

# An Essay on the Future of Pastoralist Conflict

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# **An Essay on The Future of Pastoralist Conflict**

**The future of pastoralism in Africa**

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# Scenarios and Conclusions

## Summary of Pastoralism and Eastern Africa's System Dynamics

Conflict is a form of disorder intrinsic to developmental processes. The impacts of violent conflict on economy and governance represent both a set of costs and specific indicators of serious problems on different levels of the system. Pastoralist conflict has evolved from a source of positive feedback reinforcing perceptions of pastoralism as a static and anti-modern mode of production to a critical source of negative (or system-changing) feedback for contemporary socioeconomic processes proceeding on different system scales. Pastoralist exclusion and the militarized responses resulting from it are a potentially destabilizing force across the region; but as a source of negative feedback pastoralist conflicts have exposed state policy biases, highlighted issues of resource management, reaffirmed the instrumental value of indigenous cultural institutions, and contributed to the increasing involvement of regional and supra-state organizations working with local civil society organization partners.

The dynamics of system change, including the importance of internal organization and feedback, is correspondingly central to our analysis of pastoralist conflict. Neo-liberal economic theory has informed the larger international policy frame for two decades. Future conflicts will reflect the transitional dynamics overtaking all but the most isolated pockets of the larger rangeland region. High rates of demographic growth, technology change, accumulation of indigenous capital, contested rights and popular support for legal-constitutional reforms, state-supported initiatives for regional economic and institutional integration, and a host of other developments all point to a region on the brink of such a transition. Such transitions are by definition an uneven process accompanied by turbulence and different forms of conflict.

Students of complex systems observe that during these chaotic episodes systems display heightened sensitivity to initial conditions, corresponding to the environmental, spatial, climatic, and socioeconomic parameters examined in the first section of this study. Our analysis highlighted precolonial initial conditions underpinning the emergence of pastoralist specialization as a mode of production generating higher returns to labor and the accumulation of surplus in the presence of environmental conditions distinguished by periodic but unpredictable spikes and shocks. This surplus was in turn reinvested in social relations buffering vulnerability and risk and in networks of exchange based on niche adaptation and production.

The role of domestic animals as the main currency of these networks underscores the status of monocultural livestock specialists, and cattle herders in particular, as the bankers of the regional economy. The centrality of pastoralists' contributions to cultural and economic syntheses highlights how initial conditions supported a coevolutionary dynamic of indigenous growth and integration.

These networks were expanding rapidly during the last decades of the precolonial period. European intervention followed the climatic crises and epidemics of the 1890s to act as a shock leading to the delinking of pastoralist systems from the regional economy. The pastoral mode shifted from the production of surplus to a livestock-based subsistence strategy in most areas. Colonial pro-agriculture policies and commercial production, in contrast, fueled a far-reaching spike in production and diversification responsible for the widening socioeconomic gap between highland communities and pastoralists.

After independence this gap manifested in policies of social exclusion that further antagonized pre-existing differentials; state conflicts in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia contributed to the militarization of rangeland communities, signaling an end to decades of pastoralist quietism and political passivity.

The influence of initial conditions in this region's transition resurfaces in a wide range of coevolutionary phenomena replicating the precolonial systems' dynamic.<sup>1</sup> Conditions across the rangelands and arid and semi-arid expanses of the greater Horn of Africa highlight some clear parallels: commercial forces have penetrated the livestock economy, pastoralists are seeking greater inclusion via diverse political and social channels, while governments are belatedly realizing the potential of the range livestock sector and acknowledging pastoralist communities as a critical source of economic and human capital.

The impact of negative feedback increases when a system is in flux. The combination of parameter changes and strong negative feedback enables the far-reaching internal reordering of a system that theorists refer to as phase transition. In contrast to the rigid order and the internally destructive quality of rangeland conflicts during the first four decades of the post-colonial era, the transitional dynamics characterizing the current situation across most areas of the Horn favor innovation and reform promoting the incorporation of minorities and marginal areas.

Conflict and other forms of pastoralist feedback during this current phase transition may contribute to capitalist socioeconomic transformation in some cases; but it can also result in economic relapse in pockets of the region, or even the collapse of national systems—the situation in Somalia exemplifying the complicated regional impacts that result.

Regional developments at this juncture provide the primary context for assessing the character and impact of future pastoralist conflicts.

We can expect climate change to combine with other demographic and economic parameters to intensify resource-based conflicts [CACC refs]; we can also anticipate that devolved decision-making, and the combination of regional early-warning systems, institutionalization of peace infrastructure, and adaptive processes on the grass-roots level will help mitigate these conflicts. The potential impact of legal and constitutional reform is equally if not more significant for regional security and rangeland economic growth.

### **Drivers and Trends**

The global processes associated with the current ascendancy of 'late capitalism' provide a second context for assessing trends in pastoralist conflicts. The role of supra-national institutions, which have taken over many of the functions of the state in humanitarian emergencies and conflict situations, is an important factor in this context. This brings us to a recent speech at a future trends conference, where an analyst working with the International Crisis Group downplayed "our ability to predict

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include administrative decentralization, the expanding scope of micro-economic organization, participatory methodologies now *de rigeur* in development practice, recognition of the adaptive qualities of indigenous technical knowledge in local settings, the potency of primary loyalties, and communities' struggle to restore ownership and control over natural resources.

trends and big picture scenarios” and stated that “much of what drives conflict today will continue to drive conflict for the next two decades. These drivers include:

1. Weak states with low capacity.
2. Tensions between authoritarian regimes and popular demands for greater political space.
3. Competition over scarce resources, exacerbated by climate change
4. Extremist religious movements seeking violent political change
5. The growing reach and power of transnational organised crime networks.

He went on to observe that, “in many cases it’s not about doing things differently, but doing better the things we already know should be done...The starting point is that policymakers need to have a sophisticated understanding of the key dynamics of the countries they are dealing with.”<sup>2</sup>

So what are the ‘key dynamics’ in the case of the Horn of Africa’s rangelands and pastoralist societies—and how do they articulate with the five ‘drivers’ listed above? The long-term system parameters highlighted in the preceding analysis generate a number of overlapping factors specific to the pastoralist domain that can be expected to heighten the prospects of conflict.

- **Higher population growth rates exacerbating declining TLU ratios, environmental degradation in many areas while increasing the numbers of unemployed males within pastoralist communities.**
- **The developmental gap, including biased policies, economic integration, and terms of trade, that inhibit capital accumulation and reinvestment while increasing social and environmental vulnerability to system ‘shocks’ like climate change and spiking food and fuel prices etc.**
- **The ‘tax’ imposed by high transaction costs, high input costs, outside ownership or investment in commercial ventures, and other factors reducing the profits realized through export of livestock and other new and old rangeland commodities.**
- **Spatial and environmental factors militating against monitoring, policing, and other state and/or components of conflict management.**
- **Exposure to open source innovations and technological inputs contributing to the adoption of new military strategies, tactics, and weaponry associated with fourth generation warfare.**
- **This category also includes piracy and other new forms of social banditry and ideologically justified participation in black market economies and globalizing criminal networks.**

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<sup>2</sup> Grono, Nick (2011). “What Are Some of the Challenges for Conflict Prevention and Resolution over the Next Two Decades?” Oral presentation, *Conference on "Global Conflict - Future Trends and Challenges towards 2030"*, at Wilton Park in London, UK.

- **Impact of securitization policies and traditional counter-insurgency methods in regions with Muslim populations.**
- **The negative impact of Asian capital in marginal regions, which is likely to be aggravated by reform-dampening political patronage at the center--especially in the case of Chinese investment.**
- **The negative influence of the state variable despite the rhetoric of regional integration, especially in regard to defense of their international borders and responses to cross-border issues.**

The picture emerging out of this analysis indicates that pre-existing patterns of conflict will continue to be problematic, while new variations based on the factors noted above will present new practical and policy-related dilemmas for decision makers. The shifting equation also includes a number of positive trends and potential mitigations that are enhancing the productivity and efficiency of the rangeland sector.

- **The role of civil society and capacity of local communities to project their voice on the national and international level.**
- **De facto and formal policies of subsidiarity promoting devolved decision-making, management of resources, and indigenous conflict management.**
- **The rising value of animal protein and other traditional products relative to other commodities.**
- **The potential of information and communications technology for closing the economic and infrastructural gap between highland and lowland regions.**
- **Economic benefits indicated by rangelands' high potential for renewable energy generation.**
- **Diversification of household economies underscoring the growing economic productivity of pastoralist women.**
- **Development policies mandating community participation, utilization of traditional technologies and knowledge, and evaluation of the environmental and social impacts of projects and interventions.**
- **The shift in public perceptions and attitudes supporting national agendas promoting minority inclusion.**
- **The continuing role of remittances from overseas diaspora, and permanent and cyclical returnees contribution to social welfare, service delivery, and building local economies.**
- **Improved resilience and capacity for adaptation to uncertainty that comes with revitalization of the pastoralist cultural endowment.**
- **Incremental implementation of conflict early warning systems and other elements of peace infrastructure under the aegis of IGAD and the African Union.**
- **Expiration of the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy and the onset of a new and more adaptive policy cycle on a global scale.**

It is difficult to anticipate how these factors will articulate across the region and how new and unpredictable phenomena (like the sudden populist Arab reawakening in

North Africa) will impact on future scenarios. From the perspective of this analytical frame, global warming is not a new phenomena and shock administered by the great Sahel famine of 1974-76...The reform process, in contrast engenders some new conflicts of its own, as demonstrated by the “the politicisation of kinship relations and group identities and the transformation of conflict motives” that is occurring as economic incorporation drives communities to stake out “parochial” claims to territory in southern Ethiopia (Hagmann and Mulugeta 2008).

Commercialization also instigates new forms of criminality and conflict as Hussein Ahmed (2009) documents for the same area’s Kenyan-Ethiopian cross-border zone. Insecurity significantly raises the costs for pastoralist producers and traders. His analysis of marketing-related costs shows that security accounted for 7% of the cattle transport costs on the Moyale-Isiolo route, 5.7 per cent on the Samburu-Isiolo route, and 7.4 per cent on the Wajir-Isiolo route. The African Centre for Economic Growth reported that Kenya lost about Ksh30 billion to rustling between 1990 and 1999.

We can expect long-standing differences among individual states, and issues such as trans-national water management within the larger Comesa region will also continue to be a critical issue on the regional level. Factoring for the most tangible drivers of future conflict at this juncture, however, inevitably leads us to focus on how the neo-classical economic regime of international capital impacts in the region.

Contrary to the promise of increased employment and income for the poor, a legion of critics have documented how the free-flow of international capital has increased the their vulnerability while reducing the provision of state services. Even where conflicts and other related forms of feedback have led to pro-pastoralist policies, flawed implementation and the poor quality of services often negate their impact. The supply and demand equation raising livestock prices reflects forces of demography and economy independent of the neo-liberal policy frame; nor is there evidence it has arrested the longitudinal trend of declining terms of trade between the small-scale agriculture and livestock sectors (Deitz 1999).

The growing domestic capital gap combine with policies promoting the commoditization of land are both increasing the economic vulnerability of pastoralists in many areas and fears of losing control over vital natural resources. Pastoralist activists note that internal conflicts had the unintended benefit of preserving their land and resources. The influence of external investment, and China in particular, may prove more difficult to fight at this point in time. Eliciting some important elements of the Chinese Model may help us better understand the implications for marginal areas raised by their rising profile across the continent.

### **The China Foreign Investment Model**

The critical mass and exponentially growing velocity of Chinese capital echo views on the progressive force of science, industrial machinery, and a captive pool of labor Winston Churchill expressed during the early phase of British colonialism. The revival of this developmental optic in Africa is compounded by the liquidity of China’s foreign currency reserves and their drive to secure the energy supplies essential to sustaining their economy at a time when the concept of peak oil is exerting a formidable pull across the world.

The rapidly growing role of China in Africa can be seen in their strong influence on internal political and inter-state power relations, unencumbered capacity to parlay patronage resources into government tenders and concessions, and alternating positive/negative aspects of their role as an alternative to Western donors and their

policies. The Chinese alternative, although a positive development in many ways, is among other things, exerting a dampening effect on Kenya's efforts to implement a new constitutional order. Although the policy of working through sovereign governments and support for repressive leaders (Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Omar Bashir in Sudan) highlights the illiberal dimension of their African interventions, the Chinese are also contributing to regional economic integration through their emphasis on infrastructure development.

It nevertheless remains to be seen if the currently negative influence on local issues and political empowerment will overshadow this contribution over the longer term.

Ideologically, the Chinese Model conflates the dominant role of the state with Confucian emphases on harmony and stability. Participation in Western institutions of global economy is conditioned by the autonomy conferred by the country's large population and historical episodes of self-imposed isolation. They joined the World Trade Organization only recently, and at this stage of their national development they appear reluctant to adopt growth-tempering conditions and standards that come with many international treaties and protocols. Wiki-leak documents reveal that in this particular region they eschew participation in multinational donor *fora* for developing shared and mutually supportive donor policies, although the same sources indicate they cooperated with the United States government during the highly sensitive CPA-mandated transition in Sudan leading to the successfully concluded January 2011 referendum for southern independence.

Access to oil and natural resources define China's primary national interests in Africa. Access is typically secured by entering into long-term contracts with national governments. Efficient extraction of industrial resources and the domestic economic growth imperative mirrors the low priority given to negative environmental impacts both at home and abroad. The rigid quality of their foreign policy focus on national sovereignty accounts for the seemingly invisible quality of local communities, and minorities in particular. Although the Chinese constitution has formal provisions guaranteeing their rights, ethnic minorities comprise a small fraction (eight per cent) of the domestic population. State responses to Tibetan advocacy and the grievances voiced by the Quirgiz of Sinkiang provides empirical support for the anti-minority hypothesis, as does China's willingness to directly intervene to protect oil production sites in Sudan and Ethiopia threatened by pastoralist militia.<sup>3</sup>

We should nevertheless point out that where Western human rights policies focus on individual rights and political freedoms, the Chinese concept of human rights is based on satisfying the need for basic food, health, and housing on the population level—and that they have successfully reduced the global population of people living beneath the poverty global by several hundred million in a relatively short space of time. Commitments to build local hospitals and schools are the most visible manifestation of their human rights policy in Africa.

These observations are qualified by the fact they correspond with a relatively early phase of Chinese global involvement. The extravagance lavished on the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing marked China's international coming-out party. The sight of the Kenya flag being raised at the start of the closing ceremony could be

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<sup>3</sup> The Ethiopian government rejected China's demand to station soldiers in the Ogaden after Somali rebels attacked an exploration site and killed several Chinese nationals, but unleash their own army who were accused of brutal reprisals on the civilian population [NYT ref]. The Chinese reportedly do maintain a military presence guarding oil facilities in the Bentiu area of Sudan.



seen as emblematic of a formerly impoverished and backward China, also ruthlessly exploited by British imperialists, making common cause with the world's poorest region. They can rightfully claim to have experienced and overcome many of the same challenges facing Africa's agrarian polities.

Then again, their stake in the Horn of Africa region could also become the platform for a new wave of red hegemony, lacking the coevolutionary dynamics that came with the Maasai precolonial expansion before them. Can the Chinese trump the Western investors who refer to sub-Saharan Africa as the graveyard of global capital, even though it will require adaptation to African conditions during an extended period of unstable phase transition?

The Chinese foreign investment model generally follows their domestic developmental strategies. Both are backed by a Han Chinese monoculture (92 per cent of the 1.2 billion population) organized within a rigid hierarchical system. The population's aging demographical profile prioritizes the need to "making hay while the sun is shining," expressed in a willingness to operate in war zones where the oil and the other natural resources their industries require are found.

The growing local level unpopularity in some African countries stems from labor issues and the numbers of free-lance Chinese expatriates who compete with local business people and even hawkers in some cases. China watchers attribute the large increase in the 2012 military budget and rapid development of a blue water navy to the dangers facing the growing population of Chinese abroad. The indication is they see attacks on oil facilities in Sudan and the Ogaden and events like recent labor riots in Zambia as harbingers of a larger future trend.

These factors and the kind of power relations that come with a US \$ 60 billion foreign currency surplus suggest it will be difficult for China's decision-makers and policy analysts, who are seeing the fruits of the most successful phase of economic growth in the country's history to appreciate the narrative of multi-ethnic competition, lateral power structures, and the lopsided qualities of African politics in place of their tree-and-branch models of African polities.<sup>4</sup>

Outsiders have always perceived African phenomena through their own prism and Chinese political culture is reflected in the large investments and long-term contracts sealed with military governments and big men leaders in Angola, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and elsewhere. The pattern evokes memories of Chinese attempts to forge links with African governments of the early post-independence period. This poses the question some 'investments' may turn out like the story of the Rwanda King, the young Bwami who exhausted a US \$ 3m Chinese grant during a party binge in Nairobi, only to be deposed by a military coup after returning home.

The more serious concern, however, is the resource extraction and large government tender focus of Asian international capital will once again create see its positive effects bypass rangeland and minority communities. This will reinforce not so 'comfortable' variations on the capitalist-precapitalist syntheses so elegantly described by Illife (1982). Pastoralists may be at the forefront of major future conflicts if this scenario comes to pass; and the ultra-ambitious LAPSSET project may prove to be the test case.

### **The LAPSSET Land Bridge**

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<sup>4</sup> Entering into active partnerships with Bretton Woods Financial Institutions and other Western bodies promoting neo-liberal economic policies is the more likely alternative.

LAPSSET is the name given to the low-tech, high-cost infrastructure project that will create a coast-to-coast system of railroads, highways, and pipelines across central Africa. The goal is the establishment of an equatorial land bridge spanning the continent's Atlantic and Indian Ocean seabords—connecting Duala in Cameroon to a place on the Kenyan coast called Magogoni. The first component is constructing the infrastructural linkages connecting Juba and Addis Ababa to the new Indian Ocean port. The network will link up with existing and proposed transport hubs on the coast and Isiolo to open up what a previously isolated expanse of the coast and northern Kenya to the rest of the world.

The project calls for an estimated US\$ 20 billion investment, and China has used its connections with the Kibaki government in Kenya to emerge as the lead financier. The lack of transparency and consultation attending the award of initial tenders to a Chinese company to begin work on the port, land allocations in the Tana River region, and other contracts for oil exploration in the hinterland have raised alarms in pastoralist and minority areas of the coast.

Designed to promote economic integration of the larger region, the project's railway master plan states that the Great Equatorial land bridge will also "facilitate cultural exchange" across the vast territory between Duala and Lamu. Spinning the project's benefits contradict realities on the ground. In addition to the range of negative environmental and social impacts, costs on the ground are likely to include the Swahili cultural legacy that developed over the past two millennia. Observers reckon that it may insure the extinction of the culture and society that gave Kenya its national language and the region its famous *lingua franca*.

At a time when principle of local participation is the rule elsewhere in Kenya and implementation of the new constitution holds out hope that historical injustices will be rectified, the issues raised by LAPSSET and the Magogoni port contradict the content and spirit of the reformist agenda. After a series of brief meetings with local stakeholders in 2009, the Minister of Transport claimed that the mainland site of the port was empty land, and declared the locals to be strong supporters of the project.

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Roola Project, a predecessor to LAPSSET overtaken by events, granted full control of contracting and hiring to the foreign investors, and included the allocation of a large tract of prime Tana Delta agricultural land. Although release of the feasibility study undertaken by a Japanese firm and discussion its contents in Parliament is supposed to precede implementation, the government proceeded to issue tenders for the construction of the first three births.<sup>5</sup>

Uncontrolled in-migration swelled the Lamu District population from 72,686 in 1999 to an estimated 85,641 in 2008: this 17.8 per cent increase does not reflect the parallel process of local out-migration. Kenya's national rate of demographic increase over the same period was 2.8 per cent. The proposed port will see the current migration of outsiders responsible for this unprecedented population growth turn into an avalanche. According to an article in *The East African Standard*, Lamu's population

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<sup>5</sup> In an article examining the processes underpinning the allocation of land under customary tenure, the author concludes contractual arrangements to protect indigenous communities cannot hold, and justifications based on win-win equations are a fiction. Annelies, Zoomers (2010). "Globalisation and the foreignisation of space: seven processes driving the current global land grab." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37, 2: 429-47.

will balloon to 1 million over the coming years—a figure confirmed in the Port feasibility study.

The process of displacement has been underway since the late 1960s. The indigenous people of Lamu—long subject to humiliation, harassment and chronic insecurity—have good reasons to fear that they will end up a poor and landless minority in their own homeland. After decades of political passivity indigenous Swahili and pastoralist neighbors now talk about violent resistance. In November 2010 several school-leavers were apprehended *en route* to Somalia, and local sources claim many other youth are crossing the border to join up with Al Shabaab.

Pastoralists inhabiting the rangelands between Lamu and Juba also fear the influx of foreign capital and infrastructural development will be the Trojan Horse dooming their identity and way of life. They rue the irony of this happening just when their traditional livestock economy is generating the monetary value and institutional respect it deserves. During a January 2011 ‘University of the Bush’ meeting in Kinna, a group of pastoralist scholars and MPs concluded these activities could spell the end of pastoralism in their areas.<sup>6</sup> The influence of foreign capital on the state’s weak and strong state structures is likely to catalyze prolonged resistance before this happens.<sup>7</sup>

If this occurs, linkages with other conflict zones in the Islamic world will insure the insurgents utilize the ‘open source’ methods associated with fourth generation warfare, the sophisticated system-based upgrade of traditional guerilla resistance that emerged and evolved in response to the marginalizing effect of globalization on ethnic communities elsewhere. This will certainly extend the conflict to urban areas, involve civilian targets and feature *systempunckt* attacks on critical nodes in electricity, water, transport, and other infrastructural systems, while funding sources based in black market and criminal networks help sustain the insurgency.<sup>8</sup>

Most all of these elements of future conflicts waged by non-state actors are already present in the case of the larger trans-national Somali community.

## **The Somali Factor**

Somalia is the most problematic internal contradiction generated by the post-1989 neo-liberal regime in Africa. The Somali population straddles one of the planet’s most robust economic juggernauts and the ragged fringe of the Islamist crescent of crisis. The fragmented polity subsumes contrasting responses to state collapse. Small ports dotting the country’s long coastline harbor the world’s most notorious pirates; Djibouti hosts the US army’s Afcon logistical hub. In the north, the Republic of Somaliland recovered from a period of clan warfare to emerge as an exemplar of indigenous

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<sup>6</sup> “Magogoni and the LAPSSET Project: Regional Integration or Cultural Extinction?” Forthcoming, *Lamu Chonjo*.

<sup>7</sup> Several years ago the Chinese financed the development of a modern port in this traditional Pakistani dhow harbor, and transport links transiting the hinterland of central Asia. Hyped to promote prosperity and regional integration, the Gwadar project spawned massive corruption, land-grabbing by state elites, and fueled a still-raging insurgency waged by Baluchi secessionists. The three Gwadar berths completed before things went awry remain unused (Robert Kaplan. *Pakistan’s Fatal Shore*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 2009).

<sup>8</sup> See, Robb, John (2007). *Brave New World: the Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons. Darker aspects of 4<sup>th</sup> generation strategies are explored by Ronfeldt, David and John Arquilla (2001), in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*. Washington DC: RAND.

governance; similar conditions in southern Somalia gave rise to a conflict system that is impacting across the larger the eastern Horn of Africa region.

Since independence Somali has functioned as the epicenter of rangeland conflicts in adjacent countries. The effects of the Shifita war in Kenya extended into the 1980s as herders raided each other to restock. Subsequent episodes of raiding in Kenya reflected periodic political disturbances in Somali, the collapse of Syad Barre's government catalyzing a resurgence in banditry and communal clashes, Somalia providing many of the weapons pastoralist communities' acquired during the 1990s. Although the Ethiopia weathered the storm of the 1978 war, the insurgency in the Ogaden continues to challenge the Ethiopian government's control and legitimacy in large areas of Region Five.

Initially the implications of Somali Islamism for security in stateless Somalia and Kenya's traditional Muslim areas were limited and localized. Somalia emerged as the incubator of Islamist militancy the mid-1990s and an Al Qaeda training base across the Kenyan border in Ras Kiamboni operated in the open before going underground and dispersing after the Kikambala attacks in 2001. The causal variables associated with the emergence of jihadi radicalism appear to be collinear with other determinants of conflict and criminality—but the ideological framework of 'terrorism' ramps up the threat and the tail-wagging-the-dog quality of responses to the fall of the World Trade Towers raised the stakes.

The Islamic Courts Union sheltered several known Al Qaeda agents, but even if it received support from external jihadi networks it was essentially a nationalist movement. Its transition from movement to a proper government would have diminished the role of Somalia as a terrorist safe haven. Instead, covert CIA support for the Warlord alliance and the US-backed Ethiopian invasion had the opposite effect. The rise of Al Shabaab after the fall of the ICU increased the threat of terrorism across the region. Experienced fighters from theatres in Afghanistan and Pakistan returned, and have been joined by new recruits from East Africa. The 2010 World Cup bombings in Kampala confirmed the alarming trend; the number of Kenyan and Ugandan members of the cell outnumbered the Somalis.

The US government is now funding soft-power initiatives like the Manderla triangle project and the construction of schools in Lamu District to balance the radicalizing feedback generated by counter-insurgency interventions in southern Somalia and their securitization policy equivalents on Kenyan coast, including the rendition of innocent civilians following the 2006 invasion that saw Faizul Mohammed and other "high value" Islamic Courts Union leaders flee towards the Kenya border.

Bradbury (2010) discusses the problems and some of the positives of American Hearts and Minds interventions in Lamu and Northeastern Province. The goals of the program—which was designed to also extend the reach of the state into areas where it has traditionally had a weak, intermittent, or predatory presence—are defined as the '4P's': preventing conflict, promoting regional security, protecting coalition interests, and prevailing against extremism. Implementation has confirmed concerns over problems of overlap, coordination, and reduplication of State Department and USAID programs more than his "militarization of American foreign policy" hypothesis.<sup>9</sup> He lack of institutional consistency is glaring: Bradbury (op. cit; 49) cites

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<sup>9</sup> Clemente, Dave (2011). *America's African Command: Soft Power Warriors*. Policy Brief (The World Today.org) London: Chatham House.

one official who observed that the project “hasn’t been around for seven years. Instead, it’s been around one year seven times.”

From the perspective of my own long-term experience in Lamu, Bradbury’s report soft-pedals the real issues in Lamu, where the issue is not what the US can provide but their ability to publicize if not help curb the abuses of the Provincial Administration. Perhaps more significantly, both Bradbury and this particular human terrain intervention fail to address the fact that much of the radicalizing impact of problems in these zones occurs in considerably more difficult to monitor areas outside them.<sup>10</sup>

The infiltration of pro-Shabaab agents proceeding both in Kenya’s northern borderlands, Nairobi, and other large urban areas reveal more about the flawed attitudes and venality of many civil servants posted to such hardship areas than the limited capacity of state institutions. Their activities suggest Salafi opportunism and criminal economic incentives are motivators equally if not more important than opposition to American foreign policy. These factors underscore the view civil society is the best arena for mediating the fierce and bloody contest for the hearts and minds of the Muslim *umma*. Perceptions of Muslim CSOs position on the root causes of terrorism, however, fuel suspicions about their motives and those who support them.

Recent articles by Jude Howell and colleagues address comparative aspects of the securitization policy problem in different countries. Howell (2006) notes how the security imperative has negatively affected the position of minorities and Muslims in general, and has constrained their contribution to the civil society movement in different national arenas. This presents a basic contradiction in respect to the ostensible objectives of securitization policies; Howell and Lind (2010) explore the constraints this dilemma imposes on CSOs in Kenya and the larger region.<sup>11</sup>

### **The ‘Mystery’ of Somali Capital**

Economic advantages conferred by Salafi networks were a critical factor in the spread of Somalia’s Islamist movement. The piracy problem, in contrast, began as isolated incidents of social banditry before morphing into a highly organized form of criminal predation complete with share-issuing syndicates. The profits generated by piracy are often invoked to explain the rise of Nairobi’s Eastleigh as a thriving commercial hub and the high profile of Somali investment in Kenyan real estate. The value and distribution of ransom payments, however, do not support this hypothesis.

The political disaster reinvigorated the socioeconomic clout of Somali segmentary lineages by creating a far-flung diaspora almost over night. Many thousands of Somalis are employed and running businesses in the diaspora, and there are many other income streams. Kenyan Somalis have distinguished themselves in high-income professions and the private sector. Somali transporters are active in a region spanning the Congo, southern Sudan, the Horn, and southern Africa. Much of the monies provided by Western and Islamist financiers for weapons and military operations are diverted into more productive activities.

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<sup>10</sup> Bradbury does note the project’s limited scale constrains its impact, and underscores the benefits in the form of learning and more positive perceptions for the military personnel involved. Also, USAID initiated the Kiunga-based *Secure Project* in 2010, which is designed to improve indigenous livelihoods by reinforcing local land and resource tenure.

<sup>11</sup> Howell. Jude (2006). “[Policy Arena] The Global War on Terror, Development and Civil Society. *Journal of International Development*, 18, 121-135.

Traditional social organization provides a vehicle for Somalis in Africa and abroad to pool their financial resources. This entrepreneurship, and traditional pastoralist resilience and risk-taking—not pirates and banditry—go a long way towards explaining the mystery of Somali capitalism.<sup>12</sup> The capital and technical skills accumulating within the Somali diaspora is potentially a powerful engine for reconstruction and development when conditions inside Somalia permit.

This is already occurring in Somaliland *albeit* on a modest level, where the revived tuna fish cannery in Las Khoreh and a new soap powder factory in Burao are producing goods for export. There are also cases where returnees have sparked new and long-dormant clan frictions.<sup>13</sup> The eventuality of a large-scale repatriation of people and investment capital is bound to generate a new set of problems and conflicts roiling the internal political *status quo*. The government of President Kahin, for example, rejected the proposal by Somalilanders abroad to rehabilitate the dormant cement plant outside Berbera.

### **International Public Goods and Local Responses**

Local security, as the matrix of issues responsible for the rise of Somali piracy demonstrate, and other related drivers of conflict are necessarily a global concern: “burdens of violent conflict...extend far beyond the societies where they take place, frustrating progress towards global public goods including disease eradication, crime prevention, and international security (Collier et al. 2008).” Cooperation addressing issues of global warming illustrates the problematic nature of the local-global equation.

The neo-liberal policy frame has unleashed powerful forces expanding the sphere of economic competition, fostering technological innovation, and enhancing more efficient production. Contrary to conventional assumptions, neo-liberal democracy can actual frustrate constitutional reform.<sup>14</sup> It has also increased inequality, weakened collective management of the environment, aggravated social problems, distorted political power relations, undermined the institutional capacity to regulate the circulation of capital, and heightened the conditions of economic insecurity that increasing numbers of people live under. A US army study notes the ramifications for conflict:

Security and stability in the 21st century have little to do with traditional power politics, military conflict between states, and issues of grand strategy. Instead, they revolve around governance, public safety, inequality, urbanization, violent non-state actors, and the disruptive consequences of globalization.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of our initial conditions model for Africa, the parameter distorting effect of the neo-liberal regime recalls the problems of the state’s economic hegemony before it. Small groups of strategically located elites typically capture a disproportionate share of surplus generated by occasional spikes, leaving most of the population to absorb

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<sup>12</sup> Goldsmith, Paul (2010). Kenyan Real Estate and the ‘Mystery’ of Somali Capital. *The East African*. April 23-29.

<sup>13</sup> Mahdi Abdille, unpublished dissertation research.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Bujra, Abdalla (2005). “Liberal Democracy and the Emergence of a Constitutionally Failed State,” in *Democratic Transition in Kenya: The Struggle from Liberal to Social Democracy*, ed. Abdalla Bujra. Nairobi: African Centre for Economic Growth and the Development Management Policy Forum: 5-42.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, Phil (2008). *From the New Middle ages to a New Dark age: the Decline of the State and U.S. Strategy*. Strategic Studies Institute.

the impact of the corresponding shocks. The equilibrium restoring dynamic illustrated by the Kuznets curve may hold for specific sectors and local economies, but it remains an unproven hypothesis on the system level, where Africa's unique pattern of environmental variation and ethno-cultural dynamics tend to compartmentalize both conflict and the spread of sectoral gains.

In the case of climate change, a number of studies have mapped out the projected impacts and the mitigations needed to buffer its local effects. But the resources and policies required to implement them remain in limbo—unless one believes market mechanisms like trading carbon credits will suffice. So how will the most vulnerable segments of the larger region's population cope?

Joakim Gundel (2006) illuminates how cultural institutions and traditional structures of Somali governance, although not without their problems, have functioned remarkably well in very difficult circumstances. Other pastoral communities have similar structures for internal governance that are critical for maintaining peace on the grass-roots level.<sup>16</sup> A recent International Crisis Group report on Somalia's underperforming transitional nation government confirms the disconnect between the social antagonisms originating in national and international political arenas and the stability prevailing across most of the landscape:

Some parts of Somalia, most notably Somaliland and Puntland in the north, are relatively stable, and as the ill-fated Union of Islamic Courts demonstrated in 2006, it is possible to rapidly reestablish peace and stability in central and south Somalia if the right conditions exist. Contrary to what is often assumed, there is little anarchy in the country (ICG 2011: i-ii).

The contrast between phenomena on higher system scales and the dynamics on the ground highlights Ruttan's (1982) argument that a society's cultural endowment is an essential if often neglected element enabling the synergetic function of its resource base, technological capacity, and economic institutions. Reinforcing the efficacy of local problem-solving processes is at least one part of the puzzle.

A networked civil society can exert a multiplier effect, but only if organizations overcome their tendency to cooperate in word but not in action. The movements based on networked individuals operating independent of formal opposition parties that are revolutionizing governance in the Arab world is a yet more virile exemplar, but the information technology requisite for it to work in the rangelands and margins of this region is not in place.

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<sup>16</sup> Gundel, Joakim (2006). *The predicament of the 'Oday: the role of traditional structures in security, rights, law and development in Somalia*. Nairobi: Danish Refugee Council/Oxfam Novib.