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Life & Peace Institute / Kroc Institute

Somalia

CREATING SPACE FOR FRESH APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING

CIVILIAN SUPPORT AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF AL-SHABAAB EXPANSION · IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA IN SOMALIA · RE-THINKING SOMALI NATIONAL IDENTITY: NATIONALISM, STATE FORMATION AND PEACE-BUILDING IN SOMALIA · AL-SHABAAB, PART OF THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS FACED BY SOMALIA? · CRIMINALISING PEACE OR CONTAINING VIOLENCE? · U.S. ENGAGEMENT IN SOMALIA: FRAMES, MISSED OPPORTUNITIES, AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS · ADDRESSING TERRORISM: A THEORY OF CHANGE APPROACH

John Paul Lederach ◆ Douglas Ansel ◆ Jessica Brandwein ◆ Ashley Lyn Greene ◆ Ryne Clos ◆ Shinkyu Lee ◆ Laura Weis

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The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation. This is done through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing preconditions for building peace.

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Foreword

This publication is a result of a collaboration between the Life & Peace Institute and the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. In fall 2010, LPI's team in Nairobi, with the leadership of Michele Cesari, started a conversation with Professor John Paul Lederach, who wanted to provide PhD students at the university with an opportunity to apply peacebuilding theories to a real context. LPI wanted to encourage creative thinking on policy options for Somalia. It wanted to engage a group of researchers with a solid background in peace and conflict studies, but not well accustomed with Somalia and the mainstream conversations taking place in policy making circles. As a result, the students at the Kroc and LPI's team in Nairobi started a close collaboration that led to the articles in this volume.

What emerges from the articles is that policy options discussed by decision makers inside and outside Somalia are based primarily on global and regional security concerns. They tend to overlook the local complexities and the potential for nonviolent conflict transformation that exist in the context. In particular, the black-listing of al-Shaabab prevents one of the main stakeholders to participate in the mainstream political process and discourages interest in dialogue from all sides. This means that state and non-state actors are self-censoring themselves, in fear of the consequences that engagement with a proscribed organisation might generate. There is a scarcity of alternative perspectives among policy makers that could encourage the design of an inclusive peace process in Somalia.

There are a number of consequences as being brought out in the different articles:

1. Current policies do not have a clearly defined mid/long-term political vision; the focus is on short-term objectives that overlook local and regional dynamics. They fail to acknowledge that the Somali society has changed over the last decades, and that thinking of solutions just in terms of power sharing deals between clans is outdated.
2. There has been a means-ends inversion in policy making: security has become an end in itself, an encompassing objective, resulting in a lack of clearly defined political ends that orient political, including military, engagement. This also results in little-coordinated military interventions that do not seem to have a clearly defined and common purpose.
3. The current policies exclude one main political actor from the process and as a result breed resistance to any settlement and result in further violence.
4. Conflict transformation and peacebuilding agencies are unable to engage due to restrictive anti-terror legal frameworks. More specifically, the policy of isolation of al-Shabaab limits the potential for civil society to contribute to peacebuilding, by hampering neutral positioning in the Somali conflict and preventing impartial and horizontal engagement with all key conflict stakeholders.

These challenges, but also some recommendations for policy, are presented in more depth in the following articles: *al-Shabaab, part of the solution to the problems faced by Somalia?* by Ryne Clos, *Civilian support and the foundations of al-Shabaab expansion* by Douglas Ansel, *Re-thinking Somali national identity: Nationalism, state formation and peacebuilding in Somalia* by Ashley Lyn Greene, *US engagement in Somalia: frames, missed opportunities and alternative options* by Laura Weis, *Impact of international media in Somalia* by Jessica Brandwein and *Criminalising peace or containing violence? The impact of the decision in the US Supreme Court case Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project on peacebuilding in the Somali context* by Shinkyu Lee.

As an introduction to the volume, Professor Lederach has added a very powerful article that reflects on the theories of change beyond policies of isolation versus engagement with blacklisted groups in conflict, thus generating a global relevance for the issues explored in this publication.

I would like to thank Professor John Paul Lederach and his students as well as LPI's team in Nairobi for their dedicated work that has brought this important publication into life. It is our hope that the articles will serve as food-for-thought for creative discussions on alternative perspectives for an inclusive peacebuilding in Somalia.

Jenny Svensson
Programme Director
Life & Peace Institute

Addressing terrorism: A theory of change approach

John Paul Lederach

Introduction

The recent "Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project" U.S. Supreme Court decision of June 21, 2010 has sharpened the debate about engagement with blacklisted groups and has directly impacted the wider communities where designated foreign terrorist groups operate. Anti-terror legislation has consequences and relevance for peacebuilding organizations whose engagement with these local communities and mid-level leaders creates ambiguous but potentially significant legal ramifications under the recent Supreme Court decision. As a practitioner-scholar I have been struck by the lack of basic discussion on the assumptions and theories undergirding the "listings" policy and dearth of evidence-based research testing the theories around these pressing issues. An explicit clarification of the *theories of change* that purports to address violent conflict and terrorism is needed. To elucidate a theory of change is not an abstract endeavor. It requires commitment to specify assumptions and demonstrate how a particular activity and approach functions and unfolds toward desired outcomes.

In this brief essay I want to provoke the theoretical imagination. I propose that such an imagination holds one of the keys for improving our capacity to assess and evaluate the central strategies for responding to violent conflict and terrorism. Let me start by making two observations and clarifying one premise.

First, since 9/11 and even more with the "Holder vs Humanitarian Law Project" decision we have witnessed a divide emerging between two competing theories of change. The designated foreign terrorists list proposes a change strategy based on *isolation*. Peacebuilding proposes a strategy of *engagement*.

Both terms merit a brief description. By *isolation* I do not refer to the classic use of the word in political science that delineates a strategy of not participating in international affairs, conflicts or issues. Rather as connected to the policy of designating foreign terrorists, *isolation* essentially proposes a strategy of identifying, targeting and limiting individuals and groups who espouse violence defined as terrorism. Isolation as a strategy legally limits material support, the interpretation of which increasingly includes contact, consultation or dialogue with blacklisted groups, as these activities have been determined to contribute to their legitimacy and success.

Engagement is not used here in its military form, quite the contrary. *Engagement* refers to strategies that require contact, consultation and dialogue. In particular, strategic peacebuilding suggests that engagement must happen with a wider set of people and stakeholders at multiple levels of society than is typically undertaken in official processes.[1] Peacebuilding operates within the wider civil society affected by violent conflict. Engagement suggests continuous contact, consulta-

1 See Lederach and Appleby (2010) and Schirch, 2005.

tion, deliberative dialogue inclusive of all views, and development of processes with a focus on understanding accurately the sources of violence and addressing them through a range of *nonviolent* change strategies.

Second, proponents of isolation and engagement have not adequately described the theory of change underpinning their proposed approach. In particular little direct discussion exists as to how a particular strategy addresses and transforms the challenge of terrorism. I would argue that of the two, peacebuilding has offered more concrete discussion of the undergirding theory of change in settings of armed conflict and repeated cycles of violence but rarely in direct reference to terrorism.[2]

On the other hand, the isolation approach has rarely clarified its formational theories of change but has had a powerful defining impact on the environment in which peacebuilding develops. Isolation carries the sanction of official policy and the legal backing of courts but has less clarity and explicit development of theory about how, as a strategy of change, it contributes to the reduction of violence or the forging of a more stable peace. In particular, proponents have offered very little theoretical clarification about how isolation of designated groups and individuals contributes to desired change process in and with the communities where the identified groups live.

Finally, I propose an operative premise for this essay. I assume that these two competing strategies isolation and engagement, share the laudatory purpose that their actions are aimed at reducing violence, increasing security and improving the environment for a stable peace. I have framed these goals in a way that permits us to explore theories of change. From these observations and premise several framing questions emerge:

- What are central theories of change that constitute the strategies of isolation and engagement?
- Do they actually unfold the way the strategy proposes in terms of the identified and desired outcomes?
- What unintended consequences do they bring?
- Do they vary by context?

Theory of change framework

A theory of change framework proposes that each strategy, isolation and engagement, takes up a challenge to articulate more clearly how their approach works in terms of the guiding theory by which desired changes are sought. This paper will explore three elements relevant to this task: 1) suggest a theoretical construct that more accurately portrays the complexity of the context and issues in responding to terrorism beyond what now appears as two mutually exclusive approaches; 2) discuss the theoretical assumptions of how isolation and engagement as strategies of change contribute to violence prevention and stable peace; and 3) discuss a few of the theoretical frameworks that elucidate the challenge of connecting a particular approach with its proposed outcomes.

2 An emerging and extensive literature now exists on peace processes and the challenges of moving from violent armed conflict through negotiations to a more stable peace. In particular we note the work of Darby and MacGinty 2008; Fisher, 2005; Zartman, 1983; Zartman and Faure, 2006, 2011.

As a starting point we must take note that at official levels responses to terrorism almost exclusively frame the challenge under a political umbrella constructed by way of either/or choices. Quite commonly we hear key leaders affirm that they "will never negotiate with terrorists". This framing comes in the context of a highly charged political environment and an emotionally laden legacy that follows the aftermath of mass violence. President George Bush expressed this choice as defining global partnerships and alliances after the events of September 11, 2001, when in one of his key speeches he made it clear to the international community that "you are with us or against us".

The blanket refusal to engage and negotiate with violent organizations, even those listed as terrorist, does not match the empirical evidence that engagement and negotiations have often taken place over the past decades with designated terrorists.[3] While counterterrorism responses certainly existed prior to 9/11, the "listing" of designated individuals and groups as foreign terrorists gained salience and prominence in the weeks and months that followed.[4] For a decade this approach has marked and defined a strategy of isolation that grew exponentially to include more and more groups and had an impact on wider civil society and local communities in a number of key strategic geographies.

The approach to listing has had significant debate. The UN General Assembly 2005 World Summit Outcome document declared that the Security Council and the Secretary-General should "ensure that fair and clear procedures exist for placing individuals and entities on sanctions lists and for removing them, as well as for granting humanitarian exemptions".[5] In 2009 Eminent Jurists Panel of the International Commission of Jurists described the listing and delisting procedures used by numerous nations and international agencies as "arbitrary" and discriminatory. It is a system, said the Panel, "unworthy" of international institutions such as the UN and the EU.[6]

Legal issues aside, the most difficult theoretical issue posed by designated listings, emerge in the bifurcation affecting whole populations. We live in a far more complex world than one divided into two cells. A starting point for any theoretical exploration requires a careful look at this complexity and the many settings where designated foreign terrorist lists exist as defined by the US and Europe.

In particular, the listing of *organizations* rarely clarifies how far the net of affiliation may be cast. While there are many reasons for this ambiguity a primary one has to do with the nature of these organizations. More often than not they are organized on loose but highly effective networks. They function by way of smaller independent nodes of operation with unclear hierarchies of power, strategy and decision-making. They have highly protective and secretive communicative systems. Perhaps most importantly they embed themselves around a wider set of affiliations and crosscutting relationships within the societies where they live. In locations like South-Central Somalia these listings by their very nature implicate entire geographies, human and physical and create significant difficulty for distinguishing where exactly the boundary of relationships begins and ends making it difficult to know with whom it is acceptable to relate. The impact of such list-

3 In particular see the Rand report by Seth and Labicki, 2008; Toros, 2008, Neumann, 2007; and Zartman, 1990. All point to cases, approaches, successes and failures of directly negotiating with terrorists.

4 It should be noted that when lists initially emerged in the UN in 1990 they promoted a smart sanction with the objective to impact key leaders in Iraq and avoid, to the degree possible, hardships on the wider civil society. Post 9/11 listings lost their narrow focus and grew exponentially in the designated foreign terrorist lists of the US and EU.

5 United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly 60/1: 2005 World Summit Outcome*, A/RES/60/1, New York, 24 October 2005, para. 109.

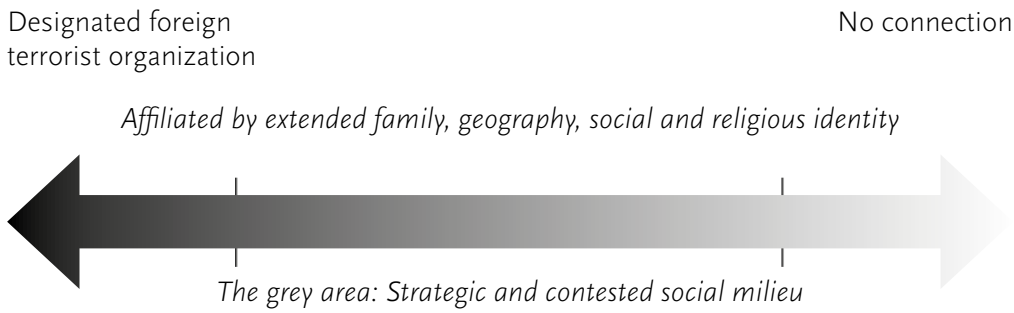
6 International Commission of Jurists, *Assessing Damage, Urging Action: Report of the Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 2009), 116–117.

ings results in a *whole population effect*, creating physical and human geographies that have less and less contact with the outside world.

Careful consideration of the many settings where designated foreign terrorist groups exist finds that their identity and membership boundaries are fluid, ephemeral and difficult to fully appraise. Rather than a clean "two-cell" designation, we find something more akin to a *grey area* of social relationships. These relational spaces can include extended families, varied kinds of associations and affiliations and just ordinary people who have to navigate relationships in order to survive. All this is compounded by network-based organizational structures created by those engaged in violence who themselves have fluid boundaries and carefully constructed layers of secrecy and protection.

Simply put, bifurcation into two clearly delineated groups does not exist. We do not live in a bi-polar world of us and them. As such we are not well served by a theoretical construct that requires rigid bifurcation when such a bi-polar distinction does not exist in the societies affected by their presence. We may be better served by understanding these contexts as a spectrum of fluid and complex relationships. If we place this visually in theoretical construct we move away from a two-cell understanding toward a continuum (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: **The contested grey area: A continuum of social relations**



"Us/them" as a way to approach terrorism methodologically requires a capacity to clearly distinguish who would be placed in each category. In reality a spectrum exists that runs on one end from those who are activists in organizations that espouse terrorism and at the other extreme those who have absolutely no connection. However, in between and especially in geographies such as South-Central Somalia, we have *the grey area* comprised of people and organizations that have at a minimum some form of contact, connection or affiliation with people and groups on the designated lists. This is often not by choice but simply because they live in a particular area, share a common religious background, or have extended family links, to mention only a few. After considerable years of experience in many of these settings, my own view is that this grey area may be much larger

and harder to define than we understand. Yet in terms of violence prevention and stable peace *the grey area is both strategic and contested*.

The expansion from bifurcation to complexity suggests that any theory of change, whether it articulates isolation or engagement, will need to carefully assess the assumptions that each brings to the complex challenge of *the grey area*, as it relates to the change they purport will emerge from their action. That careful extrapolation of theory of change has rarely been fully realized.

What we *can* delineate are the key effects, perhaps unintended consequences, the designated foreign lists have had on international humanitarian and peacebuilding organizations. In order to comply with the mandate of listings, the legally safe approach for international agencies and NGOs working in contested areas is to assume a *wide net of implication*. This translates into a preventative stance of *guilt by contact* and *potential association* for their activity, mostly any activity on the ground. As a result the tendency has been to limit their presence on the ground and reduce their contact with local populations until communication and consultation stops. The fear is this: The wide swath of *unpredictable* association creates *potential* affiliation and *may implicate* them legally as supporting terrorists. The ensuing *whole population effect* results in entire groups of people finding themselves increasingly isolated from outside contact. The ultimate impact is clear: Most international agencies and NGOs have chosen to slow down, if not completely stop, their activity in these areas.[7]

Significant questions emerge at the level of theory of change in reference to the links between action and desired outcome.

- Is the intended consequence of designated lists to isolate whole populations?
- If not, in contested geographies, is it possible to isolate a particular group independent of the civil society where they operate?
- How does isolation as a strategy of change conceive and develop processes necessary to reduce violence and stabilize peace, if no contact, interaction or dialogue can be developed with affected populations?
- When and how will movement from isolation to some form of engagement take place?

These questions lead to a more detailed exploration of theories of change that each strategy may carry.

Isolation and engagement

Our purpose here is to provoke discussion and thought about how to increase a capacity to reduce violence and stabilize peace by looking more carefully at the underlying theories of change which particular approaches suggest. My argument suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to the theoretical frameworks as responses to terrorism have emerged in the past decade. I suggest that two lenses may be useful. First, for illustrative purposes, provide an initial outline with a few theories of change that each approach might propose. And second, explore questions about how these theories address the strategic *grey area* of

7 To date the most extensive empirical exploration of this impact is found in *Friend not Foe* (Cortright, et al 2010), a research initiative conducted across several years with international agencies, NGOs and local communities.

local and wider populations in affected geographies. I start with the engagement proposals.

Exploration of theories of change suggests a process that cuts to the bare bones in order to lift out and consider some key assumptions. It requires the formulation of how a set of actions relate to expected outcomes, or in some cases unfolding processes. In its simplest form it requires us to suggest how an activity will increase or decrease particular behaviors or outcomes. In a complex and multivariate context this initial attempt will necessarily be reductionist. The purpose here it to provoke the imagination necessary to lift out what too often are implicit assumptions, an exercise that has been missing from much of the public, policy and legal debates.

As illustration I will propose a few theories of change. I have divided these into two levels of engagement or isolation: approaches to *grey area* of civil society and approaches to people in positions of, or close to, leadership in designated terrorist groups.

Engagement

With reference to the civil society, the "grey area" with proximity to designated groups, *increased engagement* (contact, consultation and dialogue) will

- increase accuracy of assessment about key grievances and concerns leading to increased capacity to recognize opportunity and address issues in ways that respond to these grievances and diminish justification for violence;
- increase the consideration of alternative views of contested issues and history (thus encouraging views other than those as providing the justification for violence by dominant groups) opening potential for consideration and reconsideration of options that reduce violence;
- increase understanding of competing internal constituencies and varying perspectives and narratives existent within the wider civil society, affected by the violence that will lead to increased constructive dialogue and greater influencing of decisions, reducing the narrow control of internal decisions;
- increase the understanding of foreign concerns and interests thereby reducing fear and increasing different views of threat and enmity;
- increase wider participation and influence the rise of alternative leadership;
- increase capacity to identify opportunities for constructive change in the short-term, initiating the social platforms necessary for long-term change, and increase capacity for dialogue and decrease violence as the defining approach.

With leadership of designated groups *engagement* will

- increase understanding of their key grievances, create potential openness to alternatives and will augment capacity to identify opportunities for change resulting in increased potential to build alternatives to violence;

- establish key relationships especially among second tier leadership necessary to explore and prepare early processes that shift from violent engagement toward dialogue and improving the potential to reduce violence and encourage nonviolent democratic processes;
- increase understanding of existing internal differences in the leadership;
- provide opportunity to elicit alternative views of outside and foreign interests and concerns increasing accuracy of information. Increased accuracy of communication means greater potential for considering alternative and nonviolent processes.

Isolation

Increased isolation of terrorist groups and leadership will

- reduce their economic and military capacity and thereby diminish their ability to engage violently;
- increase the capacity to identify, locate and capture, or eliminate, key leaders and operatives, thus reducing the effective leadership of the wider movement;
- reduce the appeal and vibrancy of their relationship within their primary and secondary constituencies, a relationship they need and must sustain in order to survive. In essence isolation strangulates their political capital and reduces their social capital, driving a wedge between leadership and wider constituency, thereby reducing the likelihood and effectiveness of violence;
- reduce their capacity to recruit new members;
- increase their desire and need to be accepted back into the international community and political mainstream, and will thereby increase their willingness to end the strategy of violence.

Proponents of isolation often suggest key concerns about the pitfalls and unintended consequences of engagement. First and foremost many express the concern that engagement represents a form of negotiating with terrorists that is politically unpalatable. Going a step deeper, the apprehension suggests that contact and engagement increases the legitimacy of these groups internationally, within their countries and key constituencies, and within their own self-view, providing them undue recognition. This serves to promote their standing and support, ultimately justifying the violence they employ against innocent civilians. As such, contact and dialogue with these leaders contributes to impunity and instability. This concern is coupled with a deep suspicion that contact and dialogue will be used tactically by violent groups and thus supports their strategic goal of harsher and renewed violence. Finally, in the eyes of many, including the Supreme Court, response to terrorism as a national security concern, represents an area of legal responsibility that falls under the *exclusive* purview of governments. Engagement at other levels by nongovernmental actors reduces the effectiveness of official policy and may impede its success.

Theory and evidence

These competing ideas have considerable theoretical development and empirical evidence from numerous disciplinary lenses.

The sociological literature on the dynamics of conflict escalation into violence provides some key observations and questions.[8] What are the key dynamics and effects of escalating conflict and polarization? Several merit brief exploration.

As conflict escalates and polarization sharpens, social pressure increases significantly for people to define and join one side or the other, thereby reducing a middle ground. Increased outside threat to goals or survival creates a much stronger internal social cohesion. In highly polarized contexts people within a group have more contact and interaction with those who share their views and concerns and correspondingly much less direct interaction with those of differing perspectives.

This combination of dynamics, very common in polarized conflict, has a two-fold impact. At times of polarization, in-group perspectives are viewed as accurately accounting for a complex reality with little room for alternative views of the complexity. This is coupled with a decrease in the available direct mechanisms for receiving and sharing information across differing views and results in people relying ever more on secondary and often inaccurate sources of information, in particular about the "other", often perceived as the enemy. This creates less accurate and less objective information on which decisions are made.

The decrease of internal debate and the interaction of differing ideas, perspectives and interpretation of a complex reality carry significant effects. Among the most significant we find that escalated conflict creates greater opportunity for more extreme views to rise in prominence and solidify positions of leadership. Whereas prior to sharp escalation, these views may have been assessed as unrealistic, distant from reality and incongruent, they gain in status as perceived and actual threat increases and violence emerges. Tolerance for and exploration of ambiguity reduces sharply in terms of group views. Little or no room exists for questions or the expression of alternative views. For the leadership, sustaining a clear and reinforced perception of outside threat sustains their status and position, and reduces the need to deal with potential competing perspectives. Sustaining one interpretation and keeping "followers" far from contact with competing views and differing interpretations, creates a monolithic, unquestioned, and highly cohesive internal constituency.

Here we find some of the most intriguing questions about *the grey area* and our two approaches. Engagement approaches would argue that the theory of change needed to transform the justification for violence and the support it may receive from geographically affected constituencies requires regular contact, consultation and dialogue that both seeks the other's views and provides potential alternative views.[9] In other words, contact and conversation create the mechanisms necessary to increase a level of ambiguity (people have the opportunity to interact with competing views of meaning rather than having one and only one correct narrative and interpretation).

8 This literature has long been established in sociology and social-pyschology. It initiated primarily on the work of Lewis Coser (1955) who identified the functions, including direct and latent, of social conflict. James Coleman's (1956) seminal work on escalation in community conflict identified a range of similar patterns. More recently Louis Kriesberg has tracked many of these same patterns in international conflict processes (see Dayton and Kriesburg, 2009, Kriesberg 1982, 1991, 2006). What this literature suggests is that as conflict escalates and polarization increases, it has specific kinds of consequences in social relationships and produces changes in wider social structures. William Ury (2000) discusses these dynamics in reference to responding to the dynamic of conflict creating two sides and the need to create a container, a third side in his description that holds the patterns of escalation at bay.

9 See Curle, 1987, Moore, 2003, Mayer, 2009, Lederach, 1995, 2005. Much of the literature on the function and approach of conciliation and mediation relies on directly impacting two flawed components of a conflict system. First, the basic communication system is unreliable when few mechanisms of direct exchange of information exist. A key to de-escalation requires improving the accuracy of communication. Second, perceptions are key. As was stated by W.I. Thomas (1923) "It is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct – if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." In a highly polarized and violent setting survival requires assuming the worst-case scenario, a system based on distrust, suspicion and fear. To impact these perceptions and interpretations that reinforce violence as the only response, trustworthy relationships must be created that create sufficient space to explore alternative explanations to the existing perceptions and interpretations.

This introduces and injects a dose of cognitive dissonance requiring exploration within diverse explanations of a complex reality. In turn the very existence of alternative conversations demands more of leadership than facile and monolithic explanations about why violence is needed and justified. On the other hand, isolation, though aimed at narrowing the space for operations of targeted leaders, in fact decreases outside contact and the introduction of alternative views when the outcome of this strategy creates a whole population effect. The net result may well strengthen the capacity of control of extremist leadership within their constituencies rather than reducing their sphere of influence.[10]

A careful exploration of theory of change requires empirical evidence. In particular, isolation as a change strategy needs to be more explicit as to how it interacts with the contested and strategic *grey area*, and will need to establish why and how diminished contact and conversation within the wider affected population contributes to the desired change it purports to accomplish.

Empirically, if indicators were established to measure impact, several would shed light on the theory. For example, what if capacity to recruit people into terroristic acts were an indicator of desired change? In essence, here we would seek to measure whether a particular strategy of change increased or decreased the ability of leadership to recruit active followers and bring them into acts of violence. If the isolation strategy works according to its theory, leaders of these groups should have less capacity to recruit, and eventually their numbers will desiccate.

Little empirical evidence seems to exist that this holds true. In fact, in a number of locations the impact of isolation coupled with outside violence has led to increased capacity for recruitment. What accounts for the appeal and legitimacy these movements seem to enjoy? How does the impact of having little contact, consultation and engagement with their views contribute to the ability of leaders to sustain a narrative that holds sway among a significant constituency?

One could argue that a more fine-tuned theory would be important in reference to specific ways in which isolation functions with an eye toward change. For example, Benjamin and Simon suggest this be approached with two concentric circles.[11] A small inner circle represents key leaders and those directly involved in terrorism. A much larger outer circle describes something close to *the grey area*, the contested population from which recruits may be found or from which may emanate pressure to shift the strategy away from violence.

Their argument suggests that this requires a strategy with capacity to appropriately target isolation of the few, while robustly engaging the wider population. As Cortright and Lopez argue, the goal must "isolate hard core elements and separate them from their potential base. This requires a political approach that addresses deeply felt grievances, promotes democratic governance, and supports sustainable economic development."[12] Such approaches *narrow the focus of isolation* toward core leaders and *encourage robust interaction* within the wider civil society. The blanket approach that isolates whole populations in order to isolate leaders does not, at least as currently defined, have a clear theory of change, and may have produced totally unintentional and undesired consequences.

10 See Cortright, et al and the specific on the ground reports that isolation creates a dynamic that reinforces extremist leadership and narrows the ability to provide alternative narratives.

11 Benjamin and Simon, 2005.

12 Cortright and Lopez, 2007.

If we move from *the grey area* discussion to challenge of more direct engagement with leaders or people close to leadership within these movements, another set of approaches, theories and evidence can be explored. The most useful comparative literature emerges from more than three decades of research on how violent conflicts end, how negotiations begin, and what may be required for sustaining a change process from violence to nonviolent political process.[13] In this essay there is far too much to explore, but to illustrate our purpose I will pick a few.

It is important to distinguish between a formal negotiation and the informal spaces, conversations and interactions that are necessary prior to a decision to officially and more publicly "negotiate". Evidence over many years suggests that the movement from violence to dialogue and peaceful engagement requires careful preparation, what many identify as "pre-negotiation". This phase often passes through contacts and openings that include a range of people, good offices, and processes that help create conditions to consider and explore avenues for ending the violence. They require a commitment to conversation, consultation and dialogue. Formal negotiations or other kinds of alternatives can then be defined. While the political and ideological demands are repeatedly expressed publicly, such as "we never negotiate with terrorists", evidence suggests otherwise. The Rand Corporation in its study on how terrorism ends suggests that more the 80 percent happens by way of policing or political process. Less than 5 percent end by way of military victory.[14]

Isolation as an approach emerges from the political goal (though with significant military influence) for responding to and weakening a foreign enemy with military threat and capacity. Isolation does not provide a clearly stated theory of exit, that is, how the strategy of segregating and secluding a group will create the conditions that bring their first or second tier leadership toward ending the violence, except by some form of elimination or military victory. For example, after surveying twenty years of peace processes, Darby and MacGinty posed the question of whether it is possible to reach a more sustainable outcome if militant, often designated as terrorist leaders are not included. In response, they note: "The reality is that total inclusion is never possible. There are always zealots who will not compromise. The more numerous and compromising the moderates, the greater the likelihood that the extremes can be marginalized."[15]

The challenge, in reference to our theory of change discussion is how does a process of change achieve a growing set of moderates without some strategy of engagement? If in fact a low percentage of success comes by way of military victory and a much higher percent by way of policing and political process, then the isolation strategy would need to develop greater clarity in how, when and with whom the potential for change is promoted. In other words, isolation as a theory of change would need to diversify its end-game scenarios.

Engagement on the other hand, suggests that the process of change begins with understanding the concerns and perspectives of those involved, including higher level leadership and their constituencies. It advocates a process of conversation and dialogue that introduces trustworthy communication and exploration of alternative

13 See in particular the recent book by Darby and MacGinty, 2008.

14 See Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida* (Santa Monica, CA: *RAND* Corporation, 2008).

15 Darby and MacGinty, 2008.

narratives. Among the intriguing and complex paradoxes we find in the comparative literature of how peace processes initiate, is the interdependence of official and unofficial processes.[16] Governmental leaders with highly visible public profiles can rarely afford the image of direct interaction with those whom they have indicated they will never talk. In many cases a combination of quiet, off record, and unofficial explorations are happening simultaneously with public pronouncements that indicate the contrary. These unofficial spaces, more often than not initiate with and through people who have the connections, relationships of trust and understanding of dialogue, but who are not formally or officially tied to any government.

This activity is highly relational. It requires years of commitment and conversation. It often initiates with key second tier leadership in environments of extreme distrust and potential violence. Emergent in this body of comparative literature is the increased understanding that the shift from violence to stable peace requires multiple layers of conversation at differing levels of leadership, the careful preparation of process and the preparation to enter into dialogue. Also required is the understanding of how prudent and painstaking development of early conversations can move toward officially sanctioned processes of negotiation. Engagement as a strategy suggests that this requires contact and conversation with a range of leaders, and with a commitment to varied potential processes. Isolation, particularly when designed as a blanket form of control diminishing any contact, has not clearly articulated a theory of change of how movements espousing violence will change, or how alternative leadership emerges without outside interaction and encouragement.

Conclusion

This paper suggests that a more direct exploration of theories of change could create a more effective understanding of how best to approach and encourage constructive social change. The primary requirements are twofold: Ask proponents to delineate their key theories of change in more specific ways and develop a dialogue based on empirical evidence rather than ideological preference or politically driven mandates. There may in fact be significant overlap and areas of agreement that could, particularly when applied to concrete geographies, result in far more effective and varied strategies and approaches.

I would make the case that isolation in the form of wide ranging terrorist lists was driven by desire to *control* future acts of terrorism. But the approach has little, if any, clear projections of a theory of change that addresses the complexity around the different contexts where it has been applied. It seeks to control violence in the short term but does not suggest how as strategy it contributes to desired change in the mid to long-term. Engagement as an approach includes concrete ideas about change over the mid and longer-term but does not have within its purview specific strategies aimed at controlling or preventing a particular act of terrorism in the short-term. Its purpose is not policing. Engagement strategies seek to change the conditions from which violence emerges, to locate and create the opportunities that make that change possible.

16 See Fisher, 2005 and Darby and MacGinty, 2008.

Policy recommendations

- Delineate with greater specificity the theory of change that supports terrorist listings with a particular focus on how it will meaningfully and strategically engage the affected populations. The assessment of the basic theory requires a careful compilation of evidence that assesses, in particular, whether it has increased or decreased a capacity to recruit, solidified or weakened more extremist leadership, and provided for shifts in the wider population toward nonviolent strategies of social change.
- Develop a clear end-game scenario for how geographies most affected or controlled by designated organizations will shift the justifying narratives and behavior from violence (and the use of terrorism in particular) toward nonviolent processes. This requires a specific strategy for how isolation contributes to constructive shifts in the wider civil society most affected by the terrorist listings.
- Based on what now appears to be compelling evidence, pinpoint how isolation of leaders (similar for example to policing approaches for criminal behavior) combines with robust engagement of local populations.
- Develop strategies that constructively impact the rise of second tier and secondary leadership. Given that many of these movements rely heavily on youth, a strategy that strategically approaches the growth of new and alternative leadership requires significant and varied approaches to engagement. Isolation as a blanket policy seems to hold little, if any, strategy for how alternative or future leaders will be different.

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Al-Shabaab part of the solution to the problems faced by Somalia?

Ryne Clos

Al-Shabaab presents part of the model of the solution to the problems faced by Somalia. This is not to deny that the organization has committed acts of large-scale violence or to paper over its claims of seeking a global war against the United States and its various international allies and symbols. As peacebuilders, we must extract what is good and deploy it in our efforts to transform society from enduring war to sustainable peace, even if this means engaging with those accused of crimes against humanity or other "undesirable" actors. Al-Shabaab is a successful social movement in both aspects of praxis, thought and action, while expertly framing the Somali conflagration in such a way as to maximize its mobilization efforts. This nets resources that it utilizes in efficient ways.

Al-Shabaab is a new voice with a new message in the context of Somalia, putting forward a plan for change that includes an emphasis on youth and a cross-clan ideology. Finally, al-Shabaab is a movement indigenous to the sensibilities of Somalia, attuned to the history and desires of the people in its society. As such, it provides a counter hegemonic challenge to an international community whose state building efforts seem more harmonious to the self-interest of powerful foreign countries than to the possible benefits for the Somali people. In these three settings, as an individual social movement, as a political voice in Somalia, and as a contestant in the international community, al-Shabaab provides a viable model for the solution to the catastrophic recent history of Somalia.

Al-Shabaab as social movement

The history of Islamism in Somalia has been given thorough and detailed coverage by other scholars and I will not reiterate their narrative here.[1] Instead, I will link this history and the characteristics of al-Shabaab to the scholarly literature on social mobilization. This body of work neatly divides into two broad sections: one dealing with thought and one with action.

The literature on thought in social movements highlights the importance of understanding the nature of the problem, comprehending the psychology of the body of potential constituents to a movement, and then framing the former to best sell it to the latter. Framing has been usefully defined as the power to shape the nature of a problem in the minds of a population.[2] Al-Shabaab diagnoses the problems facing Somalia in a variety of ways, but within the confines of a single encompassing shortcoming.

As with many other Islamist[3] organizations, al-Shabaab refers to the Qur' an and Hadith to emphasize the differences between contemporary society and the society of the original Muslim community.[4] But this is a narrow view of the

1 To access this history, please refer to the following works: Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*, (London: Pluto Press, 2010); Roland Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3 (3), November 2009: pp. 381-404; and Kenneth Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, Adelphi paper. 364th ed. 2nd Vol., London: Routledge, 2004).

2 Charles King, "Power, Social Violence, and Civil Wars", in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), pp. 115-130, citation from p. 125.

3 I will use this term [Islamist/Islamism] to describe the socio-religious phenomenon that is given myriad names by scholars of international politics, religion, and the Muslim-majority societies of the world. These other names include political Islam, Islamicism, Islamic extremism, radical Islam, and Islamic fundamentalism. When I deploy this term, I intend no pejorative or negative meanings, as do some more irresponsible scholars. I intend such vocabulary only as a fairly accurate portrayal of complex reality.

4 Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, pp. 55-61 and 81; Bjørn Olav Utvik, "The Modernizing Force of Islam", in *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and Europe*, eds. John L. Esposito, Francois Burgat, pp. 43-67, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 45-46; and Mohammed Ayoob, "Challenging Hegemony: Political Islam and the North-South Divide", *International Studies Review* 9 (4): pp. 629-643, citation from p. 634.

organization and its recruitment efforts.[5] As will be discussed in detail below, al-Shabaab presents an original approach within Somalia based on youth, overcoming clan identity and a counter hegemonic discourse to an international community that tends to view every conflict through an identical frame.[6] In spite of their rigorous application of an Islamist lens, al-Shabaab has proven to be a pragmatic movement, forming broad coalitions with other groups within Somalia when such alliances serve its interests and even adapting a softer stance toward various social phenomena that it once considered unacceptable.[7]

Given the specific nature of framing in context, it is best to examine this practice by way of a specific example. Roland Marchal selected the February 2006 invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia as a key moment in the establishment of al-Shabaab as an important factor in Somali politics. This intervention was repelled by a variegated mixture of forces, including al-Shabaab (which points to the group's willingness to participate in coalitions when such behavior is in its self-interest). During the conflict, the resistance within Somalia framed the crisis as a battle "between Somalis and the surrogate forces of unwelcome foreign States".[8]

Al-Shabaab was able to reshape the fighting as one of national self-defense, whereas Ethiopia sought to frame it as the forces of the rational North ensuring that politics would not be mixed with the "poison chalice" of Islamism[9] in this most unstable region in the world. As much as it was an exchange of munitions, the battle was one of competing discourses, of rival frames. Al-Shabaab won the first installment of this rhetorical duel and became a more powerful force. It was able to frame the fighting in a way that benefited the goals of the movement, literally shaping the way that its constituents interpreted events so that "reality" corresponded to the vision propounded by al-Shabaab.

The other dominant school in the social movement literature argues for the primacy of action, as explained by resources, broadly defined (in fact, it is easily arguable that framing itself is a type of cognitive resource). The basic premise of this school of thought is that all people are aggrieved, so the presence of poor governance, dire poverty, or overt social and cultural oppression are not explanation enough by themselves for protest. People will mobilize when they have resources such as money, followers, opportunities, or a good organizational structure to do so, rather than a certain psychological predilection.[10]

To put this line of thinking into the context of al-Shabaab, it would be beneficial to again return to Marchal's description of early 2006 as an example. Prior to the Ethiopian invasion, al-Shabaab was a mere court militia, albeit a quite large and autonomous one with leaders trained in Afghanistan struggling to maintain the limited influence on life in Somalia it then carried. Their resources were their large size, relative autonomy, and highly trained leaders.[11] The February intervention provided an opportunity (a resource) for al-Shabaab to move into a better position. It exploited some resources that it already possessed, namely an independent source of munitions and its own core of nurses and health facilities, as well as acquiring new ones, such as heavy weaponry gained through careful targeting, to push for more authority.

5 Marchal emphasizes that there is no necessary connection between theology and politics, arguing "Salafism by itself does not determine specific political choices. A more realistic approach would be to better deconstruct the mechanisms by which people are radicalized and use the same methods (the Internet, radical figures who drastically changed their views, and so on) to convince people that Jihad has meaning other than setting off bombs." See Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 399.

6 Ibid, p. 398.

7 An example of Al-Shabaab's transformation regarding the acceptability of certain societal practices is its treatment of Sufi shrines. These religious sites are of vital importance to the national culture, harkening back to a heritage of Muslim mysticism and safe haven for Sufis fleeing localized persecutions on the Arabian Peninsula. In December 2008, when trying to consolidate control over the crucial port city of Kismaayo, Al-Shabaab infuriated the local populace when a portion of its famously disciplined militia destroyed an ancient Sufi shrine. Today, scholars of the group tell us that they now treat such places with ambivalent tolerance, signaling to the local populace that they still do not support Sufism, but that alliance with communities who do is more important than their dogmatic disdain. For details on this story, see Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", pp. 397 and 399.1 Robinson

8 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 390.

9 This term of "poison chalice" was used by Ken Menkhaus in 2004 to describe the fall of Al-Itihad Al-Islam. See Menkhaus, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, p. 63.

10 The scholars who make these claims are too numerous to include here, but I will list the first two and most famous authors to deploy this line of thinking: William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest*, Second ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990) and Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

11 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 388.

As the dust settled following the series of battles resulting from the invasion, al-Shabaab came to control three of the eighteen seats of the Executive Council of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) administration. Three more seats went to other Islamists within the al-Shabaab umbrella.[12] This is an example of how al-Shabaab exploits and/or acquires resources to its own advantage.

Utilizing social mobilization literature sheds some light on the success of al-Shabaab and its current high level of influence within Somalia. This is a direct consequence of the masterful way that al-Shabaab apportions its resources so as to exploit them to the fullest amount, as well as an attribute of the superior framing performed by the group in order to recruit sympathy for its programs from the people of South-Central Somalia. Its successful framing is the key to the proliferation of al-Shabaab. To understand this, it is important to examine how al-Shabaab came to interpret the national psychology of Somali society by explaining its own movement dynamics and in apportioning blame for the problems faced by Somalia today.[13]

It is also necessary to analyze the underlying discursive battle between al-Shabaab and the various Islamist movements around the world on one side, and the hegemonic war-on-terror language from an international community dominated by the military prowess of the United States, on the other. This is a duel of competing frames, where Islamists have adopted their "religious" vocabulary as the only remaining viable challenge to a neoliberal, selectively secular North driven by globalized capital and bloated defense budgets, exported with a narrowly defined type of democracy. This is seen as the paragon of the "modernity" that the developing world needs for the establishment of peace and stability.[14] Islamism is a counter hegemonic vocabulary that has proliferated from Hassan al-Banna in Egypt to encompass a global alternative to such modernization theories from the North. This is not to reduce Islamism, a dynamic and varied amalgam of ideologies of change to a single category or definition. As a multinational, multicultural phenomenon, Islamism defies a single demarcation. But for the purposes of study may be reduced to a single frame of direct discursive challenge.[15] What unites its myriad currents is the persistent voice of rejection toward the imposed forms of the North. Islamist movements elucidate their own version of modernity as a way of framing the issues in their societies. Al-Shabaab is no different and is actually an example of this trend.

Framing in the Somali context

The international community has insisted on statebuilding[16] as the panacea to the various issues plaguing Somalia, demanding the propping up of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in spite of its complete failure to establish itself within the country.[17] The original attempt to impose a state was a consequence of the Djibouti peace process, which created the Transitional National Government (TNG). After the September 2001 attacks in the US, this government came to be vilified as an Islamic front because of the successful propaganda of Ethiopia and a few warlords, who framed it as being run by religious fanatics (a nonviolent Is-

12 Ibid, p. 390.

13 Debra Javeline discusses just how crucial framing is to the success of social movements in her analysis of the failure of wage arrears protesters in Russia. Debra Javeline, *Protest and the Politics of Blame: The Russian Response to Unpaid Wages*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 194-197.

14 Mohammed Ayoob echoes this line of thought in his argument that in the countries of the global South, there are limited viable discourses of resistance to this Northern imposition: in these countries, nationalism is affiliated with the revanchist state apparatus which governs by oppression. Socialism is an impoverished term lacking in credibility, and the human rights discourse is sterile, static, and ineffective due to its institutionalization within the current global paradigm. Islamism has emerged as a discourse of resistance to the North par excellence, as a way to frame the rejection of and challenge to imposed forms of governance and economics. Ayoob, "Challenging Hegemony: Political Islam and the North-South Divide", pp. 629-632.

15 There are several scholars who write about this discursive battle prolifically. See for example Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Armando Salvatore, Mark Levine, John Esposito, and Francois Burgat.

16 Statebuilding should here be understood in its most basic and skeletal form, the definition preferred by political scientists rather than the dynamic process referred to by historians. Political scientists utilize this term to mean the literal crafting of an institutional authority apparatus in a given territorially-bound society. Such institutional apparati possess three basic principles of control: popular legitimacy granted via the social contract, meaning that they rule with the consent of the governed; territorial sovereignty, as recognized by international law and a monopoly on the use of violence. This more basic meaning of the term is the one that I am granting to it in this essay.

17 For an example of the obstinacy with which this solution is pushed forward, refer to UN Security Council Resolutions 1725 (6 December 2006) and 1964 (22 December 2010).

lamist group, Al-Islah, played a prominent role in some aspects of the TNG).[18] A new peace process in Kenya resulted in the TFG framework as the one by which stability would come, which Marchal has critiqued as being fully in line with every desire of Ethiopia.[19]

The historian Ken Menkhaus is highly critical of the statebuilding process, arguing that it is antithetical to the process of peacebuilding and fearing that it will produce a paper state, allowing well-placed elites in Somali society to take greater advantage of international aid. Menkhaus argues further that the only type of government with which Somalis are familiar is the kleptocracy of Barre, who used his monopoly on force to exploit the people and resources of Somalia for the material benefit of his clan and himself. As long as clans remain an obdurate part of Somali society, a state will only exacerbate the issues that cause violence by institutionalizing a new societal paradigm containing two conflicting sets of people, those with birth-right access to privilege and those without it.[20]

The anthropologist Catherine Besteman supports this claim, as well as Menkhaus' assessment of the government of Barre, with her account of the land reform of 1975, where land resources were available only to the politically connected (meaning clan members of Barre), who were then able to utilize their landlord status to enrich themselves on rent payments from the disenfranchised.[21] Within this line of thinking, al-Shabaab provides an alternative to the TFG, which has remained a clannish body in spite of its best efforts to transcend them, by truly operating as a cross-clan organization that attracts adherents based on alternative sources of identity.[22]

Another scholar who is critical of the various attempts to make the TFG functional is Markus Hoehne. He argues that representation in Somalia is highly complex and not easy to understand. The second Ethiopian invasion of 2006, in December, to remove the ICU, is an example of the disconnect between the notions of the global North and those of Somalia itself in terms of representation. The outsiders argue that any Islamic government is by nature non-representative, while Somalis see such forms of governance as possibilities for finally transcending the appeal of clannish statism. The 4.5 solution of clan participation in the TFG excludes many Somalis and is less inclusive than the broad Muslim idea of the Umma open to all believers. For Hoehne, any solution that hopes to achieve positive results must be indigenous, coming from within Somali society itself.[23]

Within this combustible cauldron of non-representation resides al-Shabaab, backed by an across clan constituency and the financial support of international sponsors and the Somali diaspora, especially the communities in Kenya and Minneapolis.[24] It conforms to Bjørn Utvik's argument that Islamist groups help foster the modernization of society by opening up political participation to groups previously excluded from it.[25] By framing the issues in Somalia as partially the consequence of clannism, al-Shabaab has taken political participation beyond the determinism of birth. That is, people born outside of a certain clan are still allowed to be political.

18 Markus V. Hoehne, "Political Representation in Somalia", in *Whose Peace Is It Anyway?: Connecting Somali and International Peacemaking*, eds. Mark Bradbury, Sally Healy, *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, Issue 21, pp. 34-37, (London: Conciliation Resources, 2010), p. 35 and Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 386.

19 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", pp. 386-387.

20 Kenneth Menkhaus, "State Collapse in Somalia: Second Thoughts", *Review of African Political Economy* 30 (97), September 2003: pp. 405-422, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4006984 (accessed 24 March 2011), citation from pp. 407-408.

21 Catherine Besteman, "Local Land Use Strategies and Outsider Politics: Title Registration in the Middle Jubba Valley", in *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War behind the War*, eds. Catherine Besteman, Lee V. Cassanelli, pp. 29-46, (London: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 42-44.

22 Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, pp. 67-71.

23 Hoehne, "Political Representation in Somalia", pp. 36-37.

24 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 394.

25 Utvik, "The Modernizing Force of Islam", pp. 43, 57, and especially p. 61.

Of course, al-Shabaab's questionable (at best) attitude toward women limits the opening they provide.[26] Al-Shabaab frames itself as primarily a youth movement, having started its recruitment as a nascent court militia in 2004 among Mogadishu's orphans and abandoned children.[27] In fact, the name al-Shabaab itself means "youth". The youth are a new voice, with a different message and set of experiences than the traditional government elites, and they are more willing to accept al-Shabaab's anti clannish framing principles.

Most of al-Shabaab's members have spent their adult lives in a stateless society, based upon deal brokering and advantage taking. They do not remember the Barre misrule, but they have survived the devastating results. The consequence of this disparate life story for the younger generation in Somalia is a correspondingly disparate voice from the traditional elites and ossified Barre henchmen. This voice must have something to offer if only the global North would allow al-Shabaab to transcend the discursive box of "Islamist terrorist network" in which it has framed the movement.

Al-Shabaab was instrumental in removing Ethiopian forces from their various strongholds in the South-Central region and captured the key port city of Kismaayo.[28] Even as it battles for control of Mogadishu with the TFG, it maintains six bases as training grounds in the hinterlands, it has stabilized its area of control via negotiations with local elders and newfound tolerance for venerated Sufi shrines.[29] Though it imposed its own, sometimes draconian[30] version of law and order, it is trying to govern,[31] showing itself to be pragmatic and capable of multiple approaches to the same problem. The leadership is not unified in its diagnoses and proclamations and many of the smaller cells operate with autonomy in adapting to local conditions.[32] Further, the leadership and the smaller units sometimes make opposing statements on an issue.

From this, we can see that al-Shabaab is making the transition from an ideological, dogmatic court militia consisting of a hardened core of true believers backed by mercenary guns to a widespread political organism, hydra-headed and willing to negotiate a power-sharing agreement to maintain territory without wastefully deploying its resources.[33] It may be that in the coming months, it will become an inaccuracy to depict al-Shabaab as a single movement at all. Instead, it could become a youth-based, anti-clannish avalanche of multiple voices and manifold visions.[34]

For now, al-Shabaab appears a much more state-like body with a greater chance of imposing a statist order over Somalia[35] than the fledgling TFG. But the international community, particularly the US-dominated North, alienates it via the frame of "international terrorism" and refuses to acknowledge the shifting reality of al-Shabaab's efforts to transition.[36]

A discussion of the successful proliferation of al-Shabaab throughout South-Central Somalia would be incomplete without a brief discussion of the role of the war on terror. Part of the hegemonic discourse of the North revealed by scholars like Elizabeth Shakman Hurd is the association of Islamism to terrorism, the idea that politically active groups with religious vocabularies are acting in defense

26 For details on Al-Shabaab's behavior toward women, refer to Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 391, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations' *Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia*. S/2010/447, from 2010, p. 7. There is also evidence that suggests that Al-Shabaab searches for spies more diligently among the female population; see Soo Nala Xariir, *Somalia's Al Shabaab Warns People in Bay, Bakool Regions*, found at http://www.shabelle.net/index.php?archive=1, accessed and written 14 March 2011, for details.

27 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 389.

28 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", pp. 390-393.

29 Ibid, p. 398 (for training bases) and 399 (for shift in policy regarding Sufi shrines).

30 For examples of the type of law and order this former court militia has sometimes imposed upon its constituents, refer to *Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia*. S/2010/447, p. 7.

31 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 398.

32 Ibid, pp. 391 and 397 (for lack of unity) and 397 for a detailed discussion of the ability of local cells to make their own decisions, with a story related to the amnesty granted to TFG prisoners in the city of Baydhabo after Al-Shabaab captured it.

33 Ibid, pp. 391-398.

34 I can think of other examples of this phenomenon. One particularly poignant one, especially for Michele Cesari with his previous work experience, is the explosion of ethnic sentiment in the former Yugoslavia. This manifested itself very rapidly and the competing nationalisms in what is today Bosnia and Krajina quickly extended beyond the ability of the visible movement leadership to enforce them. As a soon-to-be expert in Central America, I can point to similar movement experiences in Nicaragua and El Salvador. By 1979, nearly everyone resisting the dictatorship in Nicaragua claimed to be a Sandinista, without understanding truly what that meant. Perhaps in Somalia over the next 18 months, the banner of Al-Shabaab, or at least of youth resistance transcending clan identity, will take on this same sort of chameleon meaning, where the name of the movement becomes synonymous with resistance.

35 This order may be imposed by force, but most of the governments that reside in positions of power around the world today got to their position through forceful interactions with their >>>

of absolute truth and are inherently dangerous.[37] The framing of groups like al-Shabaab by the international community consists in assigning them sharply critical and mercilessly static identities that are neither helpful in advancing peace nor honest to the reality of social mobilization.

Al-Shabaab is far from a changeless, transgressive collection of terrorizing extremists. It is a dynamic movement that has gripped the collective imagination of a society via a combination of effective framing and a preponderance of resources, and pushed forward a pragmatic agenda of change that promises to solve many of the entrenched problems plaguing all of Somalia. Al-Shabaab is what some scholars call a movement entrepreneur, which can be characterized as a set of people who, through audacious behavior challenging the status quo, have opened up a new realm of possibility for a given population.[38] Al-Shabaab, utilizing their armed struggle and fearless counter hegemonic rhetoric, successfully contested both the secular statist impositions of the international community and the clannist psychology of traditional Somali power-holders, forging a different vision of the world and new possibilities for the Somali people of "doing" politics.

In terms of the war on terror, there is a double standard in denoting a group as terrorist, which seems arbitrarily discriminatory to groups not pre-approved by the US. For example, al-Shabaab lacks the right of liberating its homeland from foreign occupation without being called "terrorists" for attempting it, while groups directly funded by the US, such as the Libyan rebels or the Afghan mujahedeen are given license to practice similar tactics without fear of condemnation.[39] Al-Shabaab is denoted as "terrorist" for its internal struggle to push Ethiopia out of its country, but the Ethiopian invaders and US drone strikes are not reproached for their identical behavior of assassinating opponents and imposing their version of law and order via the sword. It is unfair judgment by the international community.[40]

Al-Shabaab was added to the US terrorism list in March 2008,[41] 28 months before their first act of violence outside of Somalia (a bombing in Kampala in July 2010).[42] This designation, which forces peacebuilding NGOs to evacuate most of the area of Somalia to avoid coming into contact with al-Shabaab[43] and thereby colluding with "terrorists", seems to lack any serious meaning if it can be applied to internal belligerents in a civil war/war of liberation.

Rather than allowing it to be a hindrance, al-Shabaab took the terrorist designation and its subsequent international notoriety and converted it into capital, literally, as other Islamists denoted as terrorists began to financially support the group with more intensity and brazenness.[44] More moderate voices within al-Shabaab's official leadership have been increasingly squelched[45] as the cash rich movement brokered deals with intimidated local governing bodies. They also acted outside the purview of international aid and peacebuilding groups.[46] This is a process called out-bidding by Monica Toft, whereby groups sharpen their frames to curry favor with potential international sponsors.[47]

The terrorist designation has allowed al-Shabaab some impunity within Somalia and given it greater freedom in framing the conflict as one with Somalia, versus

rivals for power. The strongest examples of regimes still in power include Turkey, Vietnam, and Mexico, as well as world leaders like the US, UK, China, and Russia.

36 A good example of this type of alienation is evident from the story of Al-Azzam "autonomous region" recently put forward by the international community, where a fake territorial governing body was declared with diaspora funding in the heart of Al-Shabaab's area of influence as a way to undermine the group. Source here is an interview with Michele Cesari, Life & Peace Institute, 5 April 2011.

37 Utvik, "The Modernizing Force of Islam", pp. 43-45 and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 47-51, 54, and 62-63.

38 There are other phrases which formulate this same idea. For examples, refer to Dennis Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, American Politics and Political Economy Series, ed. Benjamin I. Page (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Mark Irving Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

39 This phenomenon is a direct echo of US policy during the Cold War, where groups that did not conform to the draconian expectations of the US were framed as "Communists", which immediately made them transgressive and a national security threat for the "free world". Groups that did match the US's expectations, even if their tactics were far less in compliance with the dictates of international humanitarian law, were framed as "freedom fighters" battling the forces of "Soviet" evil.

40 Hizbullah uses this line of argument in their public rhetoric. For more, refer to Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*, (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 93-94.

41 Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, p. 75.

42 *Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia*. S/2010/447, p. 2. In this report, you can see the UN attempting to justify the placement of Al-Shabaab on the terror list prior to their international terrorism debut, which I think helps enlighten an informed reader about the discursive framing duel between the North and Islamism.

43 I was happy to hear in one of our final Skype conversations with LPI that the UN has declared a moratorium on the banning of NGO involvement with Al-Shabaab because of the drought, and I sincerely hope that this in fact provides the kind of opening that LPI anticipates that it does on paper. >>>

the international interventionists trying to impose a foreign order. It carried out dichotomous framing of "us versus them", which easily promotes violence while preventing a more nuanced view of the role of international actors in Somalia from impacting the frame of the conflict.[48] Now al-Shabaab can point to outsiders as dangerous, marginalize its own moderate voices, and utilize the transnational network of resources afforded to Islamist groups by the outgrowth of al-Qaeda and the alienating maneuvers of the US in the war on terror.

The US, by adopting an equally stark frame of friends and enemies that makes Ethiopia the paragon of purity in the Horn of Africa and any violent challenges to it illegitimate religious extremism, has magnified the truly dangerous aspects of the al-Shabaab organization and alienated the positive effects of it that present a model for the solution to Somalia's problems. The terror designation is actually preventing the transformation of al-Shabaab away from hardened dogmatism and toward more pragmatic deal brokering, with consequences that seem dire for peacebuilders within Somalia.

Some Somalis, as in the article in Accords from 2010 pertaining to Somalia by the anonymous Somali, believe the presence of terrorists in authority positions, negatively impacts the country's current situation.[49] Such views are both myopic and unfair. They do not understand the fundamental reality of current international politics, where the hegemony of the North imposes its standards upon the South. All groups that are outside the clearly delineated, and in the case of Somalia, imported rules of acceptable behavior, are a priori criminal and to be rejected as barbaric, pre-modern, and/or dangerous.[50]

The global North has a framework for how to end civil wars through negotiations, which it then imposes upon every conflict situation as the best solution without truly studying the singular demands of each context.[51] Any challengers to this cookie-cutter methodology are discredited as gotiations, which it then imposes upon every conflic narrow lens. The sociologist Talal Asad avers that all outside voices, which include Islamist ones in this scheme, must "disturb the peace" to be heard.[52]

As Raymond Baker tells us, Islamism demonstrates that excluded people will employ whatever means they have available to "slow" things down to the point where they are permitted to join in.[53] Francois Burgat puts this reality of unfairness most succinctly: In order to avoid having to recognize the legitimacy of any calling into question of their respective hegemony and having to share their power accordingly, the well-heeled of world politics are thus often content to discredit the resistances with which they are confronted merely by using the slur of "exoticism" against the lexicon employed by those who are voicing them.[54]

The position taken by the anonymous Somali is, in this manner, shortsighted. He/she overlooks the important demonstration effect that al-Shabaab may have in Somali politics as other social actors examine their cross clan makeup and their political dynamism. Al-Shabaab is able to be pragmatic to an extent and to present a new way of "being political" in its society. This should not be simply dismissed as an Islamist terrorist aberration to be avoided. Despite its numerous

44 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 394.

45 Ibid, pp. 397 and 399.

46 For a discussion of Al-Shabaab's intimidation tactics, refer to Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", pp. 398-399.

47 Monica Duffy Toft, "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War", *International Security* 31 (4) Spring 2007: pp. 97-131, with the discussion of outbidding taking place on pp. 102-103.

48 Marchal has a detailed and brilliant analysis on this point. See Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", pp. 392-395.

49 Anonymous Somali, "Islam and Somali Social Order", in *Whose Peace Is It Anyway?: Connecting Somali and International Peacemaking*, eds. Mark Bradbury, Sally Healy, Accord: *An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, Issue 21, on pp. 94-97, (London: Conciliation Resources, 2010), pp. 96-97.

50 There are many authors who could be cited to back up this statement. For example, see Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, p. 54.

51 Oliver Richmond is one prominent scholar on this topic who posits an alternative approach, arguing that it is important for the international community to include local voices and perspectives. Such inclusion will provide flexibility to an otherwise unbending frame that is much needed in efforts at establishing sustainable peace worldwide. See Richmond, "Conclusion: Strategic Peacebuilding beyond the Liberal Peace", in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, eds. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 353-368, citation from 362-365, for a more detailed version of this argument that I am merely mentioning here.

52 Quoted in Armando Salvatore and Mark Levine,"Introduction: Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies," in *Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies*, eds. Armando Salvatore, Mark Levine, 1-25 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 16.

53 Raymond William Baker, "Building the World' in a Global Age", in *Reconstructing the Public Sphere in Muslim Majority Societies*, eds. Armando Salvatore, Mark Levine, pp. 1-25 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 110. >>>

issues, al-Shabaab presents part of the model of the solution, as discussed above, with its new, young voice, its cross-clannism, adaptability, pragmatism, strong resource base and direct challenge to the model imposed from the North.[55]

54 Francois Burgat, *Islamism in the Shadow of Al-Qaeda*, Trans. Patrick Hutchinson, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), p. 8.

Recommendations

Key policy recommendations to international community engaging in the Somali political process are:

1. Engage with al-Shabaab as part of the peace process.
2. Drop al-Shabaab from the list of terrorist groups or at least stop enforcing that distinction for a period of time.
3. Consider solutions beyond the standard UN peace process of finding a state actor and then siding with them, meaning in this case looking beyond the TFG for further options.
4. With all "Islamist" groups, stop excluding them from participation. This only radicalizes them and lends credence to their most alienating rhetoric.

55 Please notice that of the six positive features of Al-Shabaab listed in this sentence, five of them are related to framing.

Civilian support and the foundations of al-Shabaab expansion

Douglas Ansel

Executive summary

Beginning with the defeat of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2006, al-Shabaab quickly expanded from a small group of Islamic fighters to the most influential political actor in South-Central Somalia. In just two years, al-Shabaab advanced rapidly, controlling most of South-Central Somalia, including pockets of Mogadishu, by the end of 2008. It now controls more territory than the ICU did at the zenith of its power.

While the rapid rise of al-Shabaab can be explained in large part by the weakness of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the vacuum left by the fall of the ICU as well as the popular opposition to the Ethiopian occupation, its long-term prospects depend less on the overall security situation within the country and more on civilian support in the territories it controls. As the literature on civil wars and the success of rebel organizations points out, civilian support is instrumental in determining the strategy of actors within a conflict. These are dynamically related to the level of support civilians offer. This paper draws on the literature on rebel-civilian interactions in civil wars to provide a framework through which peacebuilding organizations can analyze the actions of al-Shabaab and support civilians give or withhold from al-Shabaab.

Sources of civilian support

Unlike wars between states, civil wars are characterized by a battle for support from the civilian population within the same state. Whether a rebel organization's goal is control of the state or secession, control of territory is a crucial intervening goal, and civilian support is necessary for territorial control. In addition to providing material support to government or rebel forces, civilians also represent a wealth of information on the whereabouts and activities of an opposing group's forces. They are instrumental in decoding who insurgents and spies are, so ensuring their loyalty is a top priority of government and rebel forces alike. While civilian allegiances may be neutral, to the government, or to a rebel organization, neutrality is often an unviable option when support is fiercely sought and contested.[1]

1. Groups in conflict recruit civilian support through a mix of providing benefits and
2. Utilizing coercion

The first way groups do this is through offering selective benefits to individuals who join, helping them overcome the collective action problem inherent in armed opposition.[2] In societies where large numbers of people are poor and may have no other source of income, any source of steady income is appealing, mak-

1 A succinct discussion of this point can be found in: Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

2 See Lichbach, Mark Irving. 1995. *The Rebel's Dilemma*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

ing rebellion an individually rational activity.[3] While offering selective benefits to individuals is an effective way of recruiting and maintaining support, this is often difficult to do on the scale necessary to secure adequate control over a region's non-combatant population.[4] Thus, rebel organizations often turn to other sources of benefits by providing governance services that benefit large swaths of the targeted population. The form governance takes varies between organizations and conflicts, but it can include taxation, redistribution of wealth, provision of public health care, education, infrastructure, and welfare payments. Providing security and stability is another crucial function rebel organizations perform in areas under their control. This is one of the most-cited reasons for why both the ICU and al-Shabaab gained popularity quickly among the Somali population.[5]

Because civilians are not merely pawns in the interaction between governments and rebel groups in civil conflicts, they have some autonomy in expressing demands for services provided by either side. Civilian loyalty goes to the group that can provide a "better deal" to the affected populations.[6] Hence, governance by rebel organizations is rooted in the demand for services expressed by the population, though this demand varies in nature and magnitude from context to context.

A substantial factor in determining what types of governance civilians demand is their prior history with the state apparatus. Populations become socialized to the state apparatus they are exposed to and expect similar benefits and protection from a competing rebel organization. When a state has established deep administrative and extractive roots in society through extensive taxation and service provision, citizen demands for governance services will be high. Conversely, when a state is historically weak, predatory, and has no established record of providing welfare benefits, health care, and even security, citizens will demand relatively little from a rebel organization in control of their territory.[7] When states have been historically weak, it will be easier for alternative groups to gain loyalty of civilians by establishing their own government structures.

However, it is costly to extend benefits, especially governance, to civilians within even a small area.[8] When desired levels of civilian support are not achieved through incentives, groups resort to using force to coerce support. Violence is a function of the level of control over a group of people. When control and support are high, there is little need to coerce further support. However, when territory is contested, violence is high as fighting groups compete for support.[9] Civilians respond to violence by supporting the actor who poses the most credible threat, which can easily vary as a conflict progresses.

All violence is not equal, though. When actors hold good information, they are able to selectively employ violence against suspected spies and informants. However, when information about whom within the local population supports specific actors is low, as it can be in areas contested by multiple actors, careful application of violence against selected individuals is no longer possible. In these circumstances, actors are restricted to employing indiscriminate violence in hopes of creating fear in the population. Predictably, this can often backfire by substantially increasing civilian resentment for the perpetrator of violence.[10]

3 See Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75-90; Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4): 563-595. This has also been confirmed by a survey of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone that identified lack of economic opportunities as a key factor motivating participation in the conflict; Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2008. "Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2): 436-455.

4 Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*

5 Shay, Shaul. 2008. *Somalia between Jihad and Restoration*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

6 Wood, Reed Morrison. 2010. Competing for Control: Conflict Power Dynamics, Civilian loyalties and Violence in Civil War. Ph.D. dissertation for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

7 Mampilly, Zachariah Cherian. 2007. Stationary Bandits: Understanding Rebel Governance. Ph.D. dissertation for the University of California at Los Angeles.

8 See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*, and Mampilly, *Stationary Bandits*.

9 Ibid. See also Kalyvas, Stathis N. 1999. "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria." *Rationality and Society* 11(3): 243-285.

10 See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence* and "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria"

In sum, civilian support for rebel organizations originates in both the services that they provide as well as the threat of violence. When choosing the "packages" of coercion and benefits, each side can be expected to provide, civilians weigh both short- and long-term concerns. If perception of a group's relative strength falls, defection will occur rapidly.[11] Ideological affinity with an organization is the final factor that enters into civilian calculations of support. While some scholars downplay the importance of this aspect[12], religious and ethnic ties as well as nationalism can provide strong affinities to a fighting organization.[13]

Applied to Somalia

Applying the framework generated above to the case of al-Shabaab's growth in Somalia from 2006 to the present sheds insight on the sources of apparent support for the movement as well as what can be expected to happen in the future. Several factors combined to allow the rapid expansion of al-Shabaab from 2006 to the present.

First, the decline of the ICU in 2006 was not matched by an extension of state authority into South-Central Somalia. Without a serious competing group, it was easy for al-Shabaab to establish civilian support at a low cost. The movement was able to subsume local clans and build support with a minimum level of violence. Had the government been able to extend the rule of law outside of sections of Mogadishu after it defeated the ICU with the help of Ethiopia, al-Shabaab's rise to prominence would have been much less rapid.

Second, the historically weak and predatory state in Somalia established a low threshold of expectations citizens have for groups contending for control of territory or the state. Unlike countries like Sri Lanka, where the legacy of a stronger state forced the rebels to provide many social services, al-Shabaab has been able to provide a minimum level of stability and little else. The history of the Somali state both created the setting in which such expansion could happen for the ICU and al-Shabaab and also lowered the bar for a successful governance structure. This is not a reaction to merely the period after the fall of Siad Barre in the early 1990s. Instead, the entire development of the Somali state has contributed to this situation.[14] For the foreseeable future, it will remain easy for groups to rapidly expand their influence by providing nominal governance structures and public benefits. The traditional system of clan-provided services makes it even easier for al-Shabaab to do this because it can merely support local elites. So long as al-Shabaab can provide security and order, which it has been able to do thus far, it will continue to be associated with the re-emergence of governance in the regions it controls.

Third, al-Shabaab has been able to expand from the southernmost to the central regions of Somalia, mainly due to locally negotiated security agreements with local clan structures, rather than relying solely on the use of force. The ability to negotiate security agreements with local clans has made it easier for al-Shabaab to provide security and order. The decentralized nature of al-Shabaab has made such a strategy possible. The more rigid structure of the TFG has prevented it

11 Wood, *Competing for Control*.

12 For example, Kalyvas asserts that the majority of non-combatants are less preoccupied with the ideological goals of groups and primarily wish to remain uninvolved in a conflict. Only when the threat of violence or amounts of benefits available are sufficiently large do non-combatants cease "fence-sitting".

13 In Sierra Leone, for example, members of the Mende ethnic group were substantially more likely to support and join the Revolutionary United Front than other individuals. See Humphrey and Weinstein "Who Rebels?"

14 Barnes, Cedric and Harun Hassan. 2007. "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1(2): 151-160.

from working with clans in a similar fashion, restricting influence largely to the Mogadishu area

However, such organizations will continue to be weak because they rely on, rather than override, clan loyalties. Al-Shabaab's governance structures will not develop further while strong clan loyalties shape the development of Sharia courts and the provision of other services.[15] Additionally, it faces growing resentment from civilians in the areas it controls, even though it has brought stability to those regions. In the same manner as support for the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone and other rebel organizations emerged and subsequently declined, al-Shabaab's harsh application of Islamic law and forced recruitment, especially of children, feeds resentment.[16]

It would be easy to assume that the support for al-Shabaab arises primarily from the security and stability it provides, the few governance services it engages in, and ideological resonance with segments of the Muslim faith. However, it is a mistake to overlook the role that violence has played in sustaining civilian support for the organization. Violence against civilians and the coercive use of the Sharia courts is heaviest in regions where territorial control is contested. There are instances where violence seems directed against potential rivals rather than justice being administered equally.[17] Such evidence fits the model of strategic violence prevalent in the civil war literature. It is probable that misuse of courts and other forms of coercion will continue at high levels so long as al-Shabaab occupies contested areas.

In areas contested by both al-Shabaab and TFG/AMISOM forces, the actions of the latter are often restricted by insufficient information, resulting in broad targeting strategies and indiscriminate violence against civilians. Al-Shabaab has been able to take advantage of this by intentionally launching mortar rounds against AMISOM and TFG positions from densely populated areas in the hopes AMISOM and TFG forces will respond with artillery fire, killing numerous civilians.[18] This strategy has helped portray the TFG as a non-credible provider of security and created civilian backlash. Even though the deaths can be partially attributed to the tactics al-Shabaab has adopted, it has gained civilian support nonetheless. The strategy appears to have worked in portraying al-Shabaab as a better guarantee of security than the TFG, even though the recent expansion of the TFG/AMISOM controlled area in Mogadishu is leading to a shift in military tactics from all sides. Coupled with the nationalistic support al-Shabaab was able to count on while Ethiopian forces remained inside Somalia, this helped sustain the movement's civilian support in the face of the atrocities it has perpetrated.

Observations and recommendations

1. Because authority is easily constituted in South-Central Somalia, peacemakers[19] and the international community should seek to engage with relevant actors, rather than supplant them or rely on regional powers. Because it will be difficult to extend state control in any meaningful manner for the

15 Mampilly finds support for his hypothesis that governance structures are less effective when rebel organization is more fractured. Melissa Simpson argues that the original ICU courts were products of the clan structure in Mogadishu and will continue to be shaped by clan loyalties. Simpson, Melissa. 2009. An Islamic Solution to State Failure in Somalia? *Geopolitics of the Middle East* 2(1): 31-49.

16 *Human Rights Watch*. 2010. "Harsh War, Harsh Peace: Abuses by al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia."

17 Human Rights Watch has documented numerous such incidents. Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 By peacemakers I mean individuals and organizations working on top-down mediation efforts.

foreseeable future, even without challenging groups, solutions to Somalia's problems cannot focus on centralized authority building exercises.

2. Peacekemakers and the international community should not focus exclusively on the ideological and governance aspects of civilian support for al-Shabaab. Coercive violence also underlies the apparent support for the group. Attempts to erode support for radical elements of al-Shabaab that do not address the misuse of Islamic courts for coercive purposes will not tackle all the sources of civilian support for al-Shabaab.
3. International strategies to weaken and defeat al-Shabaab, namely its designation as a terrorist organization and AMISOM/TFG/Ethiopian efforts to defeat it militarily, have had the opposite effect. Until harsh military reprisals against al-Shabaab locations end, which often harm more civilians than militia, al-Shabaab will continue to remain a viable source of security. Likewise, if Ethiopian troops and their proxies re-enter the country, their presence will provide a nationalistic rallying point for support of al-Shabaab. In a paradoxical situation, strengthening the TFG militarily may be responsible for weakening its roots in society, undercutting any hopes it has to govern effectively in the long run.

Re-thinking Somali national identity: Nationalism, state formation and peacebuilding in Somalia

Ashley Lyn Greene

Executive summary

This paper examines nationalism and state formation in Somalia from the perspectives of history and identity politics. I argue that while nationalist movements have at times, when faced with a common enemy, generated temporary cooperation among Somalis, they have been unable to integrate traditional forms of identity such as clan affiliation and Islam. They have been at their weakest in the face of clan feuds and regional power struggles. Furthermore, disagreements over national narratives, territory and governance hinder the formation of a Somali national identity that might mobilize people around a single system of government and a shared vision of the future. Most detrimental to the development of national unity in Somalia is the absence of a viable government. Although nationalism remains a potentially useful peacebuilding tool, it is currently not strong enough to serve as an immediate solution to conflict in Somalia.

This paper proposes a theoretical framework, based on John Paul Lederach's theory of vertical and horizontal integration. Local stakeholders and peacebuilding organizations may approach the issue of nationalism using this framework as it relates to future peace in Somalia. Rather than promoting a nationalist identity that subverts traditional social structures and religious identities, peacebuilders must support the construction of a viable state that incorporates various identities into a complimentary and stable system of relationships and governance. Only within the framework of such a functional state can nationalism act as a cohesive and positive force in Somalia.

Nationalism and the historical debate

Scholars disagree on whether the Somali people constitute a nation. My aim here is neither to provide a comprehensive summary of that debate, nor to engage in a lengthy discussion of what does or does not constitute nationalism. Instead, I will briefly present the main points of contention in the historical debate surrounding Somali nationalism and point out several general conclusions relevant to future peace efforts.

Those who argue that the Somali people constitute a nation emphasize the shared ethnic origins of Somalis as migrants from the Arabian Peninsula, belief in a common ancestry, shared Somali language and collections of oral poetry, general adherence to Islam, and a collective history of struggle against regional and colonial powers in the Horn of Africa.[1] Scholars of this position claim that these traits represent homogeneity rarely found in many regions of Africa and that such uniformity

1 Common characteristics include racial origins, association with a particular territory, language, history, culture, tradition, and religious beliefs. For further reading on nationalism see: Renan, E., 'What is a nation?', eds. G. Eley and R.G. Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 42-55; Hobsbawm E.J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Cornell University Press, 2009); Smith, A.D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1991); and Brubaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

fosters a nationalist sentiment that drives the struggle to achieve cultural unity and transcend identity based solely on territorial boundaries arbitrarily drawn by foreign powers. This process ultimately transforms defunct colonial possessions, plagued by cultural heterogeneity and ethnic conflict, into viable modern-day states.[2]

Somalia scholar I.M. Lewis states that although colonialism historically represented a powerful fulcrum around which nationalist sentiment has coalesced, Somali nationalism is a "centuries old phenomenon" originating from shared cultural traits and traditions that precede colonial divisions of Somali land and presage dissatisfaction with the territorial boundaries imposed by Europeans.[3] While Lewis recognizes clan rivalries and societal inequalities, often used to argue against the existence of a cohesive Somali nation, he maintains that narratives of origin and migration represent a "national genealogy in which ultimately every Somali group finds a place".[4] Assertions of pre-colonial Somali nationalism are crucial for understanding nationalist sentiments regarding territory. As Lewis articulates,

> The formation in 1960 of a Somali state ... applied to the former British and Italian Somali territories, established a state which was inherently incomplete. It left outside the goal of Somali nationalist aspirations the remaining three Somali communities then under foreign rule in the French territory of Jibuti, in Harar Province of Ethiopia (mainly the Ogaden), and in the northern province of Kenya (then still British).[5]

Unlike other African nationalists, who "sought to transform their fragile tribal mosaics into cohesive nations", Somalis aimed to extend the frontiers of the state to encompass the three remaining Somali colonies and thus reunite their sundered nation.[6]

A second set of scholars on the opposite spectrum of the debate contends that historians have mistakenly attributed age-old feelings of "oneness" to Somalis.[7] Unlike "organic" nationalist sentiments, which develop around common characteristics such as race and language, Somali nationalism was "in large measure, an anti-colonial phenomenon, whose ultimate aim was to overthrow an unjust system of government".[8] With the departure of colonial powers and the cessation of active conflict with neighboring states, Somalis who coalesced under common conditions of oppression reverted to tribe and clan-based national politics that revolved around resource allocation and domestic power struggles. These scholars assert that nationalist movements have constructed false impressions of a homogenous and fundamentally egalitarian society that, in reality, is deeply divided and hierarchical.

Thus Abdi M. Kusow claims that Somali nationalism has developed out of competing narratives, which ultimately construct social boundaries of "Somaliness".[9] Certain segments and clans are incorporated into these boundaries while others are excluded. Common lineage narratives, which trace Somalis' origins to non-indigenous Muslim ancestors, exclude those with African ancestry (Bantu-Jarer) and non-Islamic traditions. Clans are ranked according to means of livelihood, lineage and location, and the legitimacy of territorial claims. Because "social, economic and territorial priorities and values" are shaped largely by ideas about land ownership, competing interpretations of national narratives and territory

2 Lewis, I.M., *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. ix.

3 Lewis, I.M., 'Introduction', ed. I.M. Lewis, *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 9.

4 When tracing the history of southern migration Lewis notes that Somali expansion "was not a concerted operation under a single direction: it was a disjointed series of clan and lineage movements in which there were many cross-currents of migration as group jostled group in the search for new pastures". Lewis, I.M., *A Modern History of Somalia*, pp. 15-32.

5 Ibid., pp. x-xi.

6 Ibid., p. xi.

7 Mahaddala, H., 'Pithless nationalism: the Somali case', ed. A.M. Kusow, *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 2004.), p. 60.

8 Ibid., p. 69.

9 Kusow, A.M., 'Contested narratives and the crisis of the nation-state in Somalia: a prolegomenon', ed. A.M. Kusow, *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 2004.), pp. 1-2.

contribute heavily to Somalia's social cleavages.[10] Kusow makes similar arguments concerning Somali dialects, which he claims are judged in relation to the state-sponsored Somali language and literature. These hierarchical notions of Somaliness affect all segments of society, "from the nation to the clan and sub-clan".[11]

A third group of scholars took a middle stance, arguing that although Somalis share common characteristics and have experienced intermittent surges of nationalist movements, they have not managed to unite under these characteristics to the extent necessary for national coherence. Most scholars of Somali nationalism, regardless of where and when they locate its origins, agree that anti-colonial struggles and external conflicts such as World War II provided powerful impetuses for nationalist movements. Within an anti-colonial context, nationalist movements were able to compete for support from clans while working toward common goals of independence and unification.

Yet even under colonial occupation, total unity proved elusive.[12] Nationalist sentiments were quickly swallowed by the imperatives of day-to-day political life. In the words of Cedric Barnes, "nationalist politics only unified local Somalis as long as it served their political and economic interests to do so ... local society and economy was far more relevant than abstract concepts of national citizenship and nationalism".[13] Saadia Touval views nationhood as a positive goal but considers traditional cleavages such as clan rivalries and the absence of state institutions to be significant obstacles to successful national integration. Touval claims that despite shared qualities and definitional debates, evaluations of the legitimacy and prospects of Somali nationalism must rest primarily "upon the cohesion and sense of purpose of the nation it claims to represent".[14]

The continuing controversy over Somali nationalism raises several concerns relevant to future peacebuilding efforts. First, it indicates that clan divisions represent serious obstacles to national integration. Most agree that Somali nationalism is strongest when fomented by external conflict and weakest when confronting deep-seated feuds between clans. Thus far, Somali heterogeneity, reinforced by longstanding constructions of clan identity, is not subsumed by nationalism and remains a practical barrier to peaceful social relations and stable governance. Overcoming such obstacles will require inclusive strategies that integrate traditional clan structures into conceptions of Somali national identity.

The second critical lesson to be learned from the historical debate is that no single or dominant conception of nationalism exists in Somalia today. While Somalis may unite against foreign oppression, or for a unified Greater Somalia, such nationalist sentiment generates only temporary cooperation and does not end the threat posed by internal divisions. Thus, at the current time nationalism is not strong enough to mobilize the majority of Somalis around a single form of government and a shared vision of the future. In the absence of a cohesive Somali national identity, peacebuilders should concentrate on shaping inclusive institutions that contribute to a stable and viable state. Once a permanent system of government is in place, a positive form of nationalism may emerge that incorporates multiple Somali identities and contributes to sustainable peace.

10 According to Kusow pastoral nomadism, versus all other modes of production, has been one of the most important principles of social differentiation in Somalia. Camel herding is most dignified, while fishing and agriculture are held in less esteem. This system proscribes groups such as the Midgaan, Yibir and Tumaal, as stigmatized or marginalized segments of society. A "Segmentary Lineage Stratification System" measures how "far lineage-wise a clan is away from the original ancestor, combined with spatial distance from original dispersal point". Clans located further south are further away from the landing place of the original ancestor and are therefore lower in status. Regarding territory, clans that are considered *Mudnaan iyo Asal* (original owners of the land) have stronger claims than those considered to be *Xuraysato* (takers of the land by force). Kusow argues that territorial-based narratives constitute a form of clan identity that competes with lineage-based narratives. Neither, in his opinion, has been dominant enough to create hegemony and the resulting conflicts in interpretation have contributed to Somalia's social cleavages. Ibid., pp. 6-10.

11 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

12 Examples of such nationalist movements include the Somali Youth League, the Greater Somalia League, the Hizbia Dastur Mustaqil Somali, and the Somali National Union.

13 Barnes argues that during the period of British Military Administration following the defeat of the Italian Empire in what is today eastern Ethiopia, some clan leaders (mainly Darood) preferred occupation to unification under British rule and withheld support for the Somali Youth League. See Barnes, C., 'The Somali political economy in eastern Ethiopia, circa 1941-1948', ed. A.M. Kusow, *Putting the Cart Before the Horse: Contested Nationalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State in Somalia* (Trenton: The Red Sea Press, 2004.), p. 34.

14 Touval, S., *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 23.

Nationalism and the prospects for peace

This section argues that sustainable nation building in Somalia cannot be built in the absence of inclusive state institutions. It discusses the importance of including traditional social structures such as clans and Islam in processes of state formation. It proposes John Paul Lederach's theory of vertical and horizontal integration as a possible model for incorporating traditional Somali identities towards constructive state building and the strengthening of a Somali national identity.

The absence of inclusive state institutions represents the largest impediment to nationalism in Somalia. As Kusow points out, "The key criterion that determines whether or not a society can flourish as a nation depends on the degree to which individuals and groups are included in the social, political, and economic boundaries of the nation."[15] Successful nation building and cohesive national sentiment must be built within the framework of stable state institutions.[16] Without a viable state to provide basic public services such as security, a judicial system, infrastructure, and healthcare, "people will look to whatever grouping, militia, or identity offers them the best chance of survival ... The result is a fracturing of the polity, with local, substate, and ethnic identities providing the immediate basis for political organization".[17]

While religious or clan-based organizations may be able to provide some of those basic services temporarily, they cannot build national identity or provide sustainable and effective governance on a statewide level.[18] Furthermore, ensuing power struggles between local groups can have disastrous humanitarian consequences.[19] While nationalist movements have been unable to foster agreement about the type of state Somalia might have, a functioning and inclusive state would provide security and legitimacy upon which a sense of civic identity and a shared vision for the future could be built.[20]

It is imperative that a Somali state be built around the inclusion and integration of traditional Somali identities. Repeatedly, movements emerge that attempt to elevate one identity over another or subsume traditional functions within society under the dominance of a single identity. Their failure to incorporate diverse participation has led to violent conflict and furthered inequality. Any sustainable solution for Somalia's future, nationalist or otherwise, will need to address competing identities and establish common goals. Most critical are the inclusion of clans and Islam. Both represent well-entrenched forms of identity in Somali society and will be crucial for building nationalist sentiment that resonates with the majority of citizens and holds continuing relevancy beyond the spheres of politics and international conflict. Rather than eroding these structures, peacebuilders must integrate them into a viable state system that draws upon their positive social functions while furthering Somali national identity.

John Paul Lederach's theory of vertical and horizontal integration provides a helpful model for peacebuilders seeking to encourage inclusive forms of state building and nationalism. Lederach defines vertical and horizontal integration as "the development of working relationships that cut across the levels of society vertically (linking community work with higher levels, both within each commu-

15 Kusow, A.M., 'Contested narratives and the crisis of the nation-state in Somalia: a prolegomenon', p. 11.

16 Dodge, T., 'Preface to the Paperback Edition 2005', *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. xxvi.

17 Ibid.

18 Talentino, A.K., 'The Two Faces of Nation-Building: Developing Function and Identity', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 3 (October 2004), p. 569.

19 In Somalia, following the exit of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 and the decent into civil war, various warlords and clan leaders vied for political and economic power. In addition to the tens of thousands killed by inter-clan warfare, many Somali civilians suffered from mass starvation and internal displacement. It is believed that at least 35,000 civilian noncombatants were killed as a result of fighting between factions of the Hawiye clan in Mogadishu between 1991 and 1992 alone. Clarke, W. and Gosende, R., 'Somalia: can a collapsed state reconstitute itself', ed. R.I. Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p. 140.

20 Disagreement over the structure of the state was seen during the 1990s when clans debated whether to have a central or federal system. Generally, the sub-clans of the Hawiye clan-family wanted a strong central state based in Mogadishu while the Darood-dominated coalition backed by Ethiopia and led by Puntland president, Abdullahi Yusuf, wanted an anti-Islamist federal state. Eds. M. Bradbury and S. Healy 'Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking', *Accord: an International Review of Peace Initiatives Issue 21* (London: Conciliation Resources, 2010), p. 13.

nity and beyond the community) and that *cut across the lines of identity that mark the central divisions of the society*".[21] Two processes are particularly important for successful vertical/horizontal integration:

- processes that have been generated for increasing participation in peacebuilding and creating constructively redefined relationships;
- social mechanisms emerging from those processes that have a life beyond the immediate need that gave them birth.

Recognizing that conflicts are typically drawn around group identity lines, Lederach contends that any efforts to promote long-term reconciliation should focus on the "restoration and rebuilding of relationships".[22] While the ultimate goal of vertical and horizontal integration is to permanently redefine conflicting relationships, sustainable peacebuilding requires both a vision of change and practical, immediate action.

In the Somali context, the processes generated must revolve around the formation of a viable state and institutions that increase participation and constructively redefine relationships between competing identities. Nationalism is the enduring social mechanism that will emerge from those structures. While immediate steps are required towards building a viable state, long-term goals include the emergence of a Somali national identity that will redefine existing identities and relationships. Local stakeholders and peacebuilders can then work to strengthen a shared national identity while weakening exclusive identities, such as those built around clanism.[23]

The two most salient identities in Somali society, clan kinship and Islam, are often seen as the main obstacles to the construction of a national identity. Clan feuds and power struggles between elites have derailed peace processes, sparked violent confrontations over territory, and heightened competition over unequally distributed political and economic resources. Islamic movements, many of which reject a Somali national identity in favor of a single Islamic identity, have clashed with domestic clan structures and met external resistance from neighbors and Western powers who fear the rise of Islamic extremism.

Yet religious and clan identities are deeply entrenched in Somali society and provide the basis for many aspects of daily life, including mechanisms for dispute resolution and reconciliation. Approaches that try to exclude rather than incorporate these traditional modes of identity will fail to foster peace and stability. Sustainable peacebuilding efforts must focus on creating state institutions that integrate Somali identities into working relationships at the local, regional and national levels (vertical integration) while contributing to the long-term goal of a national Somali identity capable of bridging societal divisions (horizontal integration).

In *Building Peace*, Lederach proposes a series of questions (outlined in Table 1) that indicate successful approaches to vertical and horizontal integration throughout various stages of peacebuilding. The remainder of this section will apply these questions to past and ongoing efforts to incorporate clan identity into processes of state building.

21 Lederach, J.P., *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), pp. 142-143.

22 Lederach, J.P., *Building Peace*, p. 24.

23 Also known as identity reconstruction, this approach is proposed by Elmi, A.A. as one of four strategies for dealing with clan identity in Somalia. Elmi, A.A., *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), p. 45.

Table 1: **Vertical and Horizontal Integration**

Timeline: Cycle 1	Processes	Mechanisms
Prospective	In the activities to be generated, what is the level of participation and development of relationships in the targeted communities/initiatives? 1. Is there significant relationship vertically (between the grass-roots and local/regional/national leadership)? 2. Is there significant relationship horizontally (across the perceived lines of conflict identities)? 3. Who seems to have the greatest potential to serve as agents of change in this setting?	In the activities to be generated: 1. What are the projected mechanisms (institutions/networks) that are to be created? 2. How are they designed to cut across vertical/horizontal levels? 3. What exists that functions well and what support does it need? What exists that does not function well and needs to be changed? What does not exist that should?
Transactive	From direct experience so far: 1. What obstacles are there to achieving vertical/horizontal integration? 2. What steps have been proposed to overcome those obstacles? 3. Who, at this point, appears to have the greatest potential for change (significant people/relationships)?	From direct experience so far: 1. What mechanisms appear to be needed and possible? 2. What would be needed to sustain these mechanisms?
Retrospective	Looking back across the cycle: 1. What obstacles are there in achieving vertical/horizontal integration? 2. What are proposed steps to overcome those obstacles? 3. Who, at this point, appears to have greatest potential for change (significant people/relationships)?	Looking back across the cycle: 1. What mechanisms appear to be needed and possible? 2. What would be needed to sustain these mechanisms? 3. What exists, what needs changing, what needs creating?

Source: John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (1997), p.143.

Incorporating clans into state structures represents one of the more significant challenges for peacebuilders in Somalia. Clan kinship provides the framework and social functions by which Somalis structure their daily lives and interactions. They also serve as the main characteristic by which Somalis recognize each other, provide a sense of identity and belonging, and establish communal support systems. Additionally, they also provide politicians with means of mobilizing support and are used to determine political representation.[24] These functions, while in many ways positive, also present peacebuilders with substantial obstacles to national integration (See Table 1: Transactive Processes Question 1). Oppressive regimes have used clan identity to target specific segments of the population for political and economic exclusion and mass killing. Militias struggling for power and resources are organized around clan lines. A sense that one belongs to a certain clan often entails feelings of competition and animosity towards other clans and involves the inheritance of long-standing rivalries.

In addition to providing positive collaboration for communal needs such as watering livestock, digging wells, assisting with weddings and funerals, and aiding poorer members, communal support systems take on the role of life insurance and retribution through the use of *diya*-paying groups. One of the most destructive results is the use of collective punishment. When a member of another clan is killed, the victim's clan will kill someone from the criminal's clan, regardless of whether or not they were responsible for the crime. Guilt is established by a person's membership to the offending clan. Finally, politicians often abuse clan identity by manipulating real or perceived grievances for personal gain and to further exclusive political agendas.[25]

The negative functions and abuses of clan identity present both immediate and long-term obstacles. Most imperative are those that interfere with the stability of state institutions. Violence between and within clans, whether carried out by militias or *diya*-paying groups, competes with the state's monopoly on the use of force and its means of enforcing law and order. Issues of representation and political corruption are also critical. Long-term concerns are those that hinder the formation of a Somali national identity. One example is conceptions of territorial ownership. Typically, citizens should feel as though their rights, the ability to vote and compete for political positions, freedom of movement, etc., extend to every part of the country. As Somalia scholar Afyare Abdi Elmi notes, "The popular perception among Somalis is that each clan owns the traditional areas that it inhabits".

This perception has a negative impact when establishing a state wherein all groups share its ownership.[26] Obstacles such as this effect not only immediate issues such as freedom of movement but long-term goals of national cohesion as well. While there is some overlap between immediate and long-term obstacles, political corruption that favors one clan over another also impedes a sense of national unity. Separating immediate from long-term challenges can help peacebuilders distinguish between areas that require practical, immediate action from those that necessitate a gradual vision of change. Because nationalism must be

24 Elmi, A.A., *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, pp. 32-33.
25 Ibid., p. 34.
26 Ibid, p. 38.

built within the framework of a state, peacebuilders should focus foremost on developing viable state institutions. Once these are in place, long-term processes such as inclusion, reconciliation, and the formation of a national identity can begin to take root.

Various strategies have been proposed to confront the challenges posed by clan identity (Transactive Processes Question 2). Exclusive strategies that advocate the forcible suppression of traditional Somali identities or the furthering of divisions among society have been counterproductive and should serve as negative examples for peacebuilders seeking inclusive state structures and national unity. One such approach, enacted by Somalia's military government in the early 1970s, was the complete suppression of communal identity through the use of "clan-blind" policies. Although seemingly favorable towards nationalism in their focus on individual rights and citizenship, "clan-blind" politics proved impractical and disingenuous. "While official rhetoric banned any use of clan identity in public places, the leadership practiced it in its worst forms."[27] In addition to the infeasibility of asking people to abandon a system that had governed social interactions for generations, nominal suppression of clan identity fueled government corruption and hypocrisy. A second plan proposed in the past has been to partition Somalia along clan lines. Given the number and fluidity of clans and sub-clans numbering in the hundreds, and the scarcity of resources in Somalia, this plan is equally unconstructive.

Strategies that hold more promise for peacebuilders are power-sharing and identity reconstruction. Power-sharing has been proposed in various forms and is currently incorporated into Somalia's 4.5 formula, which allots a 122 parliamentary seats to four major clans and 62 seats to a conglomeration of smaller clans. While this attempts to incorporate clan identity into a representative system of government, it faces opposition from Islamists and intellectuals who see it as an inaccurate and unfair representation of clans as well as a means of empowering warlords and clan elites.[28] While the current 4.5 formula is certainly not ideal, scholars such as Elmi rightly argue that some form of power-sharing among clans will be necessary in the initial stages of state building and may have positive repercussions. For example, Elmi claims that incorporating the clan system can bring legitimacy to a newly established state because it deals with the question of representation in a way familiar to most Somalis. He proposes a bicameral system, in which one house represents clans while the other represents the population using geographical formulae, as a possible alternative to the 4.5 formula.[29]

A second strategy that Elmi discusses is identity reconstruction. This involves strengthening an inclusive identity that combating groups share while weakening other, exclusive identities.[30] Because clan identities are predominantly exclusive, the two remaining options are Islam and Somali nationalism. While uniting Somalis under Islamic identity is one possibility, any attempt would be strongly opposed by outside actors, including the predominantly Christian governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and the United States, which fears the rise of Islamic extremism. Such fears have gained political credence with the growth of the al-Shabaab

27 Ibid., p. 39.

28 Elmi discusses these two approaches at length in his chapter on clan identity and peacebuilding. Ibid., Chapter 3.

29 Ibid., pp. 45.

30 Ibid., pp. 45-47.

movement. Although al-Shabaab has been able to recruit members from across clans, its willingness to use violence has caused widespread instability and human suffering. A final problem related to Islamic identity is that many Islamists reject both clan and Somali national identity in favor of a dominant religious identity and a universal Muslim nation. For those who advance this goal, Somali cohesion under an Islamic identity – i.e. an Islamic state – would entail the exclusion of other traditional identities, which are perceived as unequal and divisive. A better alternative to a single dominant identity is a collective identity that incorporates both Islam and clan structures. Nationalism, while not strong enough at the present time, could eventually fulfill this role.

Despite the challenges these strategies faces, power sharing and identity reconstruction serve both the immediate needs of state building and the longer-term goals of constructing a national Somali identity. In both cases, the mechanisms needed are inclusive institutions that contribute to a viable Somali state and intentionally foster national cohesion (Transactive Mechanisms Question 1). A government that provides crucial public services such as security, law and order, and judicial and educational systems will help regulate disputes between clans and weaken the negative aspects of clan identity. Internal security mechanisms such as police, courts, and prisons will diminish the retributive functions of *diya*-paying groups while allowing them to maintain their positive contributions to community collaboration.[31] The inclusion of local actors, traditional clan elders, women and civil society in state structures and decision making will contribute to vertical integration and national sentiment (Transactive Processes Question 3). Contrary to past peace processes in which state formation has been heavily influenced by outside actors, renewed efforts must allow Somalis full participation and ownership of the economic and political decisions that accompany the creation of a state.[32]

Conclusions

Placing academic debates about nationalism in dialogue with the realities and challenges facing peacebuilders illustrates that no single identity can offer a sustainable solution to conflict and state formation in Somalia. Sustainable peacebuilding efforts must rely on approaches that foster inclusion and participation among multiple Somali identities. Clan affiliation and Islam represent entrenched sources of identity among Somali society. Rather than attempting to dilute or subsume these identities under a nationalist framework, local stakeholders in Somalia's peace process must work towards an integrative system of stable governance. Crucial to this will be finding ways to incorporate traditional systems and beliefs such as clan kinship and Islam in a way that also functions within the political boundaries of a state. Peacebuilders must identify the strengths of traditional Somali social structures while promoting government institutions that compensate for their weaknesses.

Peacebuilders must approach conflict in Somalia with both short-term and long-term strategies. In the short-term, priority must be given to the establish-

31 Lewis, I.M., *A Modern History of Somalia*, p. 11; Elmi, A.A., *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, p. 33.

32 Elmi argues that the 2004 Federal Government of the Somali Republic failed in large part because Somalis were excluded from decisions regarding the defining of regions, the establishment of elections, and the distribution of resources. Elmi, A.A., *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, pp. 16-27.

ment of a viable state. This should be done through inclusive mechanisms and peace processes that involve local actors and civil society. In the long-term, peacebuilders must encourage inclusive state institutions that foster the growth of a national Somali identity. Connecting clan social structures to national institutions would provide a starting point for achieving such inclusion and addressing the questions raised by Lederach's theory of vertical/horizontal integration. State institutions that establish both vertical and horizontal relationships, vertically between local, regional, and national actors and horizontally between clans and conflicting identities, will provide the framework necessary for the emergence of sustainable national goals and identity. This will require moving beyond ideological conceptions of nationhood and towards the practical ways in which identities can work collaboratively. With inclusive policies, the existence of multiple actors, voices and identities can be used to strengthen, not deter, national cohesion.

US engagement in Somalia: Frames, missed opportunities and alternative options

Laura Weis

Executive summary

For many Americans, recent drone strikes against alleged terrorists or the memory of humanitarian intervention in the early 1990s characterize the scope of US engagement in Somalia. Perhaps less well remembered, but no less significant, are US-Somali relations during the Cold War era. Examining US involvement in Somalia over time sheds light on patterns of engagement that have in some cases obstructed peacebuilding efforts or contributed to perpetuating cycles of violence. It also reveals potential lessons to be learned from missed opportunities.

In the following, two related questions are explored, proposed by the Life & Peace Institute (LPI):

- How has the "war on terror" framed US engagement in Somalia, and how was it framed before 2001?
- What are the possibilities for peacebuilding that may have been obstructed due to the "war on terror" or previous ideological frameworks, and what alternative frames for US engagement may exist?

Exploring the first question provides historical context for the second, which seeks to understand the consequences of that history, while also envisioning alternatives that could facilitate positive changes in US policy toward Somalia. The first section of this article presents a brief overview of US involvement in Somalia from the Cold War to the present and suggests how particular frameworks may have contributed to missed opportunities for a constructive US role in Somalia, or obstructed Somali and NGO led peacebuilding efforts. The second section offers modest recommendations informed by the discussion of missed opportunities and posits an alternative framework for US engagement with Somalia.

Frames and missed opportunities

Cold War Frame: 1950s-1980s

After World War II, Cold War considerations framed US engagement in the Horn of Africa. The US and the Soviet Union vied for influence in the region, shifting support in response to ideological allegiance, changing governments, and geopolitical interests.[1] The US provided approximately $1 billion in military aid to the Horn of Africa, including $380 million to Somalia, between 1954 and 1987. US bilateral economic aid to Somalia during the same period totaled $677 million.[2] Professor and former US diplomat David Rawson referred to military and economic assistance packages during the late 1970s and 1980s as the "security/development mix".[3]

1 Peter Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 17-22. See also Ken Menkhaus, "US foreign assistance to Somalia: phoenix from the ashes?" *Middle East Policy*, (5:1) (January 1997), p. 127.

2 Woodward, p. 127. The Soviet Union was Somalia's primary ally during the 1970s, while the US offered military and economic support during the 1960s and 1980s. See also Menkhaus (1997), p. 127.

3 David Rawson, in Ken Menkhaus, "US foreign assistance to Somalia: phoenix from the ashes?" *Middle East Policy* (5:1) (January 1997), p. 129.

From 1978 to 1988, an influx of US and international development aid focused on agricultural and pastoral projects, refugee assistance and policy reforms linking assistance to economic and fiscal policy reform.[4] According to anthropologist Catherine Besteman, Somali President Siad Barre's distribution of this aid, along with state resources like water and land, was increasingly perceived in clan terms, which encouraged "public awareness of and commentary on the clan basis of his rule". Increasing competition for resources and the flood of development dollars fueled a "growing emphasis on new kinds of clan alliances in the national arena".[5] Urban based, elite competition for access to and control of state resources channeled class struggles into clan terms, and clan identity became a more visible and prominent form of identity. Most rural Somalis did not participate in this competition, yet they were deeply affected by Barre's policies, such as land tenure laws that made state-controlled title registration the only legal way to own land, alienating rural farmers and encouraging land concentration by urban elites.[6]

Missed opportunities

Some have posited that during this period, "success or failure measured in developmental terms was ultimately irrelevant, since the primary purpose of Cold War economic assistance was strategic".[7] Yet, even within the Cold War framework, might the US government have worked, for example, to ensure that aid was distributed more evenly to avoid a regional imbalance in development?[8] In addition, the struggle for resources during the development influx in the 1980s and the introduction of clan identity at the national level deeply affected Somali society.

During this time, and as Barre's government began to collapse, many US and international actors adopted clan as a mode of analysis for this competition and as an explanation of subsequent violence. The significance of clan affiliations cannot be denied. However, Besteman contends that the "clan basis" of "recent warfare was the result, not the cause, of contemporary conflicts and competition", and the discourse of clan "obscure[d] the far more complex historical tensions within Somali society".[9] Further research could examine whether adopting the language of clan led to an emphasis on clan based solutions at the expense of opportunities to build unity across relational tensions.

Frames in flux

Late 1980s – 2001. At the end of the Cold War, President George H.W. Bush called for a "new world order". US choices in foreign policy would promote liberal economic policies, focus on democratization and good governance and respect the rule of law and human rights.[10] Indeed, in the late 1980s, Congress and the media expressed concerns about human rights abuses in Somalia. At first, the US avoided direct criticism of Barre (perhaps out of concern for basing rights) but ultimately froze its foreign assistance to Somalia, "an ethical luxury that the logic of the Cold War had prevented in the past".[11]

4 Menkhaus (1997), pp. 128-131.

5 Cathrine Besteman, "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia", *Cultural Anthropology* (11:1) (1996), p. 126.

6 Besteman, pp. 127-129.

7 Menkhaus (1997), p. 133.

8 Menkhaus, (1997), p. 128.

9 Besteman, pp. 128-129.

10 Woodward, pp. 11-12.

11 Menkhaus (1997), p. 125.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the US government received permission to establish military bases in the surrounding area, and Somali military facilities diminished in importance. Barre's regime fell in January 1991, and former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen (1989-1993), writes that "[a]ssuming that the clan system would somehow find a way to bring order out of chaos, with US forces well accommodated directly in the Gulf, and with our embassy closed, we more or less dropped Somalia from our radar screen".[12] As many as 80,000 Somalis were killed during the ensuing violence, and a major famine followed, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 240,000.[13]

Humanitarian crisis put Somalia back on the radar screen in 1992, but (absent, perhaps, a well-defined Cold War frame) Cohen cites bureaucratic wrangling over whether it was a "food problem" or a "security problem" as an obstacle to early action.[14] In August 1992, the Bush administration authorized "Operation Provide Relief", a food airlift. International consensus began to emerge around armed intervention to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the UN Security Council authorized a US led, multinational operation, UNITAF, which lasted from December 1992 until April 1993.[15]

In May 1993 (after President Clinton was in office), the mission was handed over to the UN, and UNOSOM II lasted from May 1993 until March 1995. The operation involved "an overreaching, nation-building phase" and "a scaled-back, accommodative phase" following the October 1993 violent clash in Mogadishu between UN forces, including US personnel, and Somali fighters.[16] The battle resulted in the deaths of 18 US military personnel, and Somali leaders put their losses at 312 killed and 814 wounded.[17]

During the Clinton years, longer-term, comprehensive assistance to prevent state collapse, civil war, and protracted humanitarian crises, or "complex emergencies", viewed as threats to US interests and global stability, emerged as a tool of post-Cold War foreign policy.[18] According to USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Somalia was classified as a complex emergency, though disaster assistance to the country dropped from over $49 million in FY1993 to around $6.3 million in FY1995. Disaster assistance continued throughout the rest of the 1990s at a comparable level.[19]

Mohamed Sahnoun, UN Special Representative for Somalia in 1992, cites three missed opportunities for preventive diplomacy during this period. In May 1988, the US Government Accountability Office and the State Department documented Barre's violent crushing of an uprising in the North, but no substantive international action on behalf of the victims occurred.[20] Secondly, in May 1990, the US and the international community could have supported calls for a national reconciliation conference in a manifesto signed by Somali business people, intellectuals, and tradesmen.[21] Finally, in 1991, Somalia lacked a functioning government after the fall of Barre. The US increased humanitarian aid, but it did not engage in finding a political solution, and there was no international, concerted mediation effort as clans and sub clans vied for power.[22]

12 Herman J. Cohen, Intervening in *Africa: Superpower Peacemaking in a Troubled Continent* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: MacMillan Press Ltd; New York: St. Martin's Press, LLC, 2000), p. 203.

13 Ken Menkhaus with Hassan Sheikh, Shane Quinn, and Ibrahim Farah, "Somalia: Civil Society in a Collapsed State", in *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: a Critical Assessment*, Thania Paffenholz, Ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010), pp. 322-323.

14 Cohen pp. 206-207.

15 For Cohen's account of the deliberations about and implementation of the intervention, see Cohen, pp. 204-217. A Los Angeles Times article later probed whether the US military mission in Somalia was strictly humanitarian, as US oil companies were well-positioned to move in once the country was at peace. In fact, Conoco, Inc. had maintained an office in Mogadishu, and it was utilized as a de facto American embassy in the days leading up to the intervention. See Mark Fineman, "The Oil Factor in Somalia", *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1993. Available online at: http://articles.latimes.com/1993-01-18/news/mn-1337_1_oil-reserves.

16 Chester A. Crocker, "The Lessons of Somalia: Not Everything Went Wrong", *Foreign Affairs* (74:3) (May-June 1995), p. 4.

17 Rick Atkinson, "Night of a Thousand Casualties", *The Washington Post*, January 31, 1994, A1.

18 Menkhaus (1997), p. 125.

19 "USAID/OFDA Disaster Assistance to Somalia", *USAID*, Historical Assistance table available online at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/somalia/template/index.html.

20 Mohamed Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), pp. 5-6.

21 Sahnoun, pp. 6-8.

22 Sahnoun, pp. 9-11.

There is near consensus that the international community did not meet the challenges posed by the Somali famine, refugee crisis, and ensuing violence in 1991 and 1992. Only a small number of aid workers and diplomats remained in Somalia following the fall of Barre, and the US delegation initially blocked attempts to place Somalia on the UN Security Council's agenda when UN resources were stretched.[23] Clarke and Herbst argue that when US troops intervened in December 1992, they "stepped deep into the muck of Somali politics", and "there was no clear vision of how reconciliation should proceed" on the behalf of either the US or the UN.[24] More concerted and coherent international efforts to pursue reconciliation and a development strategy beyond emergency assistance could have contributed to creating the space for Somali led peacebuilding.

Finally, the media and some US officials adopted an "explanatory scheme" for analyzing Somalia that characterized clan based rivalries not only as the primary obstacle to resolving violence, but also as the cause of the violence.[25] Understanding the conflict as rooted in ancient, clan based rivalries that reemerged after the fall of Barre's regime contributed to an image of Somalis as unable to form a modern state. Yet, Besteman claims cleavages of class, occupation, race, and language structured much of the violence between 1991 and 1994, even if the conflict's expression was clan based. Further research could help establish whether the current emphasis on clan based solutions results, in part, from this lingering "explanatory scheme".

War on terror frame: Post 9/11

Since September 11, 2001, US military aid to Africa has nearly quadrupled. The US established the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, which boasts approximately 1,800 US military personnel, and an international flotilla of 15 warships monitors the coast of Somalia.[26] According to press reports, both the US and its European allies increased military reconnaissance flights and surveillance activities as early as 2002. The East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative was established in 2003 to strengthen regional capacities to combat violent extremism.[27] President George W. Bush added a number of Somali groups to the US terrorist list, including al-Ittihad al-Islami in 2001.[28]

After a disastrous policy of supporting Somali warlords (under the Alliance Against Terrorism and the Restoration of Peace) to combat the rise of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) from February to June 2006, the US tacitly supported the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia to depose the courts in December 2006, providing military and intelligence assistance.[29] In early 2007, as many as 100 people who had fled the fighting in Somalia were picked up at the Kenyan border and sent to Ethiopia for questioning as part of the war on terror's large but obscure rendition program in Africa.[30] In late 2008, a Chicago Tribune series described "a covert war [in Somalia] in which the CIA has recruited gangs of unsavory warlords to hunt down and kidnap Islamic militants and ... secretly imprison them offshore, aboard US warships".[31] Drone strikes have increased in Somalia since President

23 Menkhaus (1997), p. 134.

24 Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention", *Foreign Affairs* (75:2) (March-April 1996), pp. 74; 75-78.

25 Besteman, p. 121.

26 "Diplomacy, Development as Alternatives to Military Force", Friends Committee on National Legislation, *Washington Newsletter*, December 2007. Available online at: http://fcnl.org/resources/newsletter/dec07/diplomacy_development_as_alternatives_to_military_force/.

27 Theodore S. Dagne, "Africa and the War on Terrorism: The Case of Somalia", *Mediterranean Quarterly* (13:4) (Fall 2002), p. 68.

28 Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), p. 75.

29 Menkhaus, "The Crisis in Somalia: A Tragedy in Five Acts", *African Affairs* (106:204) (2007), pp. 368-378.

30 Paul Salopek, "Renditions fuel anger against US", *Chicago Tribune*, December 4, 2008. Available online at: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-shadow_war3dec04,0,3217360.story?page=1.

31 Paul Salopek, "'Nobody is Watching,' America's hidden war in Somalia", *Chicago Tribune*, November 24, 2008. Available online at: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-shadow_war2nov24,0,4720127.story?page=1.

Obama took office in 2009, and recent reports indicate the administration is building secret drone bases for counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa, including one in Ethiopia, "a US ally in the fight against al-Shabaab".[32]

Missed opportunities

When the US government added a number of Somali individuals and organizations to its list of terrorists in 2001, accusing them of ties with al-Qaeda, it was unclear that members or leaders were aware of any collaboration. Suspected links to foreign terrorists resulted in an "underground war in which Islamists, Jihadists and many others who did not pose any specific danger, were kidnapped or killed by Somali hit squads paid for by the US and Ethiopian Security Services".[33] By choosing a method of covert, military means to pursue terror suspects, the U.S and its allies lost the battle for public opinion in Somalia.[34]

Additionally, Islamic NGOs that provide social services have come under pressure since the war on terror, and fear of charges of links to Islamist radicals "has had a chilling effect on Islamic charities in Somalia". For example, al-Haramain, a prominent international Islamic charity, was listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity by the US government and its offices in Somalia were shut down[35]. Finally, after President Bush added al-Ittihad to the terrorist list, Somali warlords and the government of Ethiopia used the opportunity to portray both al-Ittihad and the Transitional National Government (TNG) as terrorist groups to advance their own interests of delegitimizing the TNG.[36]

The US's decision to partner with and arm clan based militias to defeat the ICU in 2006, contributed to divisiveness and perpetuated cycles of violence and competition between clans. This was a missed opportunity for the US government to recast its engagement with Somalia. Later that year, when the US collaborated with Ethiopia in its invasion of Somalia, they had "such a heavy-handed policy towards Somalia, and the Ethiopians such a militaristic approach, that they fortified the very opposition they were supposed to annihilate in December 2006".[37] US involvement seems to have provided an opportunity for al-Shabaab to gain more international support.[38] The events of 2006-2007 were not foregone conclusions, but brought on by missed opportunities and miscalculations of leaders.[39] Increased drone strikes and continued CIA operations under the current administration suggests counterterrorism continues to frame US engagement in Somalia in 2011.

Alternative options: Recommendations for peacebuilding

Since the early 1990s, there have been fourteen Somali reconciliation or peace conferences.[40] In his discussion of peace accords, John Paul Lederach writes that sustaining peaceful transformation in settings of deep-rooted violence must involve a long-term, human-centered vision that focuses as much on "building durable and flexible processes" as it does on specific solutions (like peace accords).[41] A "transformative platform" that engages "ongoing social and

32 Jeremy Scahill, "Blowback in Somalia", *The Nation*, September 7, 2011. Available online at: http://www.thenation.com/article/163210/blowback-somalia?page=full; Craig Whitlock and Greg Miller, "US assembling secret drone bases in Africa, Arabian Peninsula, officials say", *Washington Post*, September 20, 2011. Available online at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-building-secret-drone-bases-in-africa-arabian-peninsula-officials-say/2011/09/20/gIQAJ8rOjK_story.html.

33 Marchal, Roland. "A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (3:3) (2009), p. 387.

34 Marchal, p. 387.

35 Hassan Barise, "War on terror hits Somali orphans", *BBC News*, available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3044485.stm. Last updated May 20, 2003.

36 Dagne (2002), p. 67.

37 Marchal, p. 393.

38 Marchal, p. 394.

39 Menkhaus (2007), p. 359.

40 Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace", *Congressional Research Service*, RL33911, December 16, 2010, p. 25.

41 John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 47.

relational spaces" and is "capable of generating adaptive change processes that address both the episodic expression of the conflict and the epicenter of the conflictive relational context" is fundamental to supporting constructive social change over time.[42]

Lederach defines *horizontal capacity* as "the ability to build and sustain relationship spaces of constructive interaction across the lines of division in systems and societies divided by historic patterns of identity conflicts". *Vertical capacity* refers to "relationship building across levels of leadership, authority, and responsibility within a society or system, from grassroots to the highest, most visible leaders". Finally, *integration* "is the space where vertical and horizontal linkages come together".[43] Integration requires strategic connections, "a web process" that intentionally links not-like-minded and not-like-situated people, that watches for and builds spaces for where these relationships can intersect, and that creates adaptive and flexible platforms that can respond to changing environments and ongoing issues.[44]

Key questions for Somali peacebuilding include who builds horizontal and vertical capacity? Who integrates these capacities? How are the links, spaces, and platforms necessary for change created? Some experts advocate a process of grassroots based clan reconciliation organized by Somalis in Somalia, as part of a comprehensive peace process, rather than viewing the conflict through the narrow lens of terrorism, or as between Islamist extremists and moderate Islam.[45] Indeed, the lens of the war on terror has led the US to exclude some key actors like al-Shabaab, from dialogue. Likewise, clans and sub clans play a critical role in Somali society, and much of the violence during the past two decades has pitted clans against one another. However, as one NGO suggested, pursuing a process of clan reconciliation could exacerbate existing divisions rather than drawing on linkages present between and across clans.[46] In addition, the current expression of violence may be clan based, but the root causes of the conflict may lie in issues that cut across clans.[47]

In a recent case study, Menkhaus et al conclude that Somali civil society groups have had "mixed success transcending clan, regional, and ideological divisions in the country, with certain types of social movements, networks, and organizations (such as business partnerships) better suited to bridging these divisions than others". They note that "civic peacebuilding has been most successful when pursued as the result of hybrid partnerships among different civic actors, bringing together professionals, women's groups, clan elders, businesspeople, and clergy".[48] Additionally, the International Crisis Group has called for efforts to reach out to elements of al-Shabaab open to some form of political settlement, noting that a limited engagement strategy that deliberately excludes al-Shabaab will not help to pacify Somalia.[49]

> **Recommendation:** The US should utilize its resources and influence to support international and Somali efforts to build vertical and horizontal capacity and relationships.

42 Ledearach, p. 47.

43 Lederach, pp. 182-183, 79-80.

44 Lederach, p. 84.

45 See, for example, David Smock, "How to Respond to Somalia's Current Crisis", *USIP Peace Brief*, August 2006. Available online at: http://www.usip.org/publications/how-respond-somalias-current-crisis.

46 Conversation with LPI.

47 See Besteman's discussion of clans in Section I.

48 Menkhaus et al (2010), p. 347.

49 "Somalia's Divided Islamists", *International Crisis Group Africa* Briefing No. 74 (May 18, 2010), p. 17.

> A Somali led reconciliation process could help integrate linkages by creating the space for "hybrid partnerships" among professionals, women's groups, clan elders, business people, and clergy, watch for opportunities to intersect with al-Shabaab, and build a platform from which to respond to current manifestations of conflict as well as to address the root causes of the conflict over time.

According to a recent *Accord* policy brief, "inappropriate international engagement based on inadequate analysis has helped to mobilize militants" in Somalia.[50] To realize the full potential of a strategic peacebuilding approach, not only the US government but also INGOs and NGOs need the freedom to engage in dialogue with all parties to the conflict, including those designated as terrorist organizations. Current US law severely limits such activities. Material support statutes give the US government the ability to prosecute individuals and groups who provide money, weapons, or training to terrorist groups that have been listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). After September 11, 2001, the passage of the Patriot Act "broadened the definition of material support to terrorism to include the provision of expert advice or assistance".[51]

In July 2010, in "Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project", the Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment does not protect groups or individuals who provide "expert advice or assistance" or "training" to proscribed terrorist groups, even when they do so to further peacebuilding efforts.[52] This means that "any service that can be construed as having tangible or intangible monetary value – such as providing advice, reviewing a contract, covering transportation costs – can be considered a violation of US material support statutes. Holding meetings or conferences for a proscribed group or acting as a negotiator on their behalf is illegal".[53]

The decision has impacted not only the work of US and international NGOs, but also Somali organizations. Some Muslim organizations, fearful of being added to the terrorist list, have had to assume different identities. The business community was paralyzed by the American decision to label certain businesses as terrorist groups. Orphanages could no longer receive food when al-Haramain's assets were frozen, and many turned to other Somali organizations with already stretched resources, for help.[54]

Since the 1990s, USAID has grappled with how to provide development aid without a government structure and to consider "the problems and prospects of identifying and working through alternative sources of social and political authority".[55] According to the Somalia programs page, USAID "responds to Somalia's key challenges by supporting peacebuilding and national reconciliation initiatives, building the capacity of governance institutions and civil society groups, improving the delivery of social services, and meeting humanitarian and early recovery needs".[56] Eliminating barriers to working with groups on the FTO list would enable USAID and its partners to better assess the role and Somali perception of al-Shabaab, identify civil society partners, and support peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives.

50 "Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacebuilding", *Accord Policy Brief*, 2010. Available online at: http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/somalia/policy-brief.php.

51 Joshua Gross, "No More Tea with Terrorists", *InterAction: Monday Developments Magazine*, (28:10) (October 2010), p. 18.

52 Gross, pp. 18-19.

53 Gross, p. 20.

54 Conversation with LPI.

55 Menkhaus (1997), p. 125.

56 USAID Sub-Saharan Africa website: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa/countries/redso/.

> **Recommendation:** To ensure that US, international, and Somali NGOs are able to pursue inclusive diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding strategies, the US government should take steps to modify its material support and terrorist list policies.
>
> For example, Congress could act to reform terrorist list policy by amending the US Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, which gave the Executive Branch the authority to create the FTO list, and the Office of Foreign Asset Controls could "proactively open a direct channel to peacebuilding groups, while concurrently expediting specific requests" for waivers to engage with FTOs.[57]

Effective peacebuilding requires knowledge of how parties to a conflict understand their roles in the conflict and how they envision peace. Lack of understanding can lead to a misguided focus on where to direct resources or what method of engagement to pursue. The general perception among most Somalis is that American interests take precedence over local aspirations, creating an environment where there is limited openness to US engagement. Even if the US government works to change its image, doubts would remain because of a lack of transparency and suspicions about US interests. Many Somalis do not feel they are in control of their destinies.[58] A quote from the *Chicago Tribune* series highlights this feeling: "'It's not just that people miss [the Islamic Courts Union],' said a Somali humanitarian worker ...'They resent the Ethiopians and Americans tearing it all up, using Somalia as their battlefield against global terrorism. It's like the Cold War all over again. Somalis aren't in control.'" While the frame has shifted, policies characterized by US dominance and interests, whether through a Cold War or a war on terror lens, engender similar feelings of exclusion and loss of control.

In March 2009, the *Washington Post* reported that a memo e-mailed to Pentagon staff advised that "this administration prefers to avoid using the term 'Long War' or 'Global War on Terror' [GWOT.] Please use 'Overseas Contingency Operation.'"[59] If the Obama administration has moved away from the language of "war on terror", many of its elements persist in characterizing US foreign policy, and what many Somalis continue to perceive and experience are military led approaches. Obama has said that addressing weak and failing states is in US national interest, but one analyst wrote in summer 2010 that "the case he has made is, like Bush's, limited to the threat of terrorism".[60] US aid strategies are often expressed within the framework of building a sustainable economy in order to curb violent extremism. Indeed, in Somalia, the US government pursues development programs at the same time as it provides weapons to the Transition Federal Government and logistical support for the training of troops "fighting Islamist militias accused of links to al-Qaeda",[61] and continues to engage in drone strikes.

> **Recommendation:** The US should adopt a more transparent, inclusive approach and demilitarize its policy toward Somalia in favor of civilian led diplomacy, development, and peacebuilding initiatives in partnership with Somali civil society organizations.

57 Gross, p. 34.

58 Conversation with LPI.

59 Scott Wilson and Al Kamen, "'Global War on Terror' is Given New Name", *Washington Post*, March 29, 2009. Available online at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html.

60 James Traub, "In the Beginning, There Was Somalia", *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2010. Available online at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/in_the_beginning_there_was_somalia.

61 "US says weapons sent to Somalia", *BBC News*, available online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8119976.stm. Last updated June 26, 2009.

> When the practices of well resourced governments and international institutions are informed by local experience and perspective, it can help lead to greater participation in the development of economic opportunities, emerging justice systems, and governance institutions, thereby engendering more ownership in the shape of sustainable peace.[62]

Through our responses to violence, Lederach writes, "we choose to transcend or enter and sustain the cycle of violence". Since September 11, 2001, US leaders have, for the most part, "chosen the route of perpetuation" by responding with mostly militarily means to perceived threats to national interests. This response has not increased national (or international) security, but instead has continued the cycle of violence.[63] How one defines or frames a perceived problem influences the proposed solution, along with the tools and tactics used to achieve it. If terrorism is the "problem", the strategy revolves around its focus on terrorism. Rather than transforming cycles of violence in Somalia, war on terror policies such as partnering with warlords in 2006 against the ICU, rendition activities, and the obstruction of NGO efforts to provide humanitarian assistance or to engage al-Shabaab have contributed to perpetuating them. Adherence to the war on terror framework is an obstacle to constructive social change, a process that "seeks to change the flow of human interaction in social conflict from cycles of destructive relational violence toward cycles of relational dignity and respectful engagement".[64]

An alternative framework that focuses on human-centered, relationship-driven, respectful engagement could begin to facilitate a gradual shift in US policy toward effectively addressing cycles of violence in Somalia, including its own role in sometimes perpetuating them. If human security is the "problem", one envisions a strategy that revolves around human well-being. As Lederach and Appleby note, "at its core, peacebuilding nurtures constructive human relationships", and strategic peacebuilders recognize that the actors involved have widened beyond the scope of the state.[65] A human security framework would underscore the critical role of nonstate actors in identifying security needs and promoting reconciliation, and could help encourage the development of linkages between international institutions, states, and nonstate actors – a key component of strategic peacebuilding. States will continue to act in the name of "national interest" or "national security", but many are beginning to perceive that strategic peacebuilding in an interdependent world is, in fact, "in their own interests".[66] One hopes that the US will move in this direction in its engagement with Somalia.

> **Recommendation:** Ideally, the US should adopt a human security framework, underscoring the critical role of nonstate actors in identifying security needs and creating the linkages needed to sustain effective peacebuilding processes in Somalia.
>
> A human security framework could help facilitate appropriate resource allocation and a shift in tactics away from military responses to violence.

62 Oliver Richmond, "Conclusion: Strategic Peacebuilding beyond the Liberal Peace", in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, ed. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), p. 363.

63 Lederach, p. 25.

64 Lederach, p. 181.

65 John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview", in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, ed. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), p. 22, 26.

66 Lederach and Appleby, p. 25.

Impact of international media in Somalia

Jessica Brandwein

Executive summary

The media has chosen to emphasize different aspects of the Somali situation, including the civil war, international interventions, humanitarian crises, failed peace agreements, piracy, and terrorism. These distinct ways in which the international media frames Somalia shapes both the way the international community understands the conflict, and the range of responses that international actors consider. Through a cursory comparison of African and Western media sources, this paper finds that Western media tends to frame Somalia in terms of terrorism, a humanitarian crisis or a civil war, with little focus on peace negotiations and local human interest stories or pragmatic local realities.

This media focus conforms to the US government's view of Somalia as a breeding ground for terrorists, legitimizing US policies of military intervention in Somalia, while simultaneously justifying the lack of meaningful engagement in the country on peacebuilding issues. While African media sources are more likely to highlight peace talks and local peace and regional security initiatives, nonetheless, both sources reinforce the one sided portrayal of al-Shabaab, providing little space for alternative narratives that would legitimize and support local peacebuilding engagement with the insurgent group. This paper provides a descriptive account of these frames over time, and hypothesizes the effects of these frames on local and international efforts at peacebuilding.

Different media perspectives on Somalia

Over the past 20 years, the international media has covered Somalia from several different angles, while at the same time maintaining a continuously dismal outlook on the prospects for peace and security in the country. At various times the media has chosen to emphasize different aspects of the Somali situation, including the civil war, international interventions, humanitarian crises, failed peace agreements, piracy, and terrorism. These distinct ways in which the international media frames Somalia shapes both the way the international community understands the conflict and the range of responses that it considers.

Media and conflict

The relevant literature on media and conflict generally poses two separate sets of questions: 1) How does media influence policy decisions to intervene in a conflict militarily or otherwise? How does it influence, mobilize and legitimize support for intervention? 2) Is journalism conducted with a peaceful bias that allows space for constructive conflict resolution and transformation, or with a war bias that concentrates on the violent aspects of the conflict?

Media and humanitarian/military interventions

After the first Gulf War in 1991 and the UN/US interventions in Somalia between 1992 and 1994, the predominant school of thought was that there was a "CNN-effect" that influenced a government's decision to both intervene in and exit a conflict.[1] The CNN-effect refers to the speed and volume of media in the late 20th and early 21st centuries that brings the suffering of people around the world into Western homes through their televisions screens, computers, and newspapers. This coverage by Western media outlets, from CNN to the New York Times and the BBC, puts pressure on government officials to take action to end the violence and suffering being shown on the news, even if intervening does not further a government's foreign policy interests.[2]

Extensive studies of the CNN-effect have been conducted with regard to the US intervention in Somalia in 1992. The most compelling evidence of the effect comes from a statement former President George H.W. Bush made concerning his decision to intervene:

> Former President Bush conceded Saturday that he ordered US troops into Somalia in 1992 after seeing heart-rending pictures of starving waifs on television ... Bush said that as he and his wife, Barbara, watched television at the White House and saw "those starving kids ... in quest of a little pitiful cup of rice", he phoned Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Please come over to the White House", Bush recalled telling the military leaders. "I – we – can't watch this anymore. You've got to do something."[3]

Similarly, the deaths of eighteen US soldiers during a Mogadishu battle and the television images of their bodies being dragged through the streets is commonly believed to have precipitated America's hurried withdrawal from Somalia.[4]

However, more recent research has shown that the CNN-effect is not as powerful as once believed. An alternative theory of media impact is that of Manufacturing Consent. This literature posits that the government guides media coverage in accordance with its own interests and agenda, as opposed to the media guiding governmental policy.[5] Within the Somalia intervention example, proponents of this theory claim that the government was already leaning towards involvement, and the media simply converged with this likely policy outcome.[6]

Piers Robinson attempts to integrate these two theories with his policy-media interaction model. This model proposes that when the government's policy has already been set, the media tends to conform to it, and therefore has no independent influence on foreign policy towards a particular conflict. However, in cases where either members of the government are divided concerning the best policy, or when the policy is uncertain, the media will reflect those debates, and has an opportunity to influence the decision to choose one policy over another.[7]

When using this model to determine the media's impact on peacebuilding efforts, it is important to analyze how the media is framing the conflict:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.[8]

1 Robinson, Piers, "The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?" *Review of International Studies*, 25 (1999): p. 302.

2 Spencer, Graham, *The Media and Peace: From Vietnam to the 'War on Terror'*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan: 2005): pp. 24-25.

3 Hines, Craig, "Pity, not US Security, Motivated US of GIs in Somalia, Bush Says", *The Houston Chronicle*, 24 October 1999: A11.

4 Hammond, Philip, *Framing Post-Cold War Conflicts: The Media and International Intervention*, (New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 2007).

5 Robinson, "The CNN Effect": pp. 303-304.

6 Robinson, "The CNN Effect": p. 307.

7 Robinson, Piers, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy", *European Journal of Communication*, 16, 4 (2001): p. 531

8 Entman, Robert, "Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", *Journal of Communication*, 43, 4 (1993): p. 52, original emphasis.

The emphasis that the media puts on certain aspects of the conflict over others influences our understanding of the situation, and implicitly proposes specific solutions over others. For example, internal conflicts can be framed in a variety of ways, including as civil wars, genocides, ethnic conflicts or humanitarian crises, each of which implies certain assumptions about the causes of the conflict and the responsibilities of the international community. Suggesting that an internal conflict is an "ethnic conflict" often implies to readers that there is a reified division between the warring groups based on primordial identities. In this case, intervention may be viewed as futile, as it will not change the underlying ethnic identities that perpetuated the conflict. On the other hand, framing that same conflict as a genocide or a humanitarian crisis suggests that intervention is both legitimate and potentially legally or morally mandated to stop the unnecessary suffering of the innocent.[9]

Peace journalism

Peace journalism refers to Johan Galtung's theory that the media should move beyond its focus on polarizing descriptions of war and violence to instead emphasize conflict transformation.[10] With regards to the media, war journalism uses a zero-sum analysis of violence that villainises one or both sides of the fighting, while peace journalism seeks to "depolarize by showing the black and white of all sides, and to deescalate by highlighting peace and conflict resolution as much as violence".[11] This dynamic of war journalism is particularly evident in the coverage of the warring parties in Somalia. Specifically, the consistent negative framing of al-Shabaab in much of the media is at odds with a peace journalism approach, which would provide a more nuanced view of the organization, emphasizing potential avenues for engagement with it.

In addition to providing depolarizing and nuanced coverage of the warring parties, peace journalism may highlight challenges faced by ongoing peace processes, potentially even offering solutions or areas of common ground that have been downplayed in national dialogues. It also involves focusing on the pre- and post-violence phases of conflict, emphasizing preventive and long-term peacebuilding opportunities.[12]

Generally, the media does a relatively poor job at attaining the standards of peace journalism, particularly the desired focus on pre- and post-violence. In the era of 24-hour media coverage, outlets strive for the most sensational story that will sell newspapers and pull in viewers. These stories tend to be those of violence and suffering more so than recovery from violence or peacebuilding efforts. "Media focus on humanitarian suffering in the violence phase has contributed to a channeling of funds from long-term development projects aimed at preventing conflict ... to short-term emergency relief."[13] Furthermore, the continuous portrayal of negative frames focused on violence and suffering lends the impression that the conflict is intractable, making it less likely that there will be foreign political support for either international or local peacebuilding activities. In this lens, international media should be analyzed not only according to its negative frames

9 Hammond, "Framing Post Cold-War Conflicts": p. 6.

10 According to John Paul Lederach, conflict transformation "proposes an effort to maximize the achievement of constructive, mutually beneficial processes and outcomes [of a conflict]." (Lederach, John Paul, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 19).

11 Galtung, Johan, "High Road, Low Road: Charting the Course for Peace Journalism", *Track Two*, 7, 4 (1998): p. 3.

12 Shinar, Dov, "Why Not More Peace Journalism? The Coverage of the 2006 Lebanon War in Canadian and Israeli Media," *Peace Journalism in Times of War*, ed. Susan Dente Ross and Majid Tehranian, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009): p. 9.

13 Jakobsen, Peter, "Focus on the CNN Effect Misses the Point: The Real Media Impact on Conflict Management is Invisible and Indirect", *Journal of Peace Research*, 37, 2 (2000): p. 138.

(i.e. civil war or humanitarian crises), but also by its use of positive frames that allow for the possibility of conflict transformation.

The framing of Somalia

In order to analyze and compare the frames that the international and African media have used when portraying Somalia, this paper looks at the New York Times (NYT) and the website allAfrica.com. Between 2000 and 2010, NYT has written nearly 2,500 articles that mention Somalia. This news source is respected within the Western world and is used as a sample for Western media reporting. AllAfrica.com is a service that collects and disseminates news articles from more than 130 African news organizations, and is used as a sample of African media reporting. They have featured more than 30,000 articles on Somalia during the same ten years.

A qualitative analysis of article headlines was used to develop a list of common or interesting key words that were being used to describe the situation in Somalia. Michael Parenti argues framing is achieved in part through the use of particular labeling and vocabulary. The repetitive use of specific terms by a news outlet constitutes a frame that "conveys positive or negative cues regarding events and persons".[14] In this case, ten different ways of framing the situation (see Figure 1), based on those key words, were compared across the two news sources by counting the number of articles that used the terms in each six-month time period from 2000-2010.[15] While a keyword search is an imperfect way to conduct a content analysis of news media, it does give a general idea about how the Somali conflict is being framed.

Potential Frames

1. Civil war
2. Humanitarian crisis
3. Local peacebuilding efforts
4. Warlords
5. Terrorism/Al-Qaeda
6. Piracy
7. Natural disaster
8. Islamic insurgency
9. Peace talks/Agreement
10. Peacekeeping missions

Somalia was most often referred to by the NYT with respect to terrorism, with 45 percent of the articles mentioning terrorism or al-Qaeda.[16] The African sources on the other hand, only wrote about terrorism or al-Qaeda in 16 percent of their Somalia articles. Other popular frames used by the NYT included that of a humanitarian crisis, a civil war or a peacekeeping operation. Peace processes were only mentioned in 5.8 percent of the articles, while local peacebuilding efforts, represented by the key words "civil society" and "grassroots", were only mentioned in 12 out of the 2,500 articles. While allAfrica.com's sources were also most likely to refer to terrorism, humanitarian crises, civil war and peacekeeping operations in their articles, they were also twice as likely to mention peace processes and more than six times more likely to write about local peacebuilding efforts than was the NYT. A comparison between the two sources on each frame can be seen in Table 1.

14 Parenti, Michael, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media*, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1986): p. 220.

15 The key word search was conducted through WestLaw. The key words used to constitute each frame can be seen in Appendix 1.

16 Note that the link between al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab was generally assumed by the United States since the country declared al-Shabaab a terrorist organization in 2008. According to the Council on Foreign Relations actual links between the two organizations prior to 2010 were weak, if present at all. Yet the media tended to reinforce without question the US claims of a connection between the organizations. (Hanson, Stephanie, "Backgrounder on Al-Shabaab", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2011, Available online http://www.crf.org/somalia/al-shabaab/p18650#p4). In February 2010, al-Shabaab declared for the first time that the organization was in fact aligned with al-Qaeda's campaign of global jihadism. (See "Somali Islamists al-Shabab 'join al-Qaeda fight'", *BBC News*, 1 February 2010, Available online <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8491329.stm>; Childress, Sarah, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab to Ally with Al Qaeda", *Wall Street Journal*, 2 February 2010, Available online <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704107204575038674123215854.html>; Yusuf, Huma, "Somali militant group Al Shabab aligns with Al Qaeda", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 February 2010, Available online <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/0202/Somali-militant-group-Al-Shabab-aligns-with-Al-Qaeda>).

Table 1. **Percentage of all Somalia-related articles that fit each frame**

Frame	New York Times	Allafrica.Com
Terrorism/Al-Qaeda	45%	16%
Humanitarian crises	18%	14%
Civil war	16%	11%
Peacekeeping	15%	12%
Warlords	13%	8%
Piracy	8%	5%
Natural disasters	8%	8%
Peace talks/Agreements	6%	13%
Islamic insurgency	4%	2%
Local initiatives	<1%	7%

Note: a single article can have multiple frames, therefore percentages will not equal 100%.

Over time, surges in particular frames were generally predictable, and followed similar patterns for both sources. For example, the terrorism frame spiked for both sources after September 11, 2001, and again increased sharply after al-Shabaab declared allegiance to al-Qaeda in early 2010. Piracy rose in importance after 2008 in both Western and African news outlets. And both sources increased their references to peacekeeping missions in Somalia approximately when the UN approved the AU peacekeeping mission in 2007. In each of these cases, the depiction of Somalia tended to follow actual events on the ground, as opposed to shaping them, or even critically analyzing their consequences and impact in peacebuilding.

Other frames reflected greater differences between the two sources. Around the time of the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the African sources were more likely to refer to peace processes, but the NYT saw no changes in this frame. The African sources labeled Somalia a civil war most frequently during the time of the rise of the Islamic Courts Union. Ironically, the NYT tended to rely on the civil war frame the most in the year leading up to the creation of the TFG. The trends in the top five frames over time for each source can be seen in Appendices 2 and 3.

These findings represent broad trends and do not definitively demonstrate an impact of the media on peacebuilding efforts. However, one might hypothesize that the predominant narrative of terrorism that was used in the Western media

when discussing Somalia, post 9/11, was a hindrance to both international and local peacebuilding initiatives. For example, on average, 60 percent of the NYT articles that mentioned al-Shabaab, also referred to terrorism or terrorists in the same article. This seems to have followed the decision by the US government to label al-Shabaab a terrorist organization, as opposed to shaping US policy towards the group. By equating al-Shabaab with the terrorist group al-Qaeda, the US in particular closed the door on engagement with those groups, and paved the way for a military intervention that would target al-Shabaab in 2007. Interestingly, during the periods of time when the NYT used the terrorist frame most heavily, they were also more likely to decrease their references to the humanitarian crisis aspect of the conflict.

In downplaying the human suffering that was occurring in Somalia, and instead replacing it by the threat of western suffering at the hands of Somali terrorists, the NYT supported and justified the US government's strategies of military intervention and non-engagement to its readers. The dearth of articles that reflect local initiatives or human interest stories within the NYT could also be a source of trouble for peacebuilders. A cursory look at two months (March-April 2011) worth of articles on Somalia in the NYT brought up just one "local" story, an editorial about a woman who had died due to lack of adequate access to contraceptives.[17] The only piece of "good" news was that Somali pirates had released a few prisoners.[18] The failure to portray a situation where local communities are willing and able to work for peace, as opposed to depicting Somalis as victims of war, violence and famine, discourages international engagement with and support of those local groups who are promoting peace at the grassroots level.

In general, the sources from allAfrica.com also focused predominantly on upper levels of conflict, as opposed to lower level community peace initiatives and human interest stories. However, they were more likely to feature these types of stories than their Western counterparts. For example, within the last sixty days of Somalia articles, there were several that celebrated the accomplishment of the Shabelle Media Network, a local radio station in Mogadishu that has continued its independent reporting throughout the last nine years of the conflict.[19] There were also brief discussions within a few articles of the stability in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland[20] and the limited gains the transitional government has made in recent months.[21] Largely though, the focus on pessimistic aspects of the conflict is as prevalent in the African sources as it is in the Western ones. It is thus perhaps not surprising that with the African press failing to cover positive or local aspects of the Somali situation, the Western press has also neglected to do so.

In terms of peace versus war journalism, the media coverage from both sources is clearly more prone to war than peace journalism, particularly in their recent coverage of the insurgent group al-Shabaab. Peace journalism suggests that warring groups should not be villainized in order to allow space for conflict transformation, especially if they are a key actor as is the case with al-Shabaab. On average, this is not occurring within the media's portrayal of al-Shabaab. As mentioned above, a majority of the NYT articles that write about al-Shabaab do

17 Kristof, Nicholas, "Mothers We Could Save", *The New York Times*, 7 May 2011.

18 Ibrahim, Mohammed, "Somali Pirates Release Some Prisoners", *The New York Times*, 16 April 2011.

19 "Parliament Congratulates Shabelle On Its Accomplishment," and "Shabelle Media Network Celebrated Its Nineth Anniversary", Shabelle Media Network; allAfrica.com, 9 May 2011.

20 "Puntland President Visits Bosaso", Garowe Online, allAfrica.com, 4 May 2011.

21 "The Country Urgently Needs Help of Global Partners to Consolidate Gains", UN News Service, allAfrica.com, 4 May 2011.§

so in the context of terrorism or al-Qaeda supporters. 35 percent of articles from allAfrica.com sources also frame al-Shabaab in the same way. When African news outlets are not relating al-Shabaab to terrorism, they are generally focused on the group's participation in battles, its human rights violations, and its Islamic fundamentalist ideology. This depiction of al-Shabaab as an extremist enemy rather than a potential partner for engagement in peace limits the world's view of how peacebuilding should be taking place in Somalia. Specifically, this framing reinforces policies of non-engagement, making local peacebuilding efforts that attempt to bring al-Shabaab together with other groups more difficult. Additionally, the castigation of al-Shabaab masks the wrong doing of other actors who are contributing to the suffering of the people and whose actions also undermine the prospects for peace.[22]

Peace journalism also emphasizes opportunities for peace as opposed to solely focusing on consequences of violence. It is clear to see from the framing results on peace that the NYT fails in this aspect of peace journalism, being nearly three times as likely to talk about civil wars or humanitarian crises than peace processes, and almost eight times more likely to refer to terrorism.[23] AllAfrica.com is more successful in this avenue, referring to peace processes more often than civil war, and almost as often as humanitarian crises or terrorism. However, because of the methods used to gather this data, it is impossible to know whether the articles were referring to peace processes in a positive or negative way. In order to really understand whether the African sources are promoting peace through their journalism, or contributing to the pessimistic view of Somalia by focusing on the negative aspects of peace processes, further research needs to be done.

Further research and recommendations

While this paper has provided a broad description of the different ways in which Somalia has been portrayed by the African and Western press, in order to determine the actual effects the media has had on local and international peacebuilding more research must be completed. This includes the reading of articles to determine tone and orientation in addition to mere key word searches. At the least however, with the data available, it is clear that the Western media as represented by the coverage in the NYT has conformed to the US government's view of Somalia as a safe haven and breeding ground for terrorists that serves as a threat to the national security of Western states. By framing Somalia, and particularly al-Shabaab within the broader context of terrorism, the NYT has supported and legitimized US policies of military intervention in Somalia, while justifying the lack of meaningful engagement in the country with peacebuilding issues.

The reinforcement of this frame by the African media, as represented by allAfrica.com's sources, and particularly in their one-sided portrayal of al-Shabaab, provides no alternative narrative that supports local peacebuilders trying to engage with the insurgent group. In order to change this pattern, the blind spot in media coverage of local and community led peacebuilding efforts, along with the positive contributions that al-Shabaab made to society within Southern Somalia need to

22 See ""You Don't Know Who To Blame": War Crimes in Somalia", *Human Rights Watch*, August 2011, Available online <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/somalia0811webwcover.pdf>

23 Note that there are many purposes for framing an issue in a particular way, with the preference for peace journalism reflecting one vision of the media's purpose – that is to aid in peacebuilding activities. Media consumers have different expectations for how their news is presented based on their understanding of the purpose of the outlet. For those consumers who do expect media to play a substantive and responsible role in peacebulding, the use of peace journalism is one way in which this can be achieved.

be emphasized in the press. When the leading news organizations do not have the will or capability to cover these stories, international NGOs, working with local organizations, should cooperate to ensure that the primary news organizations are made aware of these success stories.

Recommendations for the media

Seek out and cover local and community led peacebuilding efforts.

1. Ensure that the parties involved in the conflict are receiving equal coverage of both their positive and negative qualities. Seek out exceptions to the existing narrative under which various groups are explained with relation to the war.
2. Focus attention on the areas where peacebuilding efforts are stalled and seek to present solutions, or avenues for meaningful engagement through reporting. In particular, advocate for the inclusion of excluded actors in the peace process, including al-Shabaab.

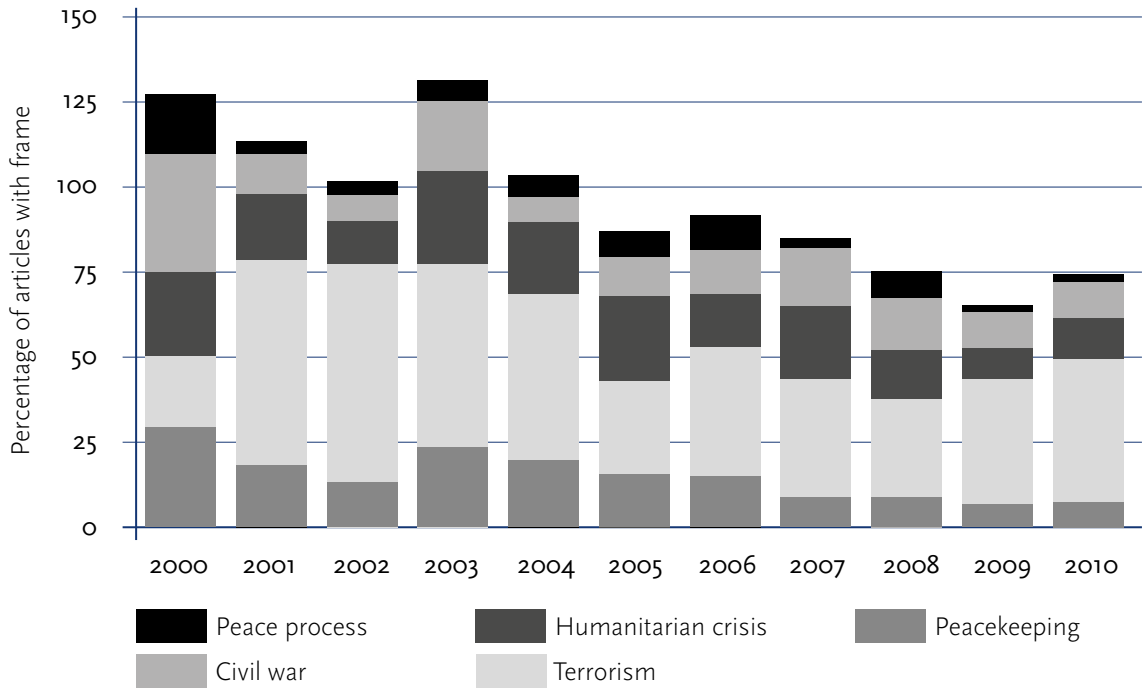
Recommendations for local and international NGOs

1. Make direct contact with local and international media outlets, guiding their attention towards local and community led peacebuilding efforts, as well as positive accomplishments of demonized organizations, such as al-Shabaab. Begin engagement through sympathetic reporters or editorialists at the media outlet who have a history of conducting peace journalism (e.g. Nicholas Kristof with the New York Times often writes positive human interest pieces on conflict torn areas).
2. Partner with advocacy organizations in the home country of the targeted media outlet (e.g. if the targeted media outlet is the New York Times, partner with an American advocacy organization that focuses on Somalia or East Africa). These organizations can often organize public awareness campaigns within the target country that emphasize the one-sided nature of a media outlet's coverage of a conflict, prompting a more balanced coverage.

Appendix 1. Key words used to search for each frame

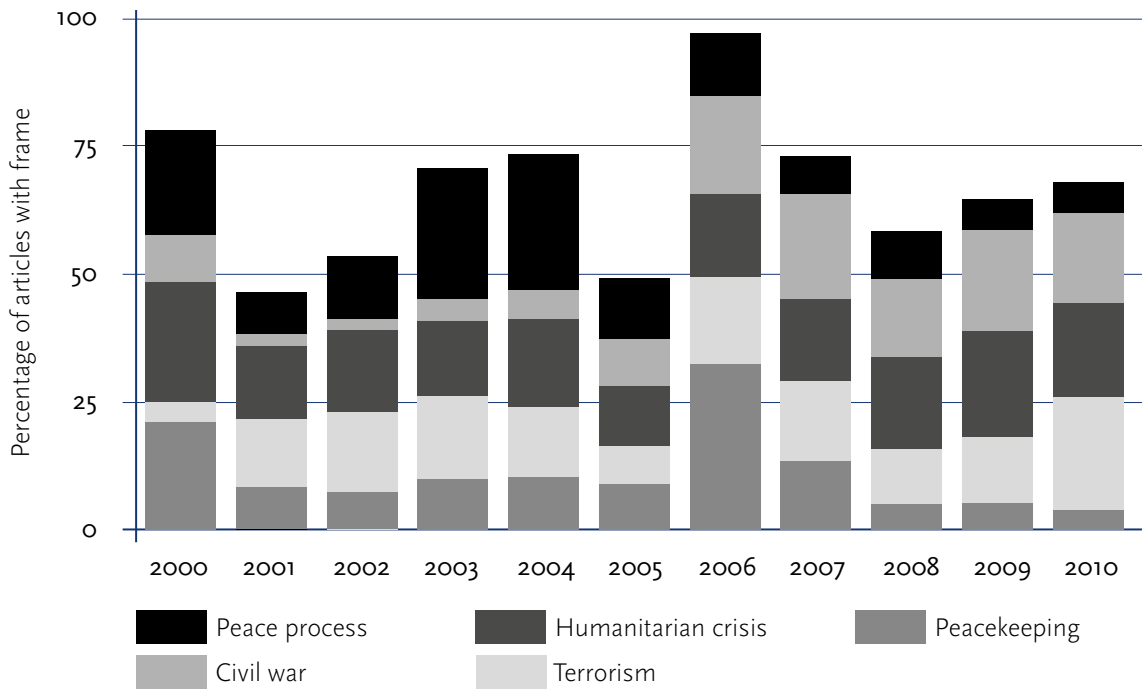
1) Civil war
   Somalia + "civil war"
2) Humanitarian crisis
   Somalia + "humanitarian crisis"
   Somalia + "internally displaced"
   Somalia + "refugees"
3) Local peacebuilding efforts
   Somalia + "civil society"
   Somalia + "grassroots"
4) Warlords
   Somalia + "warlords"
5) Terrorism/Al-Qaeda
   Somalia + "terrorism"
   Somalia + "terrorist"
   Somalia + "al-Qaeda"
6) Piracy
   Somalia + "piracy"
   Somalia + "pirate"
7) Natural disaster
   Somalia + "natural disaster"
   Somalia + "famine"
8) Islamic insurgency
   Somalia + "insurgency" + "Islamic"
   Somalia + "insurgency" + "Islamist"
9) Peace talks/Agreements
   Somalia + "peace talks"
   Somalia + "peace agreement"
   Somalia + "peace process"
10) Peacekeeping missions
    Somalia + "peacekeeping"
    Somalia + "peacekeeper"

Appendix 2. **Change in five frames for the New York Times from 2000 – 2010**



Note: Articles can have more than one frame (e.g. an article may discuss Somalia in terms of a civil war and terrorism), meaning percentages can exceed 100 percent.

Appendix 3. **Change in five frames for allAfrica.com from 2000 – 2010**



Note: Articles can have more than one frame (e.g. an article may discuss Somalia in terms of a civil war and terrorism), meaning percentages can exceed 100 percent.

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Criminalizing peace or containing violence?

The impact of the decision in the United States Supreme Court case *Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project* on peacebuilding in the Somali context

Shinkyu Lee

Executive summary

This research paper focuses on the challenges peacebuilding agencies encounter when working in Somalia. It draws close attention to the United States (US) Supreme Court's decision in the *Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project* (*Holder vs. HLP*) case and its implications on peacebuilding activities in the context of the Somali conflict. In order to elucidate the relevance of the decision in *Holder vs. HLP* to the peacebuilding community, the paper first revisits the nature of conflict and violence. Second, it shows how the decision overlooks the dynamic dimension of conflict in which opportunities for peacebuilding are creatively formed. Third, it demonstrates the dynamic aspect of conflict in Somalia with a special focus on the unintended consequences of counter-terrorism from which al-Shabaab has benefited. Finally, it explores strategic avenues of peacebuilding efforts in Somalia and presents concrete policy recommendations.

Conflict dynamics and peacebuilding

On June 21, 2010, the US Supreme Court ruled in the *Holder vs. HLP* case. The Court upheld the constitutionality of a federal statute criminalizing a very broad range of assistance to foreign terrorist organizations. As the term "material support" for proscribed groups is broadly defined in the statute, the ruling had a comprehensive impact on peacebuilding activities. In order to build sustainable peace, all relevant actors in the conflict need to be included in its solution. With the decision in the *Holder vs. HLP* case, however, the scope of peacebuilding is significantly restrained as the access to important actors is controlled and prohibited, if they are on the US list of proscribed groups. Many problems that *Holder vs. HLP* entails are derived from a limited understanding of conflict, violence and peace. Therefore, before examining the impact on Somali peacebuilding efforts, a brief discussion of conflict dynamics is useful.

Conflict is a dynamic process, inherent in human relationships, which provides the opportunity to address the underlying grievances in life and function as a catalyst for growth and change.[1] Unless its causes are properly addressed and the means to deal with it are present, conflict can degenerate into violence. Accordingly, all parties of conflict who envision a long-lasting peace should be concerned about how to address the underlying causes, while simultaneously refraining from resorting to violence. To do this, they must identify creative opportunities to be formed along with processes of change.

1 See, for a succinct account of conflict dynamic, John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse: Good Books, 2003).

In the context of conflict dynamics, new opportunities for peace and creative endeavours are made. To accommodate these proposals, and not confuse them with sheer efforts to spoil peace, the peacebuilding strategy needs to be integrative.[2] This is not to deny the presence of spoilers in peace processes, but dealing with the underlying causes of conflict is only possible when all parties are aligned and seek an integrative, creative, and changing vision of peace. Peacebuilding in this sense identifies new momentum created by change, and at the same time, should not lose sight of the long-term goal of transforming the underlying causes of conflict. As discussed in next section, the decision in the *Holder vs. HLP* case does not reflect this complex nature of conflict.

Criminalizing peacebuilding engagement

Short of a proper understanding of the dynamic dimension of conflict, the decision in the *Holder vs. HLP* case criminalizes engagement with designated terrorist organizations. The material support statute covers a broad range of activities such as "property", "service", "training", "expert advice or assistance", and "personnel".[3] Despite its far-reaching terms and extraterritorial applicability, the statute remains ambiguous, failing to distinguish between material support for terrorist organizations' violent and nonviolent activities.[4]

There are two practical implications of this legal judgment. First, it constrains the scope for peacebuilding among the direct parties in conflict. Once they are isolated as a result of the criminal enforcement, powerful groups are left with no other option than to resort to violence, as non-violent, creative possibilities for peace are excluded. Second, this juridical decision perniciously impacts the peacebuilding agencies as a whole. Even in nonviolent advocacy of the listed organizations, NGOs can be charged with a crime punishable by up to fifteen years in prison.[5]

In order to facilitate peace processes, peacebuilding activities like the active role of mediators and conflict transformation capacity building agencies are essential.[6] Many groups attain comparative knowledge of resolving conflict through workshops, trainings or peace commissions. Yet, all these activities are at the risk of being criminalized. The Supreme Court held that the designated terrorist organizations "are so tainted by their criminal conduct that any contribution to such an organization facilitates that conduct".[7] The contribution the Court prohibits includes such activities as "teaching members to use international law to resolve disputes peacefully, teaching members to petition the UN and other representative bodies, and engaging in political advocacy on behalf of members".[8] In this respect, to use one columnist's words, the decision in the *Holder vs. HLP* case "has catalized a self-cautioning conservatism in the peacebuilding community".[9]

Clearly, the legal decision restrains the capacity of international peacebuilding agencies by limiting engagement with a designated group. For instance, the criminal charge is made only on the basis of whether the person knew that the group he/she engaged was listed, or that the group had committed acts of terrorism.[10] Thus, one's actual intention to facilitate a proscribed group's terrorist

2 John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview," in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, eds. by Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 19-44.

3 Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research at Harvard University (HPCR), Humanitarian Action under Scrutiny: Criminalizing Humanitarian Engagement, http://c0186748.cdn1.cloudfiles.rackspacecloud.com/HPCR%20CHE%202011.pdf

4 Ibid., p. 20.

5 Holder vs. HLP 18 U.S.C. 2339 (B) notes, "Whoever knowingly provides material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization, or attempts or conspires to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 15 years, or both, and, if the death of any person results, shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life."

6 See, for an innovative proposal for Track II Diplomacy, John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

7 HPCR, Humanitarian Action under Scrutiny, p. 19.

8 Ibid., p. 20.

9 Joshua Gross, "No More Tea with Terrorists", *InterAction: Monday Developments Magazine*, October 2010, http://fletcher.tufts.edu/news/2010/10/oped/Gross-Oct31.shtml

10 See, for this, Holder vs. HLP 18 U.S.C. 2339(B): "To violate this paragraph [of material support], a person must have knowledge that the organization is a designated terrorist organization ... that the organization has engaged or engages in terrorist activity ... or that the organization has engaged or engages in terrorism ..."

activities is not considered in exercising jurisdiction. It implies that once a group is designated as a terrorist organization, there is no practical way for peacebuilding NGOs to engage.

In the context of peacebuilding in Somalia, the impact of the *Holder vs. HLP* on NGOs' activities is immense. One of the main parties in conflict, al-Shabaab, was designated as a foreign terrorist organisation in March 2008. With the Supreme Court decision, the possibilities to identify the enlisted group's intentions in the changing environment of conflict, and to engage them in dialogue for a sustainable peace in Somalia, have disappeared. Rather, if there is a peacebuilding NGO attempting to access al-Shabaab, it is vulnerable either to a crime punishment based on the decision in *Holder vs. HLP*, or to al-Shabaab's suspicion about "cooperating with the US war on terrorism by identifying insurgent locations".[11] In this way, the *Holder vs. HLP* has been shaping a new, undesirable environment for peacebuilding in Somalia.

Al-Shabaab: Spoilers or opportunists?

In the *Holder vs. HLP* decision, a majority of the judges claimed that foreign terrorist organizations "do not maintain organisational firewalls between social, political, and terrorist operations".[12] Therefore, the organization designated as terrorist is one whose entire efforts are solely focused on criminal conduct. In other words, the designated group amounts to the status of total spoilers; thus, even its nonviolent activities are viewed as serving for its *raison d'être*, criminalizing. However, most political groups include both moderates and extremists, and their conflict dynamics create varying possibilities of peacebuilding. Engagement with armed groups can change the status quo, forming an environment where hard choices are faced and constructive moves are made.

In contrast, non-engagement and politics of isolation can further radicalize a group that identifies no other option than continued intransigence. In this respect, there should be engagement with armed groups, so that they can embrace nonviolent/political means and abide by the rule of law. This must be a more effective approach than exclusive military strategies. In the case of al-Shabaab, as detailed below, recent research confirms that the group's violent activities have been affected by the presence of its internal factions and it has been recurrently oriented by the external change of conflict structure. For successful peacebuilding, understanding how al-Shabaab is situated in the dynamic nature of the Somali conflict is essential.

Defining the political nature of al-Shabaab seems complicated. We encounter a puzzling aspect of the group's violation of human rights alongside popularity in some of the local area it controls. Al-Shabaab has been blamed for "harsh punishments [...] without due process".[13] Many human rights NGOs have reported that greater stability in southern Somalia has been attained at the cost of the group's unrelenting repression and brutality. Yet, the record of al-Shabaab's gaining popularity equally bears on change processes of Somali conflict. To explain this, some historical accounts are beneficial.

11 *Somali NCF*, "Humanitarian Aid in Somalia – Issues and Challenges", August 20, 2009, http://ncfsomali.net/index.php/forums/54-humanitarian-aid-in-somalia-issues-a-challenges.

12 HPCR, Humanitarian Action under Scrutiny, p. 19.

13 *Human Rights Watch*, "Somalia: Al-Shabaab Metes Out Repression in the South", April 19, 2010, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/04/18/somalia-al-shabaab-metes-out-repression-south

With the massive Ethiopian intervention, a new type of civil war emerged. In the early 1990s, Somali conflict remained within neighboring communities. The anti-colonial sentiments and nationalistic voices were not vividly present at the time.[14] For the two years of Ethiopian occupation, however, many Somalis came to view the foreign military force "not ... as acting on behalf of an 'international community' but enforcing its national interests in Somalia".[15] As a result, a vibrant Somali nationalism strengthened by the unifying force of Islam, emerged as anti-colonial sentiments. Clearly, in this structural change of conflict, al-Shabaab was an opportunist. At the time of foreign intervention, "the Union of Islamic Courts consisted of heterogeneous groups – some radical and some moderate".[16]

In its hard-line policies, the US failed to strategically engage with moderates with specific stakes and supported the Ethiopian intervention. While al-Shabaab was not a significant military actor even during the Four Day War in April 2007, the intervention had the unintended consequence of empowering the group as it encountered arising nationalistic sentiments.[17] In addition, the US involvement instigated the support of international radical Islamists and Somali diaspora for al-Shabaab.[18] Thus, al-Shabaab has benefited from the dynamic dimension of conflict, where foreign interventions and counter-terrorism policies became considered the colonizing attempt to promote "American Islam".[19]

It is unclear if al-Shabaab should be seen as a terrorist group ideologically armed with global Jihad. The global jihadists constitute only one part of al-Shabaab. Somali fundamentalists claiming Islamic protection form another part of the group, while Somali nationalists consisting of a third body focused on the emancipation of foreign intervention and occupation.[20] All three groups can agree on issues in the short-term, while fighting a 'common enemy', but their sustainability as one group might be limited.

In fact, many researchers question if al-Shabaab's leaders share the same priorities and agenda.[21] Perhaps, they may desire continued assistance from international Islamic forces, but "the widely-held perception that [the group] was ordered by foreign jihadis prompted high-level defections".[22] Given this type of internal factions, as well as the external change of conflict structure, it is incorrect to view al-Shabaab as one group with an invariably fixed terrorist agenda. Neither is it accurate to assume, as the majority of the Supreme Court judges in the *Holder vs. HLP* case did, that the group solely focuses on criminal conduct, failing to maintain organizational firewalls between social and terrorist operations.

The *Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project* and peacebuilding in Somalia

Peacebuilding in Somalia has faced many challenges. From 2008 onwards, there have been several attacks against NGO workers. Insecurity for NGOs intensified, especially after the US listed al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization in March 2008 and one of the group's key leaders, Aden Ayro, was killed by a US missile strike in May 2008.[23] Most NGO projects in Somalia have been limited to the area of development. Al-Shabaab has allowed some NGOs to support activities such

14 Roland Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, no. 3 (2009): p. 392.

15 Ibid., p. 392.

16 Afyare Abdi Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding* (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 138.

17 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 393; Elmi, *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration*, p. 138.

18 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 394.

19 Ibid., p. 400.

20 The Life & Peace Institute, interview by author, March 7, 2011.

21 Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab", p. 397.

22 *International Crisis Group*, "Somalia's Divided Islamists," May 18, 2010, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/B074-somalias-divided-islamists.aspx

23 *Somali NCF*, "Humanitarian Aid in Somalia – Issues and Challenges", August 20, 2009, http://ncfsomali.net/index.php/forums/54-humanitarian-aid-in-somalia-issues-a-challenges

as food security, agriculture assistance, clean water, and sanitation, presumably because the group alone cannot resolve these problems.[24]

However, the challenge does not merely come from the restrained scope of NGO activity. It also derives from taxes, registration fees, and other payment that al-Shabaab has required. For example, on June 2, 2010, al-Shabaab ordered local NGOs to pay money, which it claimed would be used to fund the prevention of the river Shabelle floods. International NGOs were also asked to pay $ 1,000 as a contribution to the project.[25] Due to such financial demands and threats, several NGOs, including the World Food Program, have been forced to suspend their programs in al-Shabaab-held territory.[26]

Moreover, the outcome of the *Holder vs. HLP* case has worsened this situation. Paying the protection money simply to remain in the controlled area of al-Shabaab, or, not to mention, holding conflict resolution workshops/dialogue meetings with the group, can merit the criminal penalty. This has significantly impacted peacebuilding in Somalia, which, as in all other peacebuilding activities, necessitates reconciliation through dialogue between the key actors. This juridical challenge has also instigated al-Shabaab's reaction. With the increasing risk of persecution for NGOs in Somalia, they have become liable to a growing suspicion from al-Shabaab questioning if their activities could serve US intelligence.[27] The work of NGOs and agencies building peace in Somalia have therefore been considerably constrained, both by US anti-terrorism legislation and al-Shabaab's suspicion in relation to the law.

From this discussion, it is clear that the Supreme Court decision is one of the major obstacles for peacebuilding in Somalia. With a limited and problematic understanding of the nature of conflict and peacebuilding, the legal decision needs revision to reflect the dynamic aspect of conflict. Immediate action is required to clarify the material support statute for foreign terrorist organizations' violent and nonviolent activities. In the context of peacebuilding in Somalia, relevant policy makers need to realize that al-Shabaab cannot be considered as a homogeneous group of total spoilers, that the members of the group do not necessarily maintain an invariably fixed terrorist agenda, that al-Shabaab has been affected by its internal factions and structural changes of conflict, and finally that we cannot reach a sustainable peace unless all powerful groups are included in the negotiations. Based on this understanding is the recommendation for policymakers and peacebuilding NGOs to find strategic avenues to work with peacebuilding at all levels of society and help form public space where creative visions for a peaceful Somalia can be better accommodated.

Recommendations

1. Increase the understanding that there cannot be sustainable peace without including all powerful parties in negotiations to solve a conflict. The idea in the US Supreme Court ruling therefore needs to be challenged, that all attempts to engage these 'terrorist organizations' (even if they turn out to be non-violent), or bring them to the mediation table constitute support for terrorist activities.

24 The Life & Peace Institute, interview by author, March 7, 2011.

25 Yahya Mohamed Dahiye, "NGOs in Jowhar to Pay Al-shabab", *Bar-Kulan*, June 2, 2010, http://www.bar-kulan.com/2010/06/02/ngos-in-jowhar-to-pay-al-shabab/

26 The NGOs banned on 2010 September are FEWSNET, Horn Relief, and Mercy Corps. See Wilfred Mulliro, "US Condemns Alshabab's Interference with International Aid Agencies in Somalia," *Alshahid News*, September 18, 2010, http://english.alshahid.net/archives/12879. See also the remarks by Ambassador David Dunn, US Alternate Representative to the UN at a UN Security Council Debate on Somalia: http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2011/158010.htm

27 The Life & Peace Institute, interview by author, March 7, 2011.

2. Reform US anti-terrorism legislation so that, with attention to the dynamic aspect of conflict, it improves its effectiveness and fairness and makes it possible to engage diplomatically with proscribed armed groups. Clarify the material support statute so that it distinguishes material support for foreign terrorist organizations' violent and nonviolent activities.
3. Bridge the gap between those who enforce counter-terrorism and those who involve mediation and peacebuilding as they currently move in very different circles. This means that mediators are not always well acquainted with legal terms and their proscriptive connotations, and those enforcing the Counter Terrorism legislation have little or no understanding of peacebuilding and vulnerabilities of nongovernmental humanitarian organizations.
4. In the context of peacebuilding in Somalia, relevant policy-makers need to realize that al-Shabaab cannot be considered as a homogeneous group of total spoilers; that the members of the group do not necessarily maintain an invariably fixed terrorist agenda; finally that al-Shabaab has been affected by its internal factions and structural changes of conflict.
5. Based on this understanding, policymakers as well as peacebuilding NGOs are recommended to find strategic avenues to work with peacebuilding at all levels of society and help to form public space where creative visions for a peaceful Somalia can be better accommodated.

Somalia

CREATING SPACE FOR FRESH APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING

Policy options discussed by decision makers inside and outside Somalia are based primarily on global and regional security concerns. They tend to overlook the local complexities and the potential for nonviolent conflict transformation that exist in the context. In particular, the black listing of al-Shaabab prevents one of the main stakeholders to participate in the mainstream political process and discourages interest in dialogue from all sides. This means that state and non-state actors are self-censoring themselves, in fear of the consequences that engagement with a proscribed organisation might generate. There is a scarcity of alternative perspectives among policy makers that could encourage the design of an inclusive peace process in Somalia.

These challenges are presented and analysed in a series of articles that has come out of collaboration between the Life & Peace Institute and the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, USA.

The Life & Peace Institute (LPI) is an international and ecumenical centre that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation. This is done through a combination of research and action that entails the strengthening of existing local capacities and enhancing preconditions for building peace.

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