his work. In conclusion, I must acknowledge that I was initially convinced by De Waal's analysis of Horn politics and the explanation of them that his political marketplace facilitated. I include this acknowledgement as I could not have reached the conclusions I have without De Waal's work. The process of critically engaging with De Waal's assumptions and concept have led me to the key authors and alternative explanations that have formed the basis of the understanding of legitimacy and political behaviour in the Horn presented here.

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