Education and Conflict Review

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Education, Peace and Development in Somali Society

Edited by
Tejendra Pherali and
Alexandra Lewis

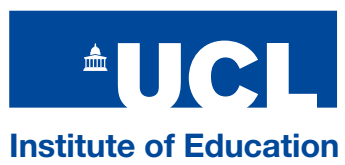# Education and Conflict Review

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2017

Education and Conflict Review focuses on debates about broad issues relating to education, conflict and international development and aims to provide succinct analyses of social, political, economic and security dimensions in conflict-affected and humanitarian situations. It provides a forum for knowledge exchange to build synergies between academics, practitioners and graduate students who are researching and working in these environments.

The Editors

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Editors' Foreword

Education and conflict is emerging as a serious academic area of research, domain of aid policy and theoretical pillar for educational practice in refugee contexts. From an educational perspective, there is a growing understanding that conflict is no longer simply a perpetrator of of violence against education, it also provides opportunities for introducing transformative educational policies and initiate broader political and societal change. On the contrary, education is also perceived as a political or ideological tool that can potentially fuel extremism, reproduce inequalities and further destabilize conflict-affected societies. In this context, we argue that the significance of continuous dialogue between researchers, policy makers and educational practitioners could not be overrated. Theorists also point to the importance of education in liberating individuals for positive change in their own lives, and to the role that education can play in maximizing economic and social outputs by investing in human capital. These ideas are captured in the iconic works of Amartya Sen, Jacob Mincer, and others, while some postcolonial authors such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Paulo Friere have also highlighted the immense potential of education in a broad sense to mobilise individuals to fight against oppression, subjugation and inequality. However, most of these authors have also highlighted that a poorly designed educational strategy, or one designed with the purpose of political control, could have the opposite effect; stagnating economies, slowing the pace of development, increasing inequalities, and reproducing socio-political hierarchies and eventually, risking peace and security. Nowhere is this more problematic than in conflict-affected societies, where existing societal divisions have produced physical violence, on a sufficient scale to disrupt schooling and damage educational infrastructure, and where the educational sector itself is likely complicit in generating the conditions necessary for that violence.

The Education and Conflict Review is a new knowledge-sharing platform which promotes dialogue between researchers, practitioners and policy makers through reflection upon the interconnections between education, peace and violence. Our first issue focuses on peace, conflict and education in Somali society, showcasing some of the on-going research that looks at both the Horn of Africa and the Somali diaspora internationally. Our authors reflect not only on their own work, but also upon the barriers and opportunities for effective research on this case study. This inaugural issue emerges after a collective workshop on Peacebuilding and Education in Somali Society, held at the UCL Institute of Education in London on May 20th 2016.

Since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, the territory has become divided into three distinct regions: Somaliland, South Central Zone and Puntland, as well as new and emerging self-administered territories. The northern territory of Somaliland is an independent quasi-state that no longer recognises its membership in the Somali union, but its independence is not recognised by the international community. This territory is largely peaceful, though that peace is arguably a fragile one. South Central is home to the Somali capital of Mogadishu and has been the most heavily affected by ongoing violence. Puntland, meanwhile, is a stabilising territory that experiences very high rates of poverty, and has a fluid allegiance to the central authority of the Somali Federal Government. Owing to its protracted nature, the Somali conflict has had a significant impact on infrastructure and state capacity. It has also resulted in several waves of displacement.

The authors in this issue deal with the broad themes relating to peace and development in the Somali region. In our first article, Michael Walls reflects broadly upon democracy in Somaliland and Somalia, and the influence that the local culture, clan structures and hybrid systems of governance exert upon statehood in the region. Our second contribution, offered by Tejendra Pherali and Alexandra Lewis, examines the role that universities can play internationally to support the higher education sector in Somaliland, which is now ready to absorb international assistance. Idil Osman, Laura Hammond and Nimo-ilhan Ali then reflect individually upon the issue of migration, upon the factors that are contributing to a continuing drive for Somali youth to leave their homes for Europe, and upon the contributions that the Somali diaspora at large can make to Somali development. Finally, Nasir M Ali looks at the dual face of international intervention in the Somali conflict, warning of the opportunities and the dangers associated with international assistance.

Tejendra Pherali and Alexandra Lewis
Editors, Education and Conflict Review

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1   Democracy in Somaliland

Michael Walls

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The critical debates connecting democracy, governance and peace-building revolve around a cyclically shifting set of questions. If we locate those questions in the context of 'development' and state formation, they relate to the different forms of democracy, the options available for balancing leadership and clear decision-making against wider participation and the related but different dilemmas around stability, legitimacy and representation within nation-states.

To put that more plainly, much discussion centres on the relative merits of developmental state models, which tend to involve a strong leadership, directing 'development' at the cost of human rights and popular participation. These are contrasted against highly participatory systems that tend to offer great 'legitimacy' through freedom of speech and association on the one hand, but which also have a tendency to short- and sometimes long-term instability on the other. That's a gross over-simplification, of course, complicated for one thing by the fact that the equation tends to change over time - as institutions solidify. It is often possible to shift from a system of stronger leadership to one of greater participation.

The time element makes these trade-offs particularly pertinent in the world of 'development', where nascent states face the immediate issues of security and stability, without which greater participation may prove impossible. There is, of course, nothing 'natural' about the nation-state in which stable and participatory processes must, perforce, be delivered. Meanwhile, the donors who frequently play such a strong role in supporting the process often forget that, in their own countries, the institutions of state were consolidated over extended periods involving battles as bitter and protracted as any that they are now witnessing in the countries in which they find themselves working.

> Customary channels for participation are closed in favour of representative systems that rely on election rather than discourse, and where many feel keenly the loss of power as politicians move from their constituent bases to capital cities to conduct their politics, in many cases failing to return regularly, or sometimes at all, to the constituents whom they are meant to represent.

The Somali experience offers particularly pertinent lessons on **all of these** points. Somali society is traditionally highly egalitarian (at least for men from dominant clans), boasting discursive traditions that offer adult males remarkable input into how their communities are governed. While donors call for 'democratisation', many Somalis see the shift to representative democracy as a process of democratic diminishment. Customary channels for participation are closed in favour of representative systems that rely on election rather than discourse, and where many feel keenly the loss of power as politicians move from their constituent bases to capital cities to conduct their politics, in many cases failing to return regularly, or sometimes at all, to the constituents whom they are meant to represent.[1]

Of course, these patterns have led to long-term state failure in what is now meant to be federal Somalia. However, it is in the still-internationally unrecognised northern state of Somaliland where that shift to representative, electoral politics has gone the furthest. Often held up as a corrective to the narrative of state failure in the south, Somaliland's progress has indeed been remarkable. Since their declaration of independent sovereignty in 1991, Somaliland has held a large number of peace meetings and conferences, following a cyclical pattern designed to address local sub-clan grievances first, before progressing to more forward-looking issues of governance, and eventually to state building itself. Those conferences continue to the present day, and offer a formal, customary structure for the continuation of the discursive traditions that have existed for centuries. They have also made possible a series of elections, starting with a constitutional referendum in 2001, and continuing since then to elect the president and local government (twice each), and, in 2005, the lower house of parliament.

In navigating a way along that path, Somaliland have had to address a number of challenges related to the anything-but theoretical concerns outlined above. Elections have frequently been delayed as compromises have been hammered out between clan groups, employing discursive methods to find common ground. That combination of discourse and election has led some to describe the Somaliland state as 'hybrid' (Boege et al. 2008; Walls & Kibble 2010). While that description is valid in many respects, it is also important to recognise just how messy that process is. For outsiders, it has often appeared frustratingly slow, corrupt and crisis-ridden (Crisis Group 2009). Many of the problems that Somaliland faces are deeply-felt and completely legitimate. The decision at one of the big clan conferences in 1993 to go with a strong presidential system with a parliament offering only moderate checks on executive power was hard-argued at the time and continues to generate considerable debate. It relates clearly to the trade-off, referenced above, between leadership and participation.

1   For more on these processes, see Walls, M., 2014, *A Somali Nation-State: History, culture and Somaliland's political transition* (2nd Edition), (Pisa: Ponte Invisibile/redsea-online)

At the same time, the greater troubles experienced in Somalia to the south, where everything - crisis, international involvement, clan division, conflict - seem to exist on a grander and therefore more intractable scale, serve as a potent reminder of the value of Somaliland's stability. That has led to an often grudging, though so far durable, acceptance of the compromises made to date.

The future has always looked uncertain - that's more or less a truism given the dynamic nature of evolving institutions and the debates that underpin that evolution. Somaliland is currently just about finished with a process of registering voters. It's only the second time voters have been systematically registered, with the last giving rise to the 2009 crisis referred to above. Voter registration is concluding against a backdrop in which discussions between the Somaliland government and the Dhulbahante sub-clans, who traditionally inhabit the eastern region of Sool, seem to be making genuine progress. Some prominent Dhulbahante elders were active participants in the initial meetings that led to the consolidation of an autonomous Somaliland state in the early 1990s. However, since then, the Dhulbahante have drifted away from Somaliland, marginalised by the internecine politics of the dominant Isaaq clans, of which they were not a part. Undecided as to whether their best prospects lay with Puntland, further to the east, with the as-yet fragile federal

> …the greater troubles experienced in Somalia to the south, where everything – crisis, international involvement, clan division, conflict – seem to exist on a grander and therefore more intractable scale, serve as a potent reminder of the value of Somaliland's stability.

government in the south, or with Somaliland, Dhulbahante groups formed different alliances, including the Khaatumo federal state who mounted an armed resistance against both immediate neighbours, Somaliland and Puntland.

The current talks are between Khaatumo and Somaliland and, if they succeed, will bring Khaatumo into the Somaliland government. Somaliland would be able to claim broad acceptance within the old British colonial borders, and Khaatumo will have direct input into local politics. Pragmatically, it would also boost the governing party's chances of success in presidential elections due to take place in March 2017.

It is rightly impossible to separate the day to day detail from the more conceptual concerns outlined at the start of this article. The struggles and debates touched on so briefly here are illustrative of precisely those changing trade-offs between stability and participation; between representative decision-making and its distant discursive cousin. Future research must continue to seek a better understanding of the societal processes that lie behind the decisions made. The transition so far has tended to consolidate the political power of customarily dominant groups - namely the main clans and men. Women and minority clans consequently face significant practical hurdles that, although often discussed, remain relatively misunderstood. More research in those areas could contribute significantly to the ability to support meaningful progress in redressing the imbalance.

Critically and often inconveniently, better understanding must be rooted in a deep contextual understanding of the myriad variables that affect the process. Somaliland offers a richly rewarding case for combining contextual and theoretical perspectives. As does Somalia in its various parts. However, while each case must be considered in the light of its neighbours, each is also distinct.

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Berbera, Somaliland: The voter registration process

Dr Michael Walls is a Senior Lecturer at UCL's Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) and, and for the past thirteen years, his research has focused on the political economy of the Somali Horn of Africa, including the evolving political settlement in Somaliland. He has also been a part of the coordination team for international election observations to Somaliland elections in 2005, 2010 and 2012 as well as the 2016/17 Voter Registration process, and is currently PI for the ESRC-funded research project 'Political Settlement in Somaliland: a gendered perspective'.

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2. Higher education partnerships for peace and development

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In recent years, education has been recognised as a contentious subject in fragile contexts (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). While education can become a victim of war, it can also play a complicit role in the production of violent conflict by exacerbating socioeconomic divisions, denying educational access to disadvantaged social groups and promoting manipulative historical narratives. Furthermore, it can be a powerful tool for political indoctrination and extremism. However, on the positive side, it can act as a catalyst for peacebuilding by addressing the drivers of conflict. For example, education can promote inclusive democracy by empowering disenfranchised groups, ethnic minorities and women and reduce inequalities by providing relevant education and employment to marginalised youth.

> International partnerships in higher education can be instrumental in facilitating knowledge exchanges, developing research ideas and promoting innovations in addressing economic, political and social challenges in the era of globalisation.

While peace is crucial for quality education, conflict sensitive education can be a driver for social transformation and sustainable peace. In protracted crises such as in Somalia, where almost 90 percent of all schools were destroyed during the civil war and merely 42 percent of primary school-aged Somali children are enrolled in school, rebuilding society through educational development is crucial. Peace and development can only be realised by strengthening the higher education sector at the policy, institutional and community level and by integrating peacebuilding and conflict transformation into educational policies and practices. This requires developing the capacity of Somali institutions to promote peace and conflict transformation practices. This need is pertinent in the context of Somaliland (which enjoys political stability), as well as in Puntland and in South Central Somalia, which continues to suffer from violence and instability.

International partnerships in higher education can be instrumental in facilitating knowledge exchanges, developing research ideas and promoting innovations in addressing economic, political and social challenges in the era of globalization. In societies that have suffered from the debilitating impact of armed conflict, rupturing of social fabrics and ethnic or clan-based tensions that maintain state fragility, higher education can produce knowledge and skills not only to revive economic development and physical rebuilding but also in reinstating collapsed governance and democratic polity. Increased access to higher education in post-war context can reduce the likelihood of the restart of a civil war (Ishiyama and Breuning, 2012). Higher education is perceived to be a stabilizing or securitizing factor by providing a positive alternative to youth, and therefore it contributes to peacebuilding through transformative disciplines such as peace and conflict studies and addressing horizontal inequalities (Milton and Barakat, 2016). In the Somali region, higher education can play a significant role in promoting regional dialogue for political stability, statebuilding and economic and social development through academic partnerships between universities in the Horn of Africa.

North-South partnerships in higher education can also play a supportive role in facilitating academic collaboration, improving curriculum development, and capacity building in research and teaching. In order to enhance such capacity building, UCL Institute of Education is collaborating with the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Hargeisa to develop a new inter-disciplinary course on Education, conflict and peacebuilding. The course has a specific focus on understanding the role of education in the production and prevention of socio-political tensions and in the development of skills for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Somali region. It aims to provide a critical understanding of the interactions between education and conflict in Somali society and to promote conflict sensitive approaches to learning.

We employed a research-based participatory approach to develop the course, involving academics, graduate students, and NGO practitioners who support education and peace programmes in Somaliland. We drew upon a global overview of education and conflict and contextualized these through some specific issues relating to the Somali region. A review of current academic programmes in the region also shows that there is lack of focus on educational debates in peace and conflict studies. We hope that our new course will fill this gap in the current academic provision in the Horn of Africa by promoting a multidisciplinary approach to teaching conflict resolution and peacebuilding, in which higher education

> A hybrid political system of local traditions and modern forms of democracy... contributed to peace and stability in Somaliland. A bottom-up approach to understanding historical narratives, local participation and incorporating indigenous perspectives and cultural values is key to the peace education curriculum. In this process, civic participation in developing the core principles of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is significant.
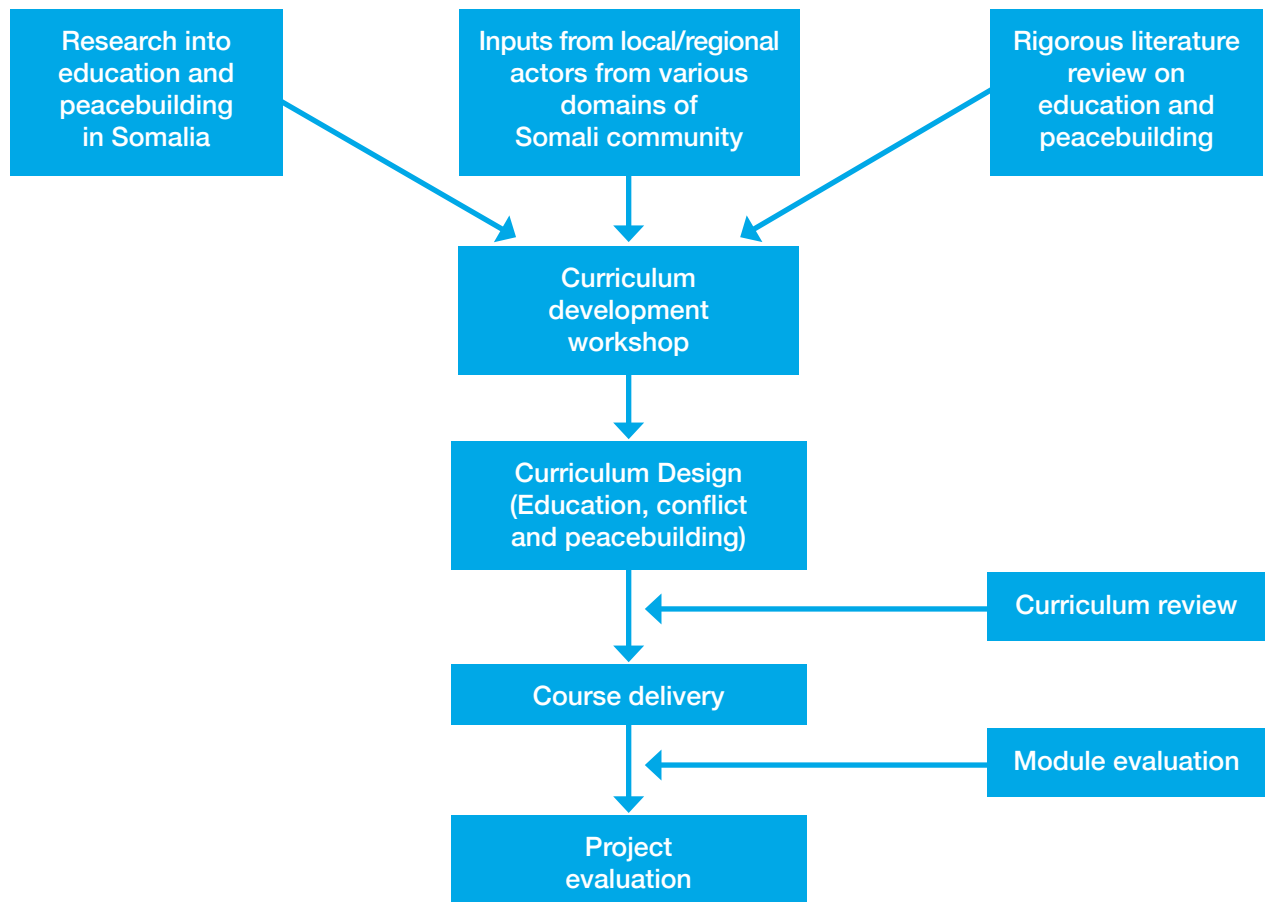
Figure 1 Methodology: curriculum conceptualisation

plays a significant role. Figure 1 shows the methodological process that we used to conceptualise the curriculum project.

A hybrid political system of local traditions and modern forms of democracy is argued to have contributed to peace and stability in Somaliland (the self-administering quasi-state located in the North of the region) in the last twenty-five years. A bottom-up approach to understanding historical narratives, local participation and incorporating indigenous perspectives and cultural values is key to the peace education curriculum. In this process, civic participation in developing the core principles of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is significant. Hence, through this course, we endeavor to build a pracademic (practice and academic) partnership through which students will engage in practicums to apply the theoretical knowledge that they have gained from the course and reflect on practical learning.

Working across different cultures is often challenging for several reasons. Conflict-affected and politically contested societies add another layer of difficulty in terms of managing educational partnerships, curriculum development and pedagogical approaches. Firstly, there are genuine concerns about North-South partnerships with regards to the potential domination of Western educational values in the process of capacity building. International academics are likely to experience cautiously friendly attitudes from partners as

there are a number of cultural disconnections, skepticism and different understandings of research. To mitigate this, it would require a commitment for a long-term engagement and collaboration from all partners. Secondly, academics from the West might subconsciously expect outcomes beyond the capacity of partner organisations in low income contexts. This may be reflected in terms of meeting deadlines, quality of outputs and the medium and levels of communication between partners during the project. Thirdly, international development organisations are likely to create a parallel segment of economically exclusive job market, which often drains out skilled and qualified workforce from public universities to the INGO sector. This situation makes public sector jobs including academic positions that can only afford to pay the national wages unattractive to most qualified people. Fourthly, there are always challenges around technologies, travel visas and security situations that affect project activities. For example, it is usually difficult to secure European or US visas for academics from low income or conflict-affected countries and the Western academics may be barred from or charged high insurance premiums for trips to conflict-affected regions. Finally, the political views of the partners and the way international academics express their ideas in their deliberations is likely to determine intimacy in and productivity of the partnership. Honesty and transparency on both sides of the debate are important in building trust, but so is diplomacy.

Somali society is beginning to serve the first pillar of higher education, which relates to teaching and learning. The other pillars, such as research and development, knowledge dissemination, and civic engagement, are significantly underdeveloped. Good quality international collaborations can be instrumental in reforming all of these domains. Collaborative curriculum development, teaching exchange and joint research programmes can enhance the quality of higher education, which can produce necessary human capital for the Somali economy. Investment in higher education would reduce Tahriib – the pressures to seek opportunities abroad (Ali, 2016) – by creating opportunities for youth at home. Yet more importantly, it can support long-term peacebuilding by strengthening state institutions, promoting social dialogue and laying foundations for participatory democracy.

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Participants at curriculum development workshop: University of Hargeisa

3. Somali diaspora and homeland relations

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Introduction

Somalia is often referred to as the longest-running humanitarian catastrophe in the world. The country has been plagued by armed violence, civil strife and insurgencies, piracy, droughts, and famines. With the absence of an effective central government, and with an overarching disorder, the society has adopted certain coping mechanisms, and established indigenous order. The Somali diaspora is often credited as one of the factors that sustain and reinforce these coping mechanisms. Since the start of the civil war in 1991, Somalis fled from their country to seek safety and can today be found in all continents (Horst, 2008). The result is an estimated 1–1.5 million strong Somali diaspora (Sheikh and Healy, 2009). The very size of this diaspora demonstrates

> In an age of globalisation, characterised by accessible transportation and rapid communication, the Somali diaspora have remained intimately connected with their homeland.

that the Somali society as a whole has become a globalized one. Here in the UK they form a considerable migrant group with an estimated population of more than 380,000. This article provides a brief introduction to the Somali diaspora and their relations with their homeland. It illustrates their transnational practices and the role of communications in their engagement with Somalia. The article concludes with recommendations for further studies on the complex relations between diasporas and their homelands and the role(s) of communication in enabling multifaceted levels of homeland engagement.

As a colonial ruler, the UK has historically been closely connected to Somalia and, because of this colonial linkage, there has been a long tradition of Somalis settling in the country. The Somali migration to the UK can be divided into 3 distinct groups: Somalis who arrived as seamen and steel workers during the colonial period, those that fled the 1991 civil war, and Somali-Europeans moving to the UK seeking social tolerance and better economic opportunities. However, Somalis have not permanently left their country of origin to start a new life elsewhere. In an age of globalisation, characterised by accessible transportation and rapid communication, the Somali diaspora have remained intimately connected with their homeland. Diasporas engage in various transnational practices, such as remittances, relief, investment in development projects or for-profit ventures, and political activism. Diasporas can also be a source for local knowledge and understanding, foreign direct investment, market development, technology transfer, philanthropy,

tourism, political contributions, transfer of experiences on democratic governance and general influence in the home country (Newland and Patrick, 2004). Additionally, diasporas have the advantage of being sometimes perceived and interpreted as "one of our own" within societies in their country of origin, and as such can get an insider perspective on development priorities, bypassing challenging or stagnant institutions and barriers. This can give diasporas advantages over development NGOs.

Development, Humanitarianism and the Somali Diaspor

It is commonly acknowledged that the most successful migrant businesses arise in the crevices created by transnationalism. For example, in shipping and cargo companies, import and export firms, labour contractors and money transfer houses known as 'hawilad' (Basch et al., 1994: 55), which have greatly invested in communications services. The creations of these facilities significantly enhance the memories of and connections maintained with the homeland by the Somali diaspora.

There is also evidence that Somali diaspora families who have the necessary means often return to Somalia. Estimates of summer visitors to Somaliland from the UK, for instance, are as high as 10,000 per year, creating a seasonal economy that injects significant amounts of money into the local service industry. The Somaliland diaspora has always been an active element in the equation of state building and the restructuring of the political system of Somaliland (Hammond and Vaughan-Lee, 2012).

Somali diasporic media

The media facilitates much of this homeland engagement. The Somali media based in the diaspora has become pivotal and dominates the Somali media landscape. This is predominantly due to it costing very little to set up, having access to credit cards and the technical infrastructure in the West that is at the diaspora's disposal as well as having a stable and secure environment surrounding them. The majority of the Somali media is owned by diaspora based individuals or they are the majority stakeholders and investors (Osman, 2015).

The Somali diaspora has utilised the improvements in communication technology as the Internet in particular 'presented an opportunity for them to communicate, regroup, share views, help their groups at home and organise activities' (Issa-Salwe, 2011: 54). Much of the engagement with development and humanitarianism is enabled by media platforms. Community members often refer to how they saw a particular project or campaign on Somali TV stations or

websites and consequently participated in them. But as these products of transnational media dissolve distance and suspend time, they 'create new and unpredictable forms of connection, identification and cultural affinity' (Gillespie, 1995: 7). The Internet is also an opportunity to promote political identity.

> The opportunities presented by globalisation in fact open up greater possibilities for territorially bounded connections, facilitated by online platforms, where people who are attached to particular homeland territories engage with one another politically in ways that can translate to oine activities.

The Somali websites that have sprung up in various parts of the world depict a deeply divided society, one that is at the same time both integrated and fragmented. Diasporic media plays a performative role in facilitating diaspora engagement with conflict dynamics by providing spaces to promote political, religious and/or clan-centred dialogue, encouraging a culture of non-recognition towards minorities and marginalised groups. This results in the reproduction of an us-vs-them environment that can lead to harmful mobilisation (Osman, 2015). In sum, diasporic media in addition to facilitating platforms for development and humanitarian engagement, also transnationalises and 're-creates' the conflict amongst diaspora communities who then engage with the conflict at home, producing a cyclical re-creation of conflict.

Conclusion

What we have is therefore a complex reality when it comes to Somali diaspora engagement with the homeland. We have diasporas that engage as a) agents of peace and development, b) 'spoilers' who negatively affect conflict and peace dynamics and c) actors supporting both peace and violence simultaneously.

A key problematic variable here is that the clan animosity that escalated from the war has remained a 'prosthetic memory' (Landsberg, 2014) and continues to brew amongst the Somali diaspora both in action and in memory.

Diaspora communities have seen their political weight grow in the 21st century (Demmers, 2002) and this is partially related to the changing patterns of conflict and the increasing flexibility and speed of technology and transportation, global human mobility and connections. However, the argument often brought forth by scholars of globalisation that groups are much less territorially bounded needs further scrutiny. The opportunities presented by globalisation in fact open up greater possibilities for territorially bounded connections, facilitated by online platforms, where people who are attached to particular homeland territories engage with one another politically in ways that can translate to offline activities. In the Somali case, there is a deeply entrenched imagined connection to the homeland territories that is reinforced and fortified by diasporic media.

Current academic discourse regarding diasporic media often centres on its capabilities to help immigrants preserve their identities and maintain ties with their homeland. It is considered to be responding to the specific needs and conditions of immigrant communities (Bailey et al., 2007), as well as allowing a transnational bond to be created with countries of origin and therefore to sustain ethnic, national and religious identities and cultures (Aksoy and Robins, 2003:93). While these notions hold much truth, and the Somali case reaffirms them, diasporic media enables diaspora communities to engage in a greater capacity than what has thus far been acknowledged. It is this complexity that needs to be further unpacked and scrutinised if we are to gain a broader and more comprehensive understanding of diaspora engagement and find ways to consolidate constructive diasporic efforts.

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4. Looking for the real refugee crisis: Researching Somali displacement near and far

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The arrival of large numbers of refugees to Europe in 2015 and 2016 has captured public attention and caused government policy and actions to be focused on trying to find solutions to this so-called 'crisis.' Yet as tragic as the experience of those who arrive in Europe is, their experiences can best be understood by tracing their paths back to their countries and regions of origin. By considering the conditions that give rise to mass displacement and movement, one can better appreciate the conditions that push people away from their homes and towards whichever destinations they travel towards: be those in a neighbouring country or another continent.

> Displacement has both emanated from, and caused further, disruption of productive economic activities, whether pastoral, agricultural or in trade terms.

I have been working on migration within and out of the Horn of Africa for 25 years. During that time, Somalia has been one of the major source countries for migration and displacement, both within the region and further afield. It is estimated that more than 1 million Somalis live within the Horn as refugees. Another 1.1 million are displaced within the country. And, by another very low estimate, an additional million Somalis (the number may be closer to 2 million) are living outside their region of origin, with large populations in North America, Europe, Southern Africa, and the Middle East.

Displacement in and from Somalia has had a dramatic effect on all aspects of life there. It has resulted in shifting clan territories, and this is one of the factors that perpetuates the cycle of violence in the country. It also influences the process of state formation, first through depleting the country of educated and skilled professionals and more recently through welcoming many of them back to take up jobs that place much of the responsibility for putting the country back together again on their shoulders. Displacement has also altered the economy of the country in several important ways: assistance for refugees and IDPs has been a major economic resource ever since the late 1970s when Somalia hosted refugees from its war with Ethiopia. This political economy of aid – including its incorporation into a system of corruption that provides incentives to some to resist peace

and the construction of an effective state – has continued to be determinative. Displacement has both emanated from, and caused further, disruption of productive economic activities, whether pastoral, agricultural or in trade terms. From another angle, some forms of displacement have provided an essential and positive lifeline, through the provision of regular remittances. Such remittances are used by poor households to pay food, health care, and educational expenses (FAO 2013).

In addition to displacement as both cause and effect of instability in Somalia, other factors that contribute to people on the move include drought, economic depression, human rights abuses, and violence associated with the ongoing conflict between state and non-state actors, in particular the al Shabaab rebels and the Somali Federal Government, backed by the African Union peacekeeping force known as AMISOM.

So complex are the different causes that compel people to move, that it is difficult if not impossible to differentiate forced migrants from economic migrants. Even those who start their journeys as economic migrants, in search of job and educational opportunities, are often subject to such horrific conditions while en-route that they effectively become forced migrants. Policies that seek to control or manage migration can either provide protection and safety to people, or they can force people to stay in unsafe situations or to enter into exploitative smuggling or trafficking networks in order to find safe passage.

At SOAS, we are working on two research projects to examine the causes and dynamics of displacement , irregular migration and conflict in Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

> So complex are the different causes that compel people to move, that it is difficult if not impossible to differentiate forced migrants from economic migrants.

The EU-funded Research and Evidence Facility for the Horn of Africa is a €4 million, 2.5 year project aimed at understanding the drivers of displacement, conflict and vulnerability in the Horn of Africa. We are leading a

consortium with partners at the University of Oxford's International Migration Institute and Nairobi-based Sahan Research to better understand the dynamics of conflict and migration and to directly inform EU support for areas affected by conflict and irregular migration. A key set of questions that we are considering are: for whom and under what conditions do changes in development conditions – whether access to employment, social services, or improvements in livelihood stability – lead to changes in decisions made about whether or not to move. We are also interested in understanding how changes in migration management strategies impact people's thinking about potential onward movement.

Another project, called Migrants on the Margins, which we are working on with the Universities of Sussex and Durham and with four international partners, with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council, DFID the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers, investigates the phenomenon of rural to urban migration in the four cities of Hargeisa (Somaliland), Harare (Zimbabwe), Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Dhaka (Bangladesh). We are interested in why people move into cities looking for a better life, only to find that they become 'trapped' in a cycle of destitution that leaves them in many cases worse off than they were when they started. We are also interested in finding out the extent to which migration to cities may be seen as a first step towards further onward migration to Europe or other destinations.Research on the drivers, dynamics and consequences of displacement in Somali areas helps us to better understand a statement such as that of the Somali-Kenyan poet Warsan Shire, who in her seminal poem 'Home' wrote: You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land.' The answers to what compels Somalis to take such risks can best be found by tracing their journeys back to their country of origin – it is here that the 'real refugee crisis' is most acutely felt and seen. Research on these questions can help us to better understand and respond to problems of displacement in our world today, whether in Europe or closer to their source.

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5. Somalia stability: Hostage to local, regional and distant actors

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Africa has been in a state of crisis since its post-colonial independence, with instability being primarily linked to external influences that have social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. The African states, for instance, Nigeria, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, and most recently Mali, have suffered extreme consequences from unviable forms of political rule, which criminalized both the state and the economy and produced ethnic contention and deeply divided societies. The external actors are not the only architects of Africa's lingering conflicts and state failures: local actors in the post-colonial age are also partially responsible for the political and economic troubles, and for frequent instances of state collapse (Harden, 1991; Gassama, 2008; Mazrui, 2008; Ali, 2014). Somalia, for example, became a victim of internal and external actors; but the new actors that have emerged after the collapse of Somali state are the by-product of gradually deteriorating political situation since 1991. From the rubble and ruins of the state, self-appointed warlords who struggled to rule the country from the barrels of guns, business groups and, later, Islamists aspired to power with the influence of external actors, both from the region and beyond (Bulhan, 2013), exacerbating the political instability and economic shortcomings that impacted on the state and on the lives of the ordinary Somali citizens.

> Somalia's problem of security and stability is multidimensional involving conflicting political and economic interests. There are competing interest groups, eager to reshape the Somali state.

Indeed, Somalia's problem of security and stability is multidimensional involving conflicting political and economic interests. There are competing interest groups, eager to reshape the Somali state. The local actors are mainly there to benefit from the absence of state institutions and thus fear to see centralized and strong institutions that could challenge their freedom: for instance, many business people were engaged in business throughout the state collapse period and never obeyed the applicable tariffs or paid taxes, a situation that would change with greater stability. Thus, they fear the return of state institutions that would regulate the market and state economy. In addition, the media enjoy considerable freedom as they are often able to avoid censorship or restriction by any national institutional framework, though facing other socio-political pressures, including threats of violence. Other actors that have benefited from the situation include local non-governmental organisations, who are now frequently perceived by the Somali people, partly due to their politicised programmes, as the agents of national and international power centres that finance them. For instance, there are a number of research institutes based in the Somali capital and elsewhere in the region that engage in research activities, which feed the policies and programme formulation of external actors.

On the other hand, the Somali state became a victim of multiple external interventions both in the region and from beyond. Indeed, the Somali state became a battleground of the Americans and their allies who are still fighting 'terrorists' linked with both Somali and non-Somali radical groups such as Al-Qaeda. This move never helped the ordinary Somalis, but had and still has an adverse impact on their livelihoods. For instance, the Americans target Somalia's money transfer companies, which channel small amounts of money to the ordinary Somalis to cover and tackle their worsening living conditions. They have also launched drone attacks against suspects linked to the terror networks as the Americans claim, but kill innocent civilians in the southern Somali regions.

In the regional context, neighboring states (particularly Ethiopia and Kenya) have consistently engaged in Somalia's conflict as well since the state collapse in 1991. This engagement evolved from one form and objective to another throughout the period in which state institutions have been absent. It can be argued that Somalia's neighbours are pursuing their own national interests and that their ground troops are in Somalia for one reason or another, engaging in the Somali conflict, mainly to protect their national security and prevent the penetration of radical groups into their territories.

Though IGAD Members always had conflicting interests since its establishment in 1986, the internal division of Somalia's politicians as well as the disintegration of the country into self-governing administrations made Somalia's hope to restore peace and order uncertain (Mulugeta, 2009). But, the regional states are preserving their national strategies. It is unreasonable to expect those countries to solve Somalia's problems under current conditions, but indeed, they do offer a general anesthesia to the Somalis, framing state institutions that are neither applicable to the Somali context nor convincing for Somali citizens at large.

These externally-imposed institutions and leaders will never serve the interest of the Somalis, instead represent the will and interest of foreign actors. The best example is the

adoption of the federal system as a governance and state structure, which cannot integrate the Somalis into one polity, but even disintegrates the existing unity and coexistence among the citizens as Somalia's most recent experiences illustrate.

> **It is grassroots engagement that can produce sustainable and lasting stability.**

Without blaming the regional and distant actors who are after their own national interests, the Somalia solution remains in the hands of the Somalis through traditional knowledge and conflict resolution mechanisms that have belonged to the Somalis. Examples of these methods include Somaliland and Puntland, who resolved and settled their differences without the help of the international community. To achieve peace and stability, Somalisation of the conflict is necessary and remains the most significant factor that needs to be taken into account, which will define their fate and generate locally-designed durable institutions. Indeed, peacemaking and state restoration must involve the efforts of all sectors of society to address the underlying causes of violence and create the space and environment in which local people interact with and further understand each other. It is grassroots engagement that can produce sustainable and lasting stability. Thus, the support of the international community in addressing those underlying factors is also crucial but empowering, allowing and facilitating local peacebuilding and conflict resolution mechanisms is the only way forward.

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6. Going on Tahriib: Young Somalis and the risky journey to Europe

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In Somaliland and Puntland 'going on tahriib' has become a trend within the youth population. Tahriib is an Arabic word that has gained huge prominence in the Somali circles. In the contemporary Somali lexicon tahriib has been adapted to refer to a specific form of emigration – mostly to Europe via the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean.

> Tahriib is an Arabic word that has gained huge prominence in the Somali circles. In the contemporary Somali lexicon tahriib has been adapted to refer to a specic form of emigration – mostly to Europe via the Sahara desert and the Mediterranean.

Although accurate statistics are rare, perceptions on the ground suggest that a large number of young Somali men and to a lesser extent, women, some as young as fourteen, embark on tahriib using one predominant route via Ethiopia, Sudan, Libya and across the Mediterranean into Europe. This route is known as the Central Mediterranean Route and is mainly used by people from the Horn of Africa (including Eritreans). This journey is fraught with dangers and incidents of young Somalis perishing in the desert and in the Mediterranean are pervasive and widely acknowledged locally.

In both Somaliland and Puntland, incidents of young people going on tahriib has caused huge community uproar and efforts to halt the trend carried out by households, civil societies, religious and government institutions, are common. This uproar raises a number of puzzling questions. First, given that the two Somali regions have experienced numerous waves of international migration in the past, why is tahriib now causing such a commotion? Second, since a large part of the Somali population in the Horn of Africa depends on remittances for their livelihoods, and since the diaspora in general have and continue to play prominent roles in the post-war development of the two regions, why is going to Europe seen to be vigorously discouraged?

This brief text explores the above questions by examining the features of tahriib that sets this journey apart from prior forms of emigration. The article draws from a new report by the author, Going on tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe (2016), based on the findings of a household survey conducted in Somaliland and Puntland in June and July 2015.

Profile of travellers and the leave now – pay later scheme

In contrast to prior forms of emigration, tahriib is exclusively a preoccupation of dhalinyarada [youth]. The majority are young men aged 18 to 21 although a significant minority embark on the journey before they are 18 years old. Given this age profile, many drop out of secondary school and university to embark on tahriib.

Tahriib is also exclusively facilitated by smugglers operating in major towns in Somaliland and Puntland and throughout the route. On the ground, smugglers operate a leave now-pay later scheme, which means young people do not need to have money upfront to go on tahriib. The leave now-pay later system is a creative strategy employed by smugglers to remove a key obstacle that their potential customers face: lack of credit. Since there are no credit facilities that issue loans to young people, and since income earning opportunities for young people are rare, removing the initial financial requirement significantly lowers the direct cost and subsequently removes a crucial barrier to international migration. Any young person wanting to leave could in effect leave. This has made tahriib a 'way out' of a wide range of challenges that young people face.

A lonely endeavour

An important feature of tahriib is that the decision to embark on this hazardous journey is largely an individual affair. This is in contrast to assumptions in mainstream labour migration models, for instance, where international migration is often seen as a household livelihood strategy, or as a way of spreading risks and diversifying household incomes. Within tahriib, other household members are not involved in the decision-making process and are often caught by surprise when a family member leaves. This is because those going on tahriib employ a wide range of strategies to avoid detection.

Not involving other household members in the decision making process is to a large extent made possible by the existence of the leave now—pay later regime. Not having to worry about the initial finances not only lowers costs associated with tahriib, but also removes the need to involve other household members. This is particularly important since other household members would most likely try to stop the individual from leaving, owing to the dangers associated with the journey and the huge financial cost bound to befall the family at a later stage.

Finding the ransom money

Although young people embark on the journey without having to pay anything upfront, tahriib is not a free journey. The leave now-pay later system merely delays the payment. At some point during the long journey (often somewhere between Sudan and Libya) young people are held hostage by a Magafe – a sort of debt collector – until their families back home pay the required ransom.

While household members are not involved in the decision to go on tahriib, they quickly become involved once they realise that their family member on tahriib is in danger, and before too long they will be contacted by a Magafe, who will be making the call to demand ransom. The Magafe not only tells the family how much to pay, but also gives them a deadline for when the ransom has to be received.

On average, households pay about USD 7,700 on ransom and other expenses incurred during tahriib. Given that the GPD per capita in Somaliland, for instance, is only about USD 348, the question here is how do households manage to raise such huge amounts in relatively short period of time?

Households utilise desperate and disparate means to raise the required finances. From mobilising kinship connections both locally and abroad – a crucial system of support for Somalis – to borrowing and stress-selling key assets such as land, livestock and houses, often at prices well below the prevailing market rates. Failure to pay ransom on time can have significant ramifications to the young person being held. Accounts of young people being abused or killed while in captivity are not uncommon.

> Tahriib has huge nancial costs to households in the r egion. Paying o the debt (which households pay back by monthly instalments) has a direct impact on the amount of disposable incomes and can implicate a household's ability to pay school fees and health care.

The huge cost of tahriib

Tahriib has huge financial costs to households in the region. Paying off the debt (which households pay back by monthly instalments) has a direct impact on the amount of disposable incomes and can implicate a household's ability to pay

school fees and health care. The sale of assets has further ramifications to the ability of households to manage future livelihood shocks.

Costs are, however, not limited to financial ones. The emotional distress that members of the household left behind experience are immense: normal household patterns are severely disrupted when an individual goes on tahriib. This continues until the individual reaches Europe safely. Although a large proportion (about 90 percent) make it to Europe, a significant minority (about 7 percent) perish en-route.

The elusive contradiction

It is important to note here that while many families would categorically prevent their sons or daughters from risking their lives by going on tahriib, and some better off parents proactively look for ways to stop their children from leaving: there are many social cues, though subtle, that are to some extent encouraging young people, especially young men, to leave.

In some instances, tahriib is socially considered to be a courageous act: instead of a young man wasting his life away in Somaliland or Puntland, where social and economic resources required for a successful transition from youth into adulthood are difficult to secure, he decides to take his chance, to try his "nasiib" [luck] elsewhere. This captures important socio-cultural stereotypes about what it means to be a Somali man and can act as a powerful incentive for young men to go on tahriib.

Conclusion

Although both Somaliland and Puntland have experienced numerous forms of emigration in the past, three features of tahriib are responsible for its rejection by the community. First, tahriib is exclusively a youth phenomenon. Second, the journey is fraught with dangers and accounts of young people perishing en-route are pervasive. Losing youth, the future of the region, is something that the community is finding difficult to come to terms with. Third, tahriib has significant financial and non-financial costs to the households and household members left behind. Although some of these costs might be short term, others, such as the loss of assets, can have long-term implications to households. However, regardless of the community uproar and the many awareness campaigns designed to discourage young people from going on tahriib, a contradiction exists. Socially, there are many hints that also work to sanction tahriib and indirectly encourage young people to leave.

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Migrants from the Mediterranean are rescued in the Channel of Sicily, Italy. UN Photo by: IOM/Francesco Malavolta.

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Cover Photo: *'Tahriib' – Doonidii geerida (Tahriib – the death boat)* by Nagib Carab Ibrahim 'Hanad Arts'. Courtesy of the Hargeysa Cultural Centre.