The APCJ is a refereed journal with a panel of international editorial advisors and readers. All articles are anonymously peer reviewed by at least two referees. We welcome the following types of contributions year round and will periodically issue calls for papers on specific topics:

**Articles and case analysis**—critical case studies or thematic discussion and analysis of topical peace and conflict themes (7,000 words maximum, including endnotes; abstract, 150 words or less).

**Briefings/practice**—training or intervention strategies, outcomes and impacts, policy review and analysis, country situational updates, and so on (2,000 words maximum).

**Book reviews**—critical assessments of new books that integrate peace and conflict concerns (1,500 words maximum).

**Resources**—reports, upcoming conferences and workshops, notices of new books and videos, e-communications, and Web sites that link to peace and conflict studies (150 words maximum); documents, declarations, communiqués, and other relevant nongovernmental or multilateral organizational statements (1,000 words maximum).

The editors will consider only material that meets the following requirements:

- Submissions must be original and cannot have been published previously, online or in print. They cannot be under consideration for publication by another journal or organization.
- Submissions should be prepared electronically, preferably in Microsoft Word.
- For notes and references, use the short-title system (not the author-date system) as per *Butcher’s Copy-editing: The Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proofreaders*, 4th edn (2006).

Authors should include full name, brief biography (with institutional affiliation), and contact details, including mailing address and telephone number.

Submit to editor@apcj.upeace.org and assted@apcj.upeace.org.

The editors reserve the right to alter all manuscripts to conform with APCJ style, to improve accuracy, to eliminate mistakes and ambiguity, and to bring the manuscript in line with the tenets of plain language.
# CONTENTS

**Guest Editor’s Note** ........................................ v
**From the Managing Editor** ................................ viii

## Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Democratic Expressions Revisited: The Youth and the Politics of Defiance in Uganda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fredrick Kisekka-Ntale and Elijah Doro</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advocacy of the Somaliland Diaspora in London</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Amal Yusuf Jama</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as an Institutional Framework for Postconflict Peacebuilding and Youth Development in Collapsed States: The Case of Liberia</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Samuel Wai Johnson, Jr</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralisation and Local Governance in Cameroon: Impact of Councillor-Citizen Relations on Service Delivery</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Josiane Tousse Djou</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralization Policy in Uganda: A Shadow of the Gospel</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Julius Chama</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Security Governance Within the East African Community: Prospects and Challenges</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Damaris Nyaboke Manyange</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Briefings

Youth Participation in Local Governance: Youth Perspective from the Coast Region of Kenya 89  
*Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen*

Tensions and Dilemmas Around Sexual Rights in the Context of the African Youth Charter 96  
*Manase Kudzai Chiweshe and Nelson Muparamoto*

## Bookshelf

Youth and Peaceful Elections in Kenya, by Kimani Njogu 103  
*Reviewed by Sarah Njeri*

Democratic Uprising in the New Middle East: Youth, Technology, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, by Mahmood Monshipouri 106  
*Reviewed by Kenneth Omeje*
Guest Editor's Note

Recent youth led uprisings and peaceful protests which began in Tunisia in late 2010 and spread rapidly to engulf other countries in the Arab world such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria have since ignited scholarly interest and efforts to examine the role of youth in bringing about political and economic reforms in seemingly repressive, exclusive and autocratic political regime in Africa. Such efforts attempt to generate fresh insights on mass mobilization and changing dynamics of Arab spring type of contestation, the quest to understand factors that lead to such uprising, their contagion effects and determinant of success in delivering desired political and economic transformation. The articles in this issue of the *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* contain scholarly papers examining these sets of issues from diverse perspectives and country contexts. It also shed light on the role of the youth in orchestrating popular uprising and protests aimed at removing repressive and dictatorial political leaders in power and bring about envisioned regime change and inevitably trigger development orientations capable of producing inclusive and equitable policies and outcomes while securing freedom, peace and security for all citizens.

The paper by Fredrick Kisekka and Elijah Doro on Uganda which examines the modes of democratic expression in the context of the youth and the politics of defiance provide useful insight on how young people can successfully engage through formal institutions and processes, like the Parliament, to oppose (lobby for) certain government policies or act to bring about positive institutional reforms. A clear example on Uganda is given to illustrate how the youth were able to obtain seats in parliament by contesting in an election as independent members of parliament and used their newly acquired positions to cause parliamentary reforms that resulted in greater separation between the executive and legislature, and also helped to strengthen parliamentary oversight functions including the government budget. Such analysis clearly shows that the youth can be mobilized to work within formal institutional arrangements to oppose and remove sub-optimal polices and induce progressive political and economic reforms in Africa.

However, this approach has been ineffective in efforts to unseat the current political regime in Uganda, which some observers and local opposition have described as unpopular and undemocratic, amidst fears that any attempts to organize mass movements and youth uprising to delegitimize government would be met with full military force. And where youth marginalization is high and therefore cannot influence policy and reforms through formal participation and where political inclusion eludes young people, who are simultaneously deprived of opportunities to establish and join social networks through which they can channel and resolve their grievances, the youth tend to quickly resort to informal networks and channels to voice their concerns and push for reform. A spontaneous uprising in this case can only be the most effective means of trying to bring about meaningful change and transformation. But Arab-spring type uprising are not very often, and let alone successful in bringing about political transi-
tions to more inclusive and participatory democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa—context and readiness for changes matters!

In some cases the pressure for political and economic change may originate from external sources. One of the under researched areas of external political participation is the unprecedented role of the African diaspora in advocating for meaningful change. The role of the diaspora has usually been confined to the importance of the remittances to the livelihood of their compatriots. This is the area explored by Amal Yusuf Jama as he explains the impact of the advocacy activities and strategies of the Somaliland diaspora in London. In the same vein as the Ugandan youth in Kisseka and Doro’s articles, Yusuf argues that the Somaliland diaspora in London play an important advocacy role within the political opportunity structure in London and elucidates the challenges inherent in working for change within these structures. He points out that the establishment of a unified leadership and the use of cultural events to promote collective goals will bring about effective change in Somaliland.

Some of the articles examine the role of developmental frameworks and approaches such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in either addressing post-conflict peace-building and youth empowerment, using evidence from post-conflict Liberia. The basic premises of the analyses is that marginalization, exclusion and entrenched inequality and inequities create conditions of deprivation and desperation especially among the youth which fuels youth mobilization for violence and engagement in armed conflicts.

PRSPs in post-conflict environments have been designed to be conflict-sensitive, participatory and on the overall to deliver equitable development outcomes with greater targeting of the poor and the young people. The paper by Samuel Wai Johnson uses the case study of Liberia to examine whether these development frameworks have delivered desired development results and have helped to enhance public governance. Like in most conflict and non-conflict countries where these frameworks have been applied, they have been found to produce mixed results and have largely been ineffective in stimulating broad-based and equitable development. And in most African countries, poverty has not significantly declined due to implementation of PRSPs, and the benefits have largely been captured and consolidated by political and business elites and much less by those targeted—the youth and rural poor.

In addition, overall inequality has increased in the case of Liberia, although PRSPs have helped to inculcate among citizens a desire for participation in the development process. However, access and participation in planning, allocation, implementation, and monitoring processes tend to be skewed against the poor and the youth, who are the main target beneficiaries of PRSPs. Thus the evidence seems to suggest that PRSPs provided limited opportunities for consolidating peace and freedoms, and was inadequate in design, process and context to bring Liberia back on its sustainable conflict-sensitive development trajectory.

Some scholars still argue that devolution and decentralization reforms can help to foster participation and promote efficient delivery of public services. They also suggest that such outcomes tend to be constrained by imbalances in power relations between citizens and public officials—vested authority and responsibility to deliver basic social services to citizens. Tousse Djou Josiane in her article examines the impact of power relations between councilors and citizens on delivery of public services in
Cameroon. She shows that non-cordial and conflict-laden relations between council officials and citizens undermine effective participation and provision of public services by councils. This is attributed by poor institutional design and capacity of the councils and explains, to large extent, the failure of the decentralization program to promote broader citizen engagement and voice in the development process in Cameroon.

The paper by Julius Chama analyses the decentralization policy in Uganda and records similar results as those documented by Tousse Djou Josiane on Cameroon. The former attributes the dismal performance of the decentralization policy to inadequate resources and frequent conflicts induced in part by political patronage, which adversely affected the quality decision-making and service delivery. Measures to expand the resource base need to be identified and utilized to structure a more balanced fiscal-social contract to promote tax compliance among citizen and for them to proactively demand for greater transparency and accountable from public officials. This would inevitably reduce marginalization, exclusion and conflicts, and create a solid foundation for strengthening public governance and service delivery at the local level.

While the two articles above address issues of local governance, Damaris Manyange examines the challenges of constructing a regional security infrastructure in Eastern Africa within a regional integration framework. She argues that, the East African Community (EAC) has successfully taken giant strides at enhancing regional security governance, especially through the finalization of normative frameworks. She however points out the major challenge as related to the lethargy of member states to implement the agreed upon frameworks. She concludes that beyond the implementation challenges, the region needs to also prioritize security governance coordination.

The articles contained in this issue are quite illuminating and would be valuable to academicians and researchers, but also to policy-makers and development practitioners working on issues of peace, conflict, governance and development. The second set of papers—briefs and reviews, are largely focused on broader themes of development, decentralization, and regional security governance systems, providing greater coherence and insights that can help to shape more detailed and rigorous future research themes.

Dr. Samuel Bwalya
*UNDP Country Director*
*Ethiopia*
From the Managing Editor

The African state and society has been explicitly or implicitly designed to exclude the youth from its state-building and development process. This has relegated the African youth to the unenviable position of electoral tools for manipulation through promises during elections. It is clear that, a genuinely inclusive society is one which ensures that its youth are active participants in all affairs of the state.

In 2012, experts at an international conference on youth and democratization held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia came to the unmistakable conclusion that African youth should be at the vanguard of political and governance changes in the continent. At the same conference the United Nations Under-Secretary and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa Mr. Carlos Lopez while emphasizing the important role of the youth in Democracy and governance in Africa said:

“We have to give our youth a clear and uplifting vision of Africa; our youth have to be able to relate to our aspirations for African unity and economic integration. They also need proper engagement in order to appreciate Africa’s potential and what their own contribution can be,”

In spite of the above call and the existence of government ministries or departments with the explicit mandate of addressing youth issues, in several African countries, the voice of the African youth has been loudly absent in key facets of states’ policies and governance structures. In countries where mechanisms and policies exist for active youth participation the vested interests of established political elites has greatly marginalized the youth.

The 2012 Arab Spring was a wakeup call for African countries on the dangers of marginalizing the youth. The popular uprisings mostly engineered by youth successfully brought down regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya buoyed by youth discontent. The sources driving youth discontent in almost all African countries seem to be identical. However, they range from frustration with economic conditions to opposition to the political status quo. There is no contrary argument that, Africa has seen the last of youth reaction to the current dispensation with especially youth population pressures on the rise.

According to the 2012 African Economic Outlook jointly published by the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development programme and the OECD Development Centre, there are more than 200 million young people in Africa between the ages of 15-24 and rapidly growing. Mckinsey Global Institute computes that, the number of young people in Africa will double by 2045. Between 2000 and 2008, Africa’s working age population (15-64 years) grew from 443 million to 550 million; an increase of 25%. In annual terms this is a growth of 13 million, or 2.7% per year (World Bank 2011a). If this trend continues, the continent’s labour force will be 1 billion strong by 2040, making it the largest in the world, surpassing both China and India.

© 2014 University for Peace Africa Programme. All rights reserved. ISSN 1659–3944.
The beauty of this growing youthful population is that, its not only growing but getting better educated. Based on current trends, 59% of 20-24 year olds will have had secondary education in 2030, compared to 42% today. This will translate into 137 million 20-24 year olds with secondary education and 12 million with tertiary education in 2030. Although significant quality gaps remain, these trends offer an unrivalled opportunity for economic and social development if the talents of this swiftly increasing reservoir of human capital are harnessed and channelled towards the productive sectors of the economy. However, they could also present a significant risk and threat to social cohesion and political stability if Africa fails to create sufficient economic and employment opportunities to support decent living conditions for this group.

Therefore this issue of Africa Peace and Conflict Journal focusing on Youth, Democracy and Governance, brings to the fore the multiple challenges faced by African countries in channeling the youth and its inherent energies towards building viable states in Africa. It is without a shadow of doubt that, in the decades to come, the youth will be a force to reckon with as Africa embraces its vision 2063.

Samuel Kale Ewusi
Managing Editor
Modes of Democratic Expressions Revisited: The Youth and the Politics of Defiance in Uganda.

Fredrick Kisekka-Ntale and Elijah Doro

This paper seeks to locate acts of political defiance by the Ugandan youth within a specific trajectory in the debate about youth as agents of political change in repressed communities. It will locate the forces of youth defiance within the Ugandan body politic and examine whether this political intransigence has broader national implications and relevance in the survival and perpetuity of the National Resistance Movement (NRM). This paper will also scrutinise the economic vulnerabilities of youth and how these pose challenges regarding their co-option into the infrastructure of regime survival because youth have been recruited by the regime in Uganda into quasi-militia groups deployed largely to beat up public protesters particularly in Kampala but also elsewhere in the country. This issue will be examined in the context of their political defiance.

In the twenty first century most famous regime change movements and political reform agitations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South America have seen youth movements playing a role both in political mobilisation, and also fighting in the streets and in rebel armies. The role of youth movements in politics is so well established that young people have come to be seen as the shapers of global politics, political change and the democratisation process.1 Youth participation in traditional political institutions and conventional systems of political participation such as electoral processes, membership of political parties and trade unions, has been noticeably waning and scholars have conceptualised this development in various ways. Adsett argues that youth have been ‘disenfranchised’; Putnam describes the ‘decline of social capital’; Vrcan observes ‘young people’s de-politicisation’; Tivadar and Mrvar talk

about ‘social vulnerability’ and Svytnarenko observes their ‘marginalisation’. Paradoxically, youth have been able to navigate the existing social and economic barriers to political participation by inventing their own arenas, platforms and crafting political responses in youth centric modes and systems.

Political participation is a pre-requisite in the development of democracy both in shaping its institutions as well as embedding and socially legitimising them. The quest for democratic involvement by all social groups has been the essential catalyst behind the expansion and development of democratic politics globally. Political theory has offered various forms of political participation. Minimalists, such as Joseph Schumpeter, limit the extent of participation to voting, for example, but other scholars have argued that participation should be linked to a broader involvement of citizens in politics. While institutional participation is confined to established political institutions, post-materialists have identified accelerated protest politics or defiance movements as a changing and novel dimension of post-modernity. Inglehart, for example, argues that social trends in post-industrial society have brought about the replacement of old materialistic values in politics associated with security and authority by a higher concern for the environment, human rights and gender equality among others.

Defining youth presents a myriad of problems because it can be used in different contexts to imply a number of things. Youth is usually socially constructed. While the United Nations Programme on Youth defines youth as a person who is between the ages of 15-24, the African Union Youth Charter defines youth as a person aged between 15 and 35. The Uganda National Youth Policy (2001) defines youth as all young persons, female and male aged 12-30 years. Rather than merely looking at youth as an age category, it must also be seen as a construction defined by social expectations and norms. While this definition captures the essence of the use of the word, in this paper we must add that in the realm of African politics the term youth traverses the biological age category and the social cultural construction to mean physically active and able bodied individuals who are seen as distinct from the octogenarians and very old individuals who control the party and executive power in almost all cases.

A World Bank Report, African Development Index 2008/2009, revealed that Uganda had the youngest population in the world with the highest unemployment

---


rate in Africa of 83 per cent ahead of Zimbabwe (68 per cent) and Burkina Faso (54 per cent). The same report also noted that Uganda had the highest dependency ratio on the continent of 1:1. The Uganda National Youth Policy of 2004 notes that youth constitute 65-75 per cent of the population with most of the youth living in rural areas. Recent figures estimate that there may be as many as 6.5 million youth in the country and with an annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent this figure is projected to rise to 7.7 million in 2015. Economic statistics referring to this group reflect a picture of ineptitude, lost hopes, grim futures and vicious cycles of lost opportunities and dire misery. A study in 2013 conducted by Action Aid International Uganda, entitled ‘Lost Opportunity’, found that 62 per cent of Ugandan youth are jobless and 12 per cent of all youth in Uganda, aged between 12 and 30, are chronically poor. As noted earlier the youth constitute 65-75 per cent of Uganda’s population and more than two million are out of school. The majority of these have no regular work or income making them vulnerable to recruitment into illegal activities. The study found that:

*a scrutiny of the state of youth with regards to employment, careers and livelihoods, access to adequate livelihood opportunities further reveal that the youth are at a disadvantage. With the majority of youth lacking the requisite skills the informal sector has become the major alternative source of employment opportunity for job creation.*

It further notes that ‘not only do youth lack self worth as individuals, but they are also affected in the access to services provided by government. Youth perceive that they lack a voice in society, while they also distrust authority.’ According to the 2010/11 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) and the Labour Ministry, 400,000 youth are released into the job market to compete for 9,000 jobs annually.

This group, despite the heavy burden of poverty and vulnerability, has been at the forefront of Ugandan politics since independence in 1962 and has participated in fostering political change. In the turbulent post-independence times, youth participated in the political violence that saw four regimes change power between 1962 and 1986. During the National Resistance Army’s war of 1981-1985, 80 per cent of the fighting force comprised of young people most of whom had left school and college to join the

---


8. Ibid.


11. At independence in 1962 Milton Obote took control as Executive Prime Minister. In 1996, he became Executive President before he was overthrown in a military coup by Idi Amin, who was removed in 1971 by a military takeover that brought Milton Obote back into power. In 1981 after a heavily disputed election (December 1980) civil war broke out which lasted until 1986 when the National Resistance Movement came to power.
bush war in protest over the tyranny.12 In 1986, young women were identified by the NRM’s ‘Ten Point Programme’ as a special interest group needing affirmative action in parliament.

In 1993, parliament enacted a National Youth Council (NYC) statute to organise youths into a single unified national body to participate in development and national governance. The statute provides for five youths to be elected at district level. The same statute also created district youth councils, sub county youth councils and village youth councils. This intricate web of youth administration was intended to increase youth participation in politics and in policy and decision-making and consequently to empower them socially and politically. Despite the creation of this new infrastructure for youth involvement and integration into the broader national political system, there was still low participation by youth in decision making due to ‘lack of leadership and management skills, organisational and regulatory barriers and low resource allocation to youth programmes’.13 A study carried out by Ebert Friedrich Stiftung in 2001 revealed that, despite youth representation at different levels of the administrative structure, this was not transforming into meaningful gains and there was still a lot that had to be done.

Youth, especially in the north, have borne the brunt of decades of protracted conflict, which has denied them opportunities for education and sustainable livelihoods. Most of them have experienced broken lives, fear, chronic poverty, and economic marginalisation, and they are deeply scarred by the memories of war and violence. In other rural parts of Uganda the same picture of a deeply impoverished, desperate, economically and politically disempowered and disconnected youth population is evident and creates challenges around how to integrate them into the national economic fibre and give them a meaningful life.

YOUTH DEFIANCE AND PROTEST IN FORMAL POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: YOUNG MPS, DISSIDENT POLITICIANS AND REGIME CHANGE POLITICS.

The introductory section of this paper made reference to the general political apathy of youth to forms of traditional political organisations such as political parties, electoral processes and membership to trade union organisations. This has been explained by scholars in a number of ways, such as the ‘de-politicisation of youth’,14 ‘youth marginalisation’,15 and the ‘decline of social capital’.16 Consequently, alternative fora for youth engagement outside the orthodox political structures of state political

---

power have been generated. While this scenario holds in certain case studies especially in the developed world where youth have at their disposal various social networks, in Africa and the developing world, the dearth of organised social networks for young people’s interest groups—such as environment, human rights, community activities, sport, and leisure—has meant that young people’s political participation has largely been restricted to formal political institutions.

In Uganda, the youth have historically either campaigned for political parties, engaged in mobilisation of communities or directly participated in the elections when they have sometimes been elected to public office. Since 2011, a group of youth in formal political institutions has made more enduring contributions with regard to protest and defiance as well as engagement with the incumbent regime. While other youth civic bodies have also carved a niche within the political discourse of protest they have largely been advocacy bodies rather than activist organisations. Within the Sixth Parliament were a number of young independent MPs who confronted the executive on a number of issues and helped to establish the independence of parliament.17 These MPs emerged to replace the weak political opposition that existed in parliament at the time and to challenge the hegemonic tendencies that were gradually manifesting within the movement system.

This was a powerful entity that entrenched the independence of the Sixth Parliament over the executive. Most notably there was the passage of the Administration of Parliament Act (2005) that granted autonomy to parliament, and the Budget Act (2001) that created more space for the engagement of the legislature in shaping the national budget. These young MPs were able to censure cabinet ministers, for example Sam Kutesa (censured), Jim Muhwezi (censured), Kirunda Kivejinja (who resigned before censure), Matthew Rukikaire (who resigned before censure), and were able to defy the executive and presidential orders on a number of occasions. These challenges resulted in very strained relations that forced the government to campaign against most of them during the elections to the Seventh Parliament.

This group of reformist and liberal minded young MPs were later to emerge during the Seventh Parliament and metamorphosed into the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (PAFO), a group that was interested in seeing the preservation of the independence of parliament and real debate at a time when parliament was being severely threatened by the hegemonic and patronising tendencies of the executive. PAFO members supported the return to multi-party democracy and were opposed to attempts by the incumbent, President Yoweri Museveni, to remove the term limits for the presidency and seek re-election in 2006. Although their anti-third term agitation failed to yield results, this parliamentary movement stood as a strong unit of recalcitrant, obstinate and highly defiant individuals calling for constitutionalism and a return to the rule of law that the government was slowly circumventing. As a result they became targets of state repression, harassment and intimidation. PAFO meetings were routinely broken up by the police; members were incarcerated and beaten up by NRM supporters, but they continued to resolutely defy the government. The PAFO later merged with the main political opposition members from within the NRM party led by Dr Kizza Besigye—a veteran of the NRM/A war and President Museveni’s bush doctor—to

form the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). This became a formidable opposition that consistently engaged the ruling party in all elections and became the official voice of dissent to mis-governance, corruption, and mishandling of the economy and the various abuses of human rights perpetrated by the Museveni regime.

In April 2011 and working with the civil society organisation Activist for Change (A4C), Kizza Besigye mobilised a group of youth to join him in the ‘Walk to Work’ demonstrations. The protest was motivated by the high cost of living, rising cost of fuel, high transport costs, unaffordable food prices and frustration over poor service delivery and lack of fiscal discipline in government.\(^\text{18}\) This sparked intense riots in Kampala and brought the country to a standstill. Besigye was characteristically arrested, igniting widespread protests from his supporters, starting from Kisekka market.\(^\text{19}\) Deadly clashes ensued in which two people were killed, 120 taken to hospital and 360 arrested.\(^\text{20}\) Consequently, the authorities outlawed A4C for its alleged role in instigating the ‘Walk to Work’ riots. A4C later mutated into another opposition pressure group called For God and my Country (4GC), which holds the same views and political philosophies as A4C. 4GC was also banned as an illegal association.

Since 2005, Besigye has built a strong charismatic personality and large following in the capital city, which has resulted in frequent arrests and incarceration, police harassment and brutality. His major supporters in the riots have been market vendors, unemployed youths, some boda boda riders, students and other civic bodies opposed to the regime.\(^\text{21}\) In 2011, Besigye called for an Egyptian style revolution in Uganda if the elections were rigged. The momentum for protest built by Besigye, and the culture of defiance he has instituted in the citizenry, may act as the greatest influence for improving the civic competence of youth in Kampala and the role they play in confronting government and demanding accountability. This partly explains the paranoia the regime has developed which has led to Besigye being barred from crowded places, such as the market, and sometimes kept under a \textit{de facto} house arrest. It was the ap-


\(^{19}\) It is interesting to point out that Uganda remains one of those sub-Saharan countries that has been inspired by the Arab Spring revolts that began in Tunisia and spread to Egypt and Libya. In the ensuing protests long-serving dictatorial governments were overthrown by the people. It is therefore logical to point out that those in search of political change sought to take advantage of similar conditions of discontent in the country as well as the growing youth population to demand for regime change. It is in this regard the Kisekka-Market in Kampala has turned out to be the strategic planning area of the protests and has thus been code-named Uganda’s Benghazi, the city that was taken over by Gaddafi opponents, who founded the National Transitional Council in February 2011. In many ways therefore, the Arab Spring revolt represents a new form of youth inspiration and mobilisation especially through the use of social media and exporting this form of mobilisation to the rest of the world, which remains one of the modern day political and social exports of the region.


\(^{21}\) In 2012, Besigye announced his resignation from the presidency of the FDC and stated that he would not participate in any future elections if there were no electoral reforms.
prehension caused by the Kampala riots that prompted the government to craft a Public Order Management Act in 2013.²²

The protest movement led by Besigye in Kampala does not constitute a critically powerful force driven by a homogenous ideology, however, or a strong sense of purpose to effect regime change. In reality the protests are limited to localised issues around urban concerns and grievances, with limited political and economic objectives, which concern day-to-day market vendors and boda boda riders. While it is possible that these localised concerns may transform into higher political ambitions, there is no attempt to link the urban protest movement of Kizza Besigye to a national based movement, and there are a many hurdles in generating such a movement.

The current (Ninth) Parliament witnessed an intake of youthful MPs who have been unexpectedly quick spirited and combative. These young MPs have agitated with their own party on the deteriorating state of service delivery and corruption, have stalled the passage of important bills in the house, and have used motions in parliament to frustrate their own party. They have even gone as far as creating coalitions with opposition MPs on a number of issues. As a consequence this group has been given the sobriquet 'rebel MPs'. The group consists of Wilfred Niwagaba (Ndorwa East), Theodore Seekikubo (Lwamiyaga County), Barnabas Tinkansiimire (Buyaga County), and Muhammad Nsereko (Kampala Central).²³ Among the litany of direct confrontations they have had with their party are opposing Museveni’s ministerial appointments of Nasser Ntege Sebbagala and James Kakooza, and opposing the Anti-Bail Bill which targeted protesters and government opponents. They also defied the party’s line to vote for Museveni’s choice for the Chair of the Ugandan Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) voting instead for Betty Amongi of the opposition Uganda People’s Congress (UPC).

In 2011, the group conspired with the opposition to vote against the passage of the Petroleum Bill in protest over the excessive powers in granting and revocation of oil exploration licences it conferred to the Minister of Energy. Later in the same year, they joined hands with an independent young MP, Gerald Karuhanga (Youth Western), to move a censure motion against three government ministers accused of corruption in the allocation of oil exploration contracts.²⁴ The motion implicated the Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi, Foreign Affairs Minister Sam Kutesa and Energy and Mineral Development Minister, Hilary Onek. The motion further sought to halt the award of further mining contracts until a legal framework had been established. The president called for an NRM retreat at the National Leadership Institute in Kyankwanzi where he sought to influence the MPs to go back to parliament and withdraw the mo-

²² The Bill outlaws public gatherings without prior consent and authorisation from the police and authorities. It has largely been used selectively and specifically against public gatherings by the political opposition and civil society groups agitating for regime change.

²³ The other member of the rebel MPs camp Cerina Nebanda died under mysterious circumstances in December 2012 and the government has been implicated in her death.

²⁴ Gerald Karuhanga a young independent MP has also been at the forefront, directly defying government in Parliament. Karuhanga, a brilliant Makerere educated lawyer, rose to political prominence during his student leadership days at Makerere University where he had led a strike against the re-arrest of the Redemption Army suspects. With the coordination of Kizza Besigye and Major General Mugisha Muntu he led over 1000 students to the city centre. Tyres were burnt, shops destroyed. Karuhanga also moved a motion that sought to restore term limits in the constitution.
tion. The ‘rebels MPs’ defied the presidential and party directive and, at the retreat, Tinkansiime and Sekikubo refused to wear the green fatigues which were given to all the NRM members as a symbol of party unity.25 Midway during the presidential speech, the rebel MPs walked out in protest. Cerina Nebanda said they had walked out because they felt offended that the president would order them to withdraw a resolution they had made in parliament as if they did not know what they were doing.26 “The president thinks he can undermine parliament anytime he wants, I have a conscience and can’t be part of that scam.”

In April 2013, the National Resistance Movement Central Executive Council (CEC) expelled the rebel MPs from the party on the grounds of non-compliance to the party’s rule 4, which prohibits campaigning against official party flag bearers in elections. The party wrote to parliament calling for their expulsion from the house but the speaker ruled that the constitution did not have a provision on the expulsion of MPs and that they would retain their seats.28 The party appealed to the Constitutional Court which ruled that the MPs be barred from accessing parliament.29 Upon appeal, the Supreme Court overturned the judgement of the Constitutional Court and the rebel MPs won a landmark legal battle against the government.30 The rebel MPs, in one of their rallies, predicted that President Yoweri Museveni’s government would collapse before 2016 if no major reforms were instituted by then.31

Another front concerns the battle for the control of Kampala city between the ruling party and the Lord Mayor Elias Lukwago that has led to street protests and confrontations of a colossal nature. He was elected to the mayoral seat in 2011 following heavily contested elections. Upon Lukwago’s electoral victory, Museveni attempted to stall the political influence of the Lord Mayor by appointing a Chief Executive Officer of Kampala and a Minister for the city to dilute the mayoral powers. The attempts to frustrate the Lord Mayor at the helm of the city culminated in a move to censure him, orchestrated by the state and ruling party. This sparked off riots from traders at Kisekka market and a deadly clash with the police which resulted in the death of two


26. Former Butaleja Woman Member of Parliament who died under mysterious circumstances in December 2012.


29. On 21 February 2014 the Constitutional Court finally ruled that the ‘rebels MPs’ be thrown out of parliament with immediate effect.

30. On the 6 March 2014 the Supreme Court ruled and stayed the expulsion from parliament of the four MPs expelled by the National Resistance Movement–Organization party. The Supreme Court also ordered the Speaker of Parliament and the Electoral Commission not to hold any by-elections to replace the MPs until the same court disposed of the main application.

people, his arrest, and that of his political ally Dr Kizza Besigye. Against all odds and police directives not to hold meetings with his political constituency in contravention of the Public Order Maintenance Act 2013, Lukwago has defied the police, experiencing beatings and incarcerations on many occasions. Eventually, Lukwago was found guilty by the Justice Catherine Bamugemereire-led tribunal, set up by the minister in charge of Kampala, Frank Tumwebaze.\(^\text{32}\) He challenged the impeachment in the High Court where the judgement upheld that he was still the Mayor of Kampala pending a judicial review of his impeachment.

Erias Lukwago’s defiance invites us to revisit the body of regime politics and popular resistance that has been broadly framed within social theory and social movements.\(^\text{33}\) Kampala represents the centre of political mobilisation and space for the opposition to perform accountability checks, particularly on executive power.\(^\text{34}\) Former Mayor of Kampala Ssebaana-Kizito pointed out, ‘the bigger issue is about the battle for Kampala between the ruling party and the opposition.’ As long as Museveni continues to be president, he will never stop fighting opposition mayors in Kampala. For the president’s appointees do whatever they do to fight Lukwago to please the president.\(^\text{35}\)

**LOCATING THE YOUTH DEFiance, REGIME CHANGE AND HOW THEY CONNECT IN UGANDAN POLITICS**

Why have youth become an important pawn in Uganda’s political game? Alternative routes for political expression have become fewer and the role of the youth has increased in political significance. This importance is also attached to the role played by the youth in the Arab spring revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.\(^\text{36}\) In addition, there is growing consensus that the conditions that facilitated the Arab spring revolts in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen are equally ripe in Uganda.

Unemployment is rampant; available statistics demonstrate that unemployment is four times higher for young people compared to other demographic categories. In addition, the youth are politically marginalized and therefore frustrated with the prevailing political circumstances present in the country. The perceived lack of voice coupled with political oppression, makes them a very vulnerable group to political uprising in Uganda today. It is little wonder that the frequency of youth involvement

\(^{32}\) Justice Catherine Bamugemereire’s tribunal was set up following a petition filed by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) councillors against Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago. He was accused of misconduct, incompetence and abuse of office. A tribunal was subsequently set up and he was found guilty of the accusation; the city councillors eventually impeached him.


in urban demonstrations and other forms of political and economic discontent, particularly in Kampala, has increased.\textsuperscript{37}

In a key informant interview with a political leader, we examined the prevalence of riots across Kampala in the wake of the impeachment of the Lord Mayor and arrest of Dr Kizza Besigye. He said that the only force with any marginal chance of effecting regime change in Uganda was a youth-led mass movement, a spontaneous youth revolt instigated by desperation and regime repression. He totally rejected the utility of elections as a viable option pointing out that a series of elections had just been rigged and stolen, and the sitting regime would not acquiesce to an electoral defeat.\textsuperscript{38} He went further, and rubbished the military option as being far-fetched considering how effectively the regime has consolidated its control and grip over the military to the extent that the armed forces have become part of the infrastructure of terror and repression for regime survival and perpetuity.

In view of the above, it is critical to ascertain the organic linkages within the protest movement and expound on them and their implications for the future political matrix of Uganda. Regime change is preceded by deliberate mobilisation driven by an organisational instinct built around a discourse community, sharing common convictions and views about an establishment. They have to be institutions and structures that can act as conduits of mobilising youth rage, frustration, despair and anger around a positive goal and objective. This is where youth organisations, civic bodies, student organisations and youth wings of the official opposition are critical in political reform and revolution. Vladimir Lenin writing decades ago noted that ‘… all we have to do is to recruit young people more widely and more broadly… the youth, the students and still more so the young workers will decide the issue of the whole struggle’.\textsuperscript{39}

The tragedy of Uganda is that there are no properly established, vibrant, politically conscious and autonomous youth structures and institutions with a broad-based reach and competence, enough to stimulate a mass movement. The Uganda Youth Network (NYN), which was founded in 2002, provides a forum for debate, advocacy and youth participation in legislative and policy processes. It is driven by three main strategic objectives: human rights and good governance; economic empowerment; and, the environment and sustainable development. However, such organisational fora have remained as platforms for elitist youth advocacy, and generators of international aid funds and academic debates which never contribute anything much to the national struggles of young people.\textsuperscript{40}

In the formal political realm, young politicians have tried to create multi-partisan structures and institutions. In 2011, youth from the different political parties created

\textsuperscript{37} For instance on 19 June 2014, two youth students, Norman Tumuhimbise and Robert Mayanja, members of the little-known ‘Jobless Brotherhood’, stormed parliament with two pigs painted ‘Yellow’ the official colour of the NRM. They wore white T-shirts with red inscriptions of their protest message, which they now say was a response to President Museveni’s state of the nation address, detailing the wasteful expenditure by the state especially by the executive and legislature.

\textsuperscript{38} Interview with a key respondent, Kampala, 16 December 2013.


\textsuperscript{40} Interview with key informant in Kampala, 12 December 2013.
the Inter Party Youth Platform (IYOP) with the objective of providing effective and meaningful channels for improved participation in the political development processes. The organisation serves as a platform for young people’s network and engagement in topics of development, democracy, trade, climate change and sustainable development. The chairperson of the organisation stated that ‘Clearly Ugandans yearn for a new beginning, a new direction. We yearn for a return to constitutional rule, freedom and respect for all’.41

There are also youth wing structures of the various opposition political parties such as the Democratic Party (DP) and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), but the ruling party has largely prevented them from establishing any structures in the rural areas. Conspicuously, an organised youth movement visible in structures and institutions of civic engagement and activism is not present in Uganda and what exist are fragmented, disparate groups with a limited reach and an equally limited passion or political motive to transcend the narrow objectives and vision. Arthur Larok offers a highly critical pronouncement on these organisations as ‘weak and fragmented’, riddled with ‘internal governance and system deficits, elitist with weak organic linkages with the majority of the youths in the rural areas, functioning more like trusteeships with an assumed rather than legitimate mandate’.42 Further, ‘without a formidable structure that connects national and subnational actors, as well as youth across disciplines and sectors, business, the market place, the employed versus the unemployed, the youth movement can hardly be effective in engaging in national policy processes’.43

In a key informant interview held with a senior citizen who has lived through the Obote and Museveni regimes, he pointed out that the state in Uganda understands the power and impact of youth organisations and bodies, and has endeavoured to decimate them to ensure that there will never be an organised or powerful youth political entity.44 In this regard, the existing youth bodies have either been rendered useless through conscription to state and political systems of the Movement, or denied space to articulate on pertinent political issues.

Another key respondent noted ‘The Museveni system is intent on producing a politically unconscious society which is increasingly in accumulation and consumption mode with young people’s attention diverted from the critical issues of governance. For most of these young people, as long as there is a car, a good salary, and their children going to school nothing else matters’.45 This thinking mirrors what Bayart termed ‘the politics of powerlessness’.46 Nancy Fraser, following Bayart’s conceptual trail, christened African youth political participation as ‘powerless counter publics to the hegemony of the elders’.47 Fraser identifies counter publics with subalterns and in unison with what Cruise O’Brien describes as ‘politics from below’.48 A more detailed

41. IYOP chairperson Cecilia Anyakoit in an interview with the Observer, 20 June 2013.
42. Larok et al, ‘At the crossroads’.
43. Ibid.
44. Key Informant Interview, Kampala, 9 January 2014.
45. Ibid.
account of this state of affairs was developed by Bruce Baker in his debates on youth, social clustering and the consequences of political disengagement. The above conceptual characterisation helps in understanding the structuring of African politics where hegemonic elders dominate state power and political parties. This normative mode of youth participation in politics follows the socialisation theory of Hodkinson. Here, participation is more about controlling young people and regulating their activities in accordance with the requirements of the state system than about their autonomy and self-fulfilment. In Malawi, Kamuzu Banda used the Youth Wing of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), a paramilitary group, to terrorise pro-democracy activists. President Moi of Kenya used the Mungika criminal group to terrorise political opponents, and in Zimbabwe the ruling ZANU PF regime's campaign of violence in 2008 was largely spearheaded by the youth. In Uganda President Obote used the UPC Youth Wingers during the late 1960s and late 1980s.

In Uganda, youth have historically fallen prey to the dominant-party syndrome where the state effectively assimilates them for use in terror, dominance, coercion and patronage. Studies about the youth bulge have pointed out that youth cohorts in conditions of economic misery are a time bomb for political ferment in corrupt regimes. We therefore argue that it is for this reason that corrupt regimes can actually reap huge dividends from large numbers of gullible, uneducated and economically vulnerable youth groups, by harnessing them for regime survival and using them against the political opposition. The model advocated by Collier has come to inform the ‘opportunity’ literature on insurgency that has its roots in economic theory and focuses on the structural conditions that provide opportunities for a rebel group to wage war against a government. This can actually be shown to work in the same way towards strengthening a corrupt government. One such outfit is the feared ‘Kiboko Squad’ formed in 2007 to do the dirty work for the National Resistance Movement Organization (NRM-O). It was formed during the anti-Mabira riots. One commentator notes:

Uganda like post colonial African states inherited a state infrastructure that is predatory and exploitative. Such a state infrastructure is characterised by highly centralised decision making systems, suppression of dissenting voices and a patron-

---

51. Paul Collier, ‘Doing well out of war: an economic perspective’, in Mats Berdal and David Malone (eds.), Greed and grievance: economic agendas in civil wars, (Boulder, CO and London, Lynne Rienner, 2000), 91–111. Collier’s model argues that the mere existence of an extraordinarily large pool of unemployed youth is a factor that lowers the cost of recruitment because the opportunity cost for a young person is generally low. If young people are left with no alternative but unemployment and poverty, they are increasingly likely to join a rebellion as an alternative way of generating income.
52. Kiboko is a vernacular word for ‘stick’ and the squad was so named because of the long canes they carry around to use on protesters.
53. In 2007, opposition MPs Betty Kamya, Jimmy Akena, Hussein Kyanjo and Beatrice Atim Anywar led thousands of protesters against an Executive Proposition to giveaway part of Mabira Forest in Central Uganda to an Asian investor to increase sugarcane production. Demonstrators attacked Asians, killed one person and destroyed property.
age system that works to foster regime survival objectives rather than the development objectives of the youth... many youths are interested in becoming part of the burgeoning patronage system rather than challenging it because they have been made to believe that their emancipation is a favour from the ruling elite, they prefer to listen to diversionary rap music from politicians rather than demanding action."54

President Museveni has featured on ‘you want another rap track’ to appeal to young people by identifying with their social and cultural interests. In September 2013, parliament approved a Shs 265 billion (USD100 million) Youth Livelihood Fund (YLF) to empower the poor and unemployed youth countrywide. However, this fund has largely been seen as a tool of controlling youth cooperatives and income generating groups. In one instance, and in a move that was largely criticised, the president handed out a sack of money containing 250 million shillings to youth groups in Busoga, in addition to a minibus, a truck and 15 motorcycles.55 This move was a symbolic gesture to youth that the president is the only source of state funds.

The youth in Uganda also suffer the national malady of fragmented and fractured identities which are very parochial and sectarian in outlook. Uganda consists of many ethnic groups that are distinct conscious emblems, and young people have come to view state politics through these ethnic lenses and structure their responses to political activities around ethnic feelings. Youth from the western region for instance generally feel that regime change, that will bring a non-westerner to power, may be greatly harmful to their interests. Western youths interviewed by the authors responded that they will never support anyone from either the north or central region. This relates to the general perception from other parts of the country that the western youth are favoured and benefit from preferential treatment by getting government jobs.

DO REBEL MPS PRESENT AVENUES OF YOUTH INITIATED DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN UGANDA?

Having explored the dynamics within the institutions and structures of youth organisations, the paper will now focus on a group discussed in previous sections but whose import to national politics was not exhausted. The question is: are rebel MPs therefore unique or novel to the regime change politics of Uganda? In answering the above question it is important to note that the current regime is very hyper-sensitive and any criticism and/or complaint made by the public such as non-availability of drugs, non-payment of teachers, medical staff or procurement related corruption, is interpreted as having been motivated by the desire to embarrass the regime and attain political significance. In this regard any apparent criticism or divergent view point requires a degree of courage which cannot be understood in various liberal democratic systems. Secondly, Uganda is a country governed under multi-party politics, but with limited outlets for political activity and limited means for expressing opposition or disagreement. For this reason, youthful rebel MPs who have chosen to go against established

54. Larok et al, ‘At the crossroads’.
'NRM party norms' constitute an alternative outlet that other politicians can use to express themselves.

Two schools distinct and at variance with each other, are associated with this debate; the 'retrogressive' and 'reformist. The retrogressive view is highly cynical of this protest group and tries to explain it as a manifestation of NRM domestic tiffs and a reflection of internal power struggles that has no direct bearing on any greater issues of national power. To this strand of opinion, the rebel MPs and Lukwago are opportunists and attention seekers wanting to be rewarded with ministerial appointments. The reformist describe them as being the spirit of change and progress, the voices of a wider constituency of moderates within the NRM willing to wrestle power from Museveni in 2016.

To the reformist, rebel MPs represent younger MPs in the Movement who are independent thinking. In an interview held with one political analyst, he intimated that the rebel MPs have behind them a whole crop of liberal minded politicians within the NRM who are just not willing to blow their cover yet and are clandestinely canvassing to either overthrow Museveni in 2016 or frustrate his publically perceived successors. So behind this tiny protest group there lays an enormous political conspiracy that may even include top military officials and senior party members within the NRM. The desertion by the Coordinator of Intelligence Services, General David Sejusa, to the United Kingdom in April 2013, and the subsequent release of sensitive information revealing plans to assassinate top politicians and military officials opposed to the 'Muhoozi project' fits into the jigsaw of a possible grand conspiracy linking the rebel MPs to a bigger political ferment within the NRM.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The current paralysis of the youth movement to feed into the politically convenient moments of historical change is perhaps the greatest drawback to regime change in Uganda. With a youth population contented with the conditions of state predation and in a state of fatalistic resignation to the perilous status quo the only convenient question that can be asked is what is the future role for, and what are the prospects of, the youth movement in Uganda? While it is very clear that youth will never be the vanguard in national opposition and anti-regime politics and has not shown itself capable in any way of assuming that role, it is demonstrable that youth are more likely to be co-opted into existing centres of protest, to swell the crowds of protest in the streets and to be tinder material that may be used to ignite a political revolution in Uganda. Youth have the potential to harness their creative instincts of music, dance, theatre, poetry and art into a powerful source and tool of political consciousness. They must make full use of the available technologies to disseminate their ideas and to widen their interaction and connection to create a discourse community. In most successful case studies such as Egypt where the youth were the vanguard in the overthrow of Mubarak using social media, they also had a critical role in counteracting the motifs and imagery of fear deployed by the regime to dampen political activism.

56. Interview with key informant, 12 November 2013.
57. Ibid.
The Advocacy of the Somaliland Diaspora in London

Amal Yusuf Jama

The purpose of this research is to explore the advocacy activities and strategies of the Somaliland diaspora network in London. Ostensibly, the advocacy of diaspora groups concerning the collective affairs of their home country is significantly under-researched and this study has been conceived to make a contribution to this important area of research. The objectives of the study are essentially to examine the mobilization strategies of the Somaliland diaspora and to analyse the advocacy activities of this group within the political opportunity structure of London. The study adopts a qualitative research approach by conducting in-depth (open-ended) interviews with a number of respondents. Using the social movement approach for mobilization and political opportunity structure (POS) to analyse results, the study discusses some key findings and makes recommendations that, among other things, emphasize the importance of establishing a unified leadership, using cultural events to promote collective goals, and engaging with younger Somalilanders to help overcome any obstacles to achieving the ultimate objectives of the Somaliland diaspora in London.

INTRODUCTION

A number of self-seceded entities in the international community are seeking recognition as sovereign states. To the inhabitants of these unrecognized entities individuals that have migrated to foreign host countries play a significant role as advocates to raise awareness for their cause.1 This research critically analyses the advocacy of the Somaliland diaspora network in London in promoting the goals of their homeland.

A diaspora can be defined in several ways. For the purposes of this work, a diaspora is defined as a social collective that shares a national identity, maintains ties with the homeland and represents the collective interests of its members by establishing organizations. According to Cohen’s categorization of diasporas, the Somali diaspora satisfies many of the principles of diaspora identity: the forced banishment from a homeland and subsequent migration to numerous host countries; a shared history and memory of the homeland; a collective dedication to the development and improvement of the homeland; a lasting ethnic identity; and a common faith in a future destiny.

As advocacy is apparently one of the least studied topics of all of the roles of diaspora networks in the development processes of a home country, the goal of this research is to explore the advocacy of the Somali diaspora in London to address the knowledge gap on the role of diaspora networks advocating on behalf of self-seceded states. This research vacuum is most apparent in analysis of existing scholarly articles. Although there are several works on the Somali diaspora residing in the UK, these studies fail to make a clear distinction between the Somali speaking diaspora from Somalia and Somalia—a highly significant issue since the topic of diaspora advocacy for self-seceded states is unique to the Somali diaspora. In the analysis of the existing research, this current study recognizes the distinct identity of the Somali diaspora and provides an in-depth account of the diasporic activities of Somali-Americans in a city in a host country.

---


BRIEF HISTORY OF SOMALILAND

The significance of the UK recognising Somaliland as an independent state is better understood through an analysis of the historical background of Somaliland—a former British colony. Somaliland gained independence from Britain in June 1960 and united with the southern regions of Somalia, a former Italian colony, only four days later during the wave of pan-Africanism. However, this merger would prove to be ill-fated.

After the assassination of the second president of Somalia, the national army seized power in a coup d’etat led by Major Mohamed Siad Barre and introduced a one-party dictatorship political system adopting socialist principles from 1969 to 1991. Because of the widespread underdevelopment of the northern regions formerly known as Somaliland, the Somali National Movement (SNM)—a rebel movement against the Siad Barre dictatorial regime—was formed as an association in London, in April 1981, by young members from the Somaliland diaspora. It eventually reclaimed the independence of Somaliland in 1991.

Despite the historical relationship between the UK and Somaliland and the undeniable progress of Somaliland towards democracy and development, the self-autonomous entity has yet to be recognized as a sovereign state by the international community and, most relevantly from the perspective of this study, by the United Kingdom.

CURRENT POLICY OF THE UK TOWARDS SOMALILAND

In February 2012, the UK co-hosted an international conference on Somalia in London in which the UK expressed its support for talks between Somaliland and Somalia to establish future relations. A similar conference was held on 7 May 2013 with the aim of mobilizing the international community to support the Federal Government of Somalia to address its greatest challenges. Although the UK recognizes the distinct development needs of Somaliland—Foreign Secretary William Hague met with the President of Somaliland in February 2012 and pledged £105 mil-

---


lion to help Somaliland achieve its development goals—its current foreign policies recognize the borders established by the unification of the former colonies, British Somaliland and the Trust Territory of Somalia, into the Somali Republic in 1960.

CURRENT POLICY OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) TOWARDS SOMALILAND

In 2005, former President of Somaliland Dahri Riyale Kahin submitted an application to the African Union (AU) for membership in the continental body—comprised of fifty-four African states—as an independent state based on its historical past as a separate entity during the colonial era. As a result, in 2005 the AU launched a fact-finding mission. This mission resulted in a number of findings: first, as the report reasoned that since there was never a ratification of the hasty union between Somaliland and Somalia, the argument for the recognition of Somaliland is distinct and will not create a ‘Pandora’s box’ for self-seceding states in the continent; second, there are numerous consequences as a result of a lack of recognition for Somaliland including limitations to bilateral trade and development aid; third, that the obstacles faced by Somaliland are due in large part to its history with the failed state of Somalia which caused long-term destruction. A second AU fact-finding mission was launched in Somaliland in 2008 and concluded that the belief of Somalilanders of their nation’s independence is inevitable and a reunification with Somalia inconceivable. Despite these findings, the AU has not made this matter a top priority on its agenda and has failed to communicate its findings and recommendations with Somaliland.

The lack of recognition of the independence of Somaliland by the AU may be due to the political influence of its opponents, mostly the neighbours of the self-seceded state including Ethiopia that borders Somaliland in the northwest and is fearful of a strengthened Somali population, and Djibouti, which also borders Somaliland in the northwest and perceives Somaliland as a threat to its ports that fund its economy. Other neighbouring countries have voiced their lack of support due to the hope of re-establishing a united Somalia to act as a power balance to Ethiopia—the currently Christian-majority power in east Africa.

---

18. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF SOMALILAND

There are several scholarly articles that argue for the recognition of Somaliland.21 Advocates of Somaliland emphasize its ability to meet the legal requirements for statehood according to the declaratory theory of recognition, which recognizes statehood if the following four conditions are satisfied: ‘...a permanent population...a defined territory... [a] government...[a] capacity to enter into relations with the other states’.22 Although the Montevideo Convention affirms that the ‘the political existence of the state is independent of recognition by other states,’23 this acknowledgement from the international community has proven to be a crucial requirement for the sovereignty of self-seceded states.24 Therefore, although Somaliland is able to fulfil the conditions for declaratory theory, its lack of international recognition leads to the inability to satisfy the conditions of the constitutive theory of recognition—a theory that claims that statehood requires recognition from the international community—often viewed as the theory that represents reality.25

SOCIAL MOVEMENT APPROACH FOR MOBILIZATION AND POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

Diaspora advocates belong to diaspora communities with common goals to promote.26 Wescott and Brinkerhoff list a number of reasons for the participation of diaspora advocates including expressing an identity which serves as a mobilization tool because ‘identity is the foundation for acting collectively, as opposed to individually, and it enables the harnessing of diverse resources and capacities’.27 Another motivation for participation, specifically for victim diaspora, such as the Somaliland dias-


poration, is that ‘restoring the homeland or even returning there becomes an important focus for social mobilization.’

According to the social movement approach for mobilization, a community may construct ‘master frames’ to promote a shared view and justify collective action. As framing strategies help to strengthen and sustain a mobilization, the role of identity as a master frame within the Somaliland diaspora in London is explored in this study.

Master frames are used as a tool of persuasion to create an ethnic national identity to promote a singular political objective—thus determining the members of the movement and the ideal form of government—both of which are forms of advocacy. The mobilization frames approach may be applied as an analytical tool to explore the shared symbolic beliefs that provide political significance to participation. This master frame is significant to the global Somaliland diaspora as one of the primary goals of Somaliland advocates is political in nature—to achieve international recognition as a sovereign state.

The political opportunity structure is a social movement approach that focuses on the aspects of a political system that promotes or hinders mobilization in a country and the perceptions of actors of the openness of the POS for collective action. As advocates in diaspora groups target their activities towards host countries, the success of these efforts is dependent upon the ability of these actors to identify access points of the government.

Shain and Barth identify the POS as a factor in their international relations theory to evaluate the effectiveness of diasporic activities and introduce an additional dimension to the POS—the importance of unity. In the host land country, unity is vital because strong divisions within a community make it easier for government officials in the host land to ignore the demands of diaspora networks. With regard to the relationship between a diaspora group and its homeland, unity is necessary because this relationship relies on the extent to which the homeland depends on the resources of the diaspora—in this case, mobilization for political support; therefore, a diaspora must share the same position on matters as the homeland government in order to be considered an influential and legitimate asset to its cause. In the light of this addi-

32. Ibid.
35. Shain and Barth, (2003), 465.
37. Shain and Barth, ibid.
tional dimension to the POS theory, this research hopes to add to the study of advocacy by exploring the importance of unity within the Somaliland community in London to achieve their ultimate goals.

**SAMPLING**

For the purposes of this research project, random sampling procedures to select a sample from a population were unsuitable. Instead, the sampling strategy to answer the objectives of this research study used a combination of two types of naturalistic sampling techniques—convenience sampling and judgment sampling. Convenience sampling refers to the recruitment of the most accessible participants and judgment sampling is the selection of participants that are most useful to answer the research question due to their expertise and knowledge of a given topic.

The target demographic for respondents was adult members (18 years of age or older) of the Somaliland diaspora currently residing in London for a minimum of five years and actively involved in the Somaliland community. Participants were selected based on their availability and willingness within the limited time frame of this study. After conducting seven one-on-one interviews and one group interview for a total of ten participants, the researcher stopped recruiting additional participants because of resource limitations. Interviews were conducted in London from August 2013 to October 2013. The table below outlines the demographic attributes of respondents of the sample for this study.

---

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent B</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Somaliland diplomat</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td>Retiree</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Community organizer</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent E</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Undergraduate student</td>
<td>Undergraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent G</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Employee of pharmaceutical company</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Postgraduate student</td>
<td>Postgraduate student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Community organizer</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent J</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Community member</td>
<td>University graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

39. Ibid, 523.
A DEDUCTIVE APPROACH TO QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The framework for analysis that was used for this research project was a deductive approach to qualitative analysis as outlined by Crabtree and Miller.\(^40\) The top-down approach of deductive reasoning begins with a theory and focuses on testable hypotheses that can be tested using data.\(^41\) For this study, this ‘theory-before-research’ model applied the social movement framework to explore an innovative subject area—the advocacy of diaspora networks in host land countries. The diagram below illustrates how the social movement approach for each research objective guided the formation of the codes for analysis.

---


42. This diagram illustrates how the social movement approach for each research objective guided the formation of the codes for analysis. In this diagram, the theoretical frameworks are the social movement approach for mobilization and political opportunity structure. The themes are the tools for mobilization and the political advocacy strategies of the Somaliland diaspora. The categories are the reasons for participation, master frames, political objectives, the permeability of the host land, and the effectiveness of strategies. The process and descriptive codes for the first research objective are motivation, identity and recognition. The process and descriptive codes for the second research objective are visibility and unity.

---

Flow Chart of the Theoretical Framework of Codes Model for Qualitative Inquiry\(^42\)

![Flow Chart of the Theoretical Framework of Codes Model for Qualitative Inquiry](image-url)
ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research objective: mobilization of Somalilanders in London

The Motivation for Participation of Somalilanders for Mobilization. There are a number of reasons why members from a diaspora network choose to advocate on behalf of their homeland. With regard to advocates from homeland countries suffering from conflict, the motivations for action that are most relevant to this study include a desire to promote a distinct identity and to remain hopeful of a return to the homeland.43 A few quotes from respondents that are consistent with these reasons for participation include:

[...] after the establishment of this Somaliland community centre, Somalilanders have embraced their Somaliland identity. For example, the Somaliland flag hangs in schools during International Day festivities and members of the diaspora proudly express their Somaliland identity. Therefore, the objective of Somaliland to be recognized as an independent state is embodied by its diaspora. (Respondent E).

A desire to return to the homeland is expressed by the younger generation of Somalilanders:

[...] whether we are recognized or not I do plan on moving back to Somaliland. (Respondent F).

Advocates often join to support policy reforms to improve the development of their homeland.44 One example involved a new policy of UK banking institutions to discontinue partnerships with money transferring companies operating in Somaliland. A respondent explains the reasons for her protest to help reverse this decision:

[...] this is the only way we can get money into Somaliland… and with [a UK banking institution] discontinuing its participation with Somali transfer companies, it is impossible for individuals to send money to family members and for aid agencies to invest in the country… Somaliland is completely ruined if this decision goes ahead. (Respondent F).

Diaspora advocates may be motivated to act if there is a perceived threat to their homeland.45 According to Somaliland advocates, the sovereign state of Somalia is a danger to their homeland:

[...] we are not brothers; we are enemies and they are a threat to us and we should acknowledge this fact. (Respondent H).

A further reason for the participation of diaspora advocates is to strengthen the relationship between the homeland and host country.46 In the light of its colonial relationship:

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid, 6. 47.
the UK is very important to Somaliland... the UK government ruled Somaliland as a colony for 77 years and this relationship with the UK is very, very crucial to the Somaliland government... We believe the UK should take the lead in recognizing Somaliland. (Respondent B).

In analysis of these reasons for the participation of Somaliland advocates, a number of common themes arose: the promotion of a distinct identity; a desire for a permanent return to the homeland; policy reforms; defending the homeland against a supposed threat; and improving relations with the host land to achieve its aims. However, an additional theme that emerged from the findings, that was not covered extensively in the literature review, consisted of the experiences and memories of Somalilanders in their homeland serving as a motivational factor for advocacy. One example of the memories of Somalilanders while living in their homeland:

I'm very proud to be doing something for my own community because I remember when I was young, many people sacrificed immensely for Somaliland, even losing their lives during the War for Independence. By lobbying, my contribution is very minor in comparison. (Respondent A).

A connection to Somaliland serves as a motivational factor for involvement to the younger generation of Somalilanders as well. According to a Somalilander that spent the majority of her life in London, her motivation was the result of a trip back to her homeland:

 [...] I saw hope, people were working hard to make progress. Since I came back from that trip, I completely changed my life perspective. (Respondent I).

Therefore, the findings from this study suggest that regardless of whether respondents had an early upbringing in the homeland or if Somalilanders make a visit to the homeland following an upbringing in the host country, these experiences in the homeland may serve as a motivational factor to advocate on behalf of Somaliland.

The Identity of Somalilanders for Mobilization As Sökefeld argues, a community employs master frames, and the Somaliland identity served as a motivational factor for the establishment of the first community centre for Somalilanders in London:47

 [...] when I noticed a non-existent distinct Somaliland identity in London, I founded this Somaliland community centre to... make visible this community as a distinct community and to try to collectively address the obstacles of Somalilanders in London. (Respondent E).

The distinct Somaliland identity—a master frame—is used as a framing strategy to establish a collective solidarity of Somalilanders in London, as illustrated by the celebratory events held on the 18th of May:48

---

We hold events always on the 18 May each year. We promote these events via websites and press releases. We always select a committee or a team that will organize each event. That team is responsible for deciding the best way to spread the word. (Respondent B).

The shared Somaliland identity contributes to the sustenance of this mobilization:

[…] people in the diaspora have become more nationalistic... when you see your people as part of a diaspora group proud of their country and nation, you become more nationalistic. It becomes a part of you. (Respondent D).

Master frames such as identity are related to important historical moments that represent shared memories and struggles. Respondent D explains that his involvement:

 […] dates back to the early days of struggle because I have seen the oppressor Siad Barre. I witnessed how oppressive he was from a young age.

The master frame of identity to mobilize the youth in the Somaliland diaspora emerged as a theme in the group interview with young Somalilanders. All three respondents in the group interview identified themselves as Somalilanders, for example:

My nationality is Somalilander. (Respondent H).

After the researcher asked how these respondents maintained a connection to Somaliland despite their upbringing in London, one respondent explained:

The language we speak in our house is Somali. We are very connected to our family back home. It almost feels as though there’s no distance because we’re always in touch. In that sense, I feel very connected to back home. (Respondent F).

According to this respondent, the mobilization of young Somalilanders may be advantageous to disseminate the message to non-Somalilanders as a result of their dual identity:

[...] The younger generation is very significant because we understand both cultures; we understand the diaspora because of where we grew up and we are also connected to Somaliland. In this sense, it’s a lot easier for us to introduce who we are. The more we are involved, the more people can learn about Somaliland through us because we understand both cultures. It’s also amazing for Somaliland because people can view how the diaspora has adapted while remaining connected to Somaliland. Especially since we’re not recognized, for someone to still be connected, still see the country as theirs, still be attached… I think it shows how committed we are and how serious we are about recognition, about Somaliland and our identity as a whole. (Respondent F).

In the light of its use by community organizations and event organizers to mobilize the Somaliland diaspora, the master frame of identity has seemingly been successful in sustaining this cause. However, the use of identity as a mobilization tool may be

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
improved by mobilizing young Somalilanders as these members are able to disseminate the message to non-Somalilanders, thus enhancing the ability of this diaspora network to successfully mobilize on a larger scale.

The Political Objective of Recognition for Mobilization The social movement approach for mobilization is used to explore the common views that give political meaning to engagement in diaspora activities. Master frames, which refer to tools of persuasion to promote a national identity, may be used to advance a political objective. With regard to the Somaliland diaspora, the Somaliland national identity is used to achieve the political objective of international recognition. In the case of the UK as host country, Somalilanders adopt a number of lobbying strategies.

One approach involved organizing conferences with prominent advocates throughout the UK to create unified lobbying strategies:

We are planning a conference this fall in which we will invite every city in the UK and prominent leaders to discuss the best way to help Somaliland and achieve recognition by putting more pressure on the British government and Parliament. (Respondent B).

Within the Somaliland diaspora, one of the mobilization strategies involved recruiting educated professionals to transfer their skills to help further the goal of recognition:

I think the primary goal of the Somaliland diaspora is recognition for Somaliland. Each individual of the Somaliland diaspora in the UK plans to help… the more intellectuals we attract, the more we’re able to achieve. (Respondent A).

In analysis of interviews, a number of common themes arose regarding the hindrances to the effectiveness of these adopted strategies. First, one respondent explains the failure to recruit young Somalilanders to the cause of recognition:

[...] another issue is young people, because the majority of people doing the advocating and the lobbying are almost all in their forties. Therefore, we are not inviting enough young people. I know young people use Twitter, Facebook, multimedia and new technologies. We need young people to be interested in this cause to take advantage of social media. But young people are not that interested. (Respondent A).

This view is shared by younger Somalilanders one of whom explains:

I’m not sure that Somaliland is ready for recognition right now. I’m more concerned about the social, economic, and developmental issues of our country… we need to build ourselves from the grassroots level… so, at the moment, recognition is not at the top of my priority list. (Respondent G).

52. Ibid.
As the success of lobbying strategies is dependent upon financial resources, a hindrance to achieving recognition for Somaliland is lack of resources. Consequently, one respondent recalled a missed opportunity:

“There’s one organization called Independent Diplomat. This organization was willing—for only £80,000—to lobby for Somaliland. They would go all the way to international organizations—African Union, Commonwealth, United Nations. This organization has former UN diplomats that would lobby on behalf of Somaliland, but we couldn’t even raise half of the money. Therefore resources are an issue. (Respondent A).

As the success of ethnic lobbying depends on the ability of diaspora networks to form alliances to help support their cause, the President of Somaliland stressed the significance of this factor to Somalilanders:

“Our President came and, in his lecture, he said ‘We are Somalis, we talk to ourselves and we don’t talk to other communities and we need a way of communicating to other people. Change our course.’ I think that’s when we changed our strategy and said ‘There are so many communities to help our community. Let’s help find a way of getting our message across to other communities and the leaders of other nations’. (Respondent A).

In addition to political strategies to lobby for the case of Somaliland, one respondent recommended incorporating cultural events to reach other communities to improve the effectiveness of advocacy. As an organizer of a cultural arts centre, this respondent explained the approach:

“No one is interested in a repetitive narrative. So we must engage with people and that’s the power of the book fair—it’s not us saying we want recognition, it’s us showing, actually, we are here. Somaliland is here. (Respondent I)

In light of the barriers to the success of these advocacy efforts, consisting of mobilizing young Somalilanders, a lack of resources and reaching other communities, innovative approaches—such as the incorporation of cultural fundraising events held in a public setting and open to everyone—may be valuable to address and limit these obstacles and ultimately achieve the political aspirations of this diaspora group.

Research Objective: Political Opportunity
Structure of the UK and Somaliland Diaspora Strategies

The Importance of Visibility within the POS of the UK What is a political opportunity structure? A POS is the institutional and legal conditions of a state upon which the success or failure of diaspora mobilization is dependent. A core theme that arose

54. Ibid.
during interviews in relation to the political opportunity structure of the UK was the importance of visibility of the Somaliland diaspora in this host country. According to one respondent, visibility is crucial because:

[…] if you are visible then you can be part of the debate, you can be part of the society. (Respondent E).

A lack of visibility was first expressed during interviews when one former organizer narrated an incident in which the former President of Somaliland was not given special treatment during his presidency after arriving at a UK airport:

We saw ourselves as an invisible state so we established a sort of entity to help and lobby for the recognition of Somaliland. (Respondent A)

Newland emphasizes the importance of diaspora advocates to identify access points within the political framework of a host country to target their efforts; Somalilanders spread the importance of voting within this diaspora network during elections to increase their visibility.56 According to the founder of one of the first Somaliland community organizations in London, this city is comprised of:

[…] 32 boroughs; in all of those 32 boroughs there’s one Somaliland community organization. Imagine how many British MPs in Parliament would be knowledgeable about Somaliland as a result of their constituency. (Respondent E).

Due to the significant presence of Somalilanders across constituencies in this city, members of this diaspora group:

[…] have a voice, they have the most powerful medium to lobby for Somaliland because here in the UK, there is a parliamentary democracy, and… a candidate can be an MP with two thousand votes, so if Somalilanders use their power in numbers… they would be able to make a big difference for Somaliland to lobby for its recognition. (Respondent E).

From the perspective of Somaliland advocates, elected officials have a responsibility to represent their constituents. The political clout of Somalilanders is increased by mobilizing the large number of Somaliland voters in any given constituency. Therefore, by registering Somalilanders to vote, this enabled the Somaliland diaspora to be:

[…] visible on the political podium so whether it’s an MP or a local Mayor …they know how many Somalilanders live here. So therefore we can say, ‘This is what we want for our country, this is what we want for our people’. (Respondent F).

---

56. Newland, (2010) 4-7; The UK political system distributes power across different levels of government. At the local level of government, the city in which this study was conducted is divided into boroughs, each of which is governed by a councillor. At the national level of government, Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to represent the interests of constituents in the House of Commons in the UK Parliament. Politicians in the local and national levels of government are targets of Somaliland advocates to advance their cause.
Seemingly, the effectiveness of these mobilization strategies depends on the ability of Somaliland advocates to convincingly communicate to politicians the potential benefits they may reap from representing the interests of these constituents. As explained by a community organizer:

[...] for politicians, it’s all about their interest and votes… that’s the reason for my emphasis on visibility because if the diaspora is able to convince politicians of votes in their favour… these politicians will listen. However, as long as… they don’t see their interest in a cause, contacting them won’t make an impact. Their accessibility is not an obstacle. (Respondent E).

Haney and Vanderbush summarize theories of the determinants of successful ethnic lobbying as dependent upon the ability of a diaspora to identify access points of the government. In the context of self-determination, such as the case of Somaliland, advocates used the permeability of the UK political system to mobilize voters across constituencies—thereby increasing their visibility in the host land. However, although these political actors within the UK framework are easily accessible to their constituents, the success of these recruitment efforts is dependent upon the ability of these advocates to persuasively inform political candidates of the potential benefits of representing the interests of this group in the political sphere.

The Importance of Unity of the Somaliland Diaspora within the Political Opportunity Structure of the UK According to the international relations theory of Shain and Barth, unity plays a significant role regarding the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by diaspora groups. Although Hooghe and Newland emphasize the importance of unity within a diaspora group to influence a host land regime, a common theme that arose during interviews was a lack of unity within the Somaliland diaspora in London. First, there appeared to be a lack of co-operation between diaspora groups and organizations:

The diaspora needs to work together more effectively for the good of Somaliland. They must work together in a very coordinated way where they have a planned strategy and know their requests from the British government. (Respondent B).

According to a respondent, a possible solution to this lack of unity is:

[...] It would be best to have more written consistent strategies that we can share such as a common umbrella organization. (Respondent A).

58. Shain and Barth, (2003), 452.
Shain and Barth highlight the significance of a strong relationship between a diaspora group and its homeland. The importance of the activities of the Somaliland diaspora to advance the political goals of its homeland was a common theme throughout this study. According to one active member, this diaspora is the:

[…] main network that raises awareness. Somaliland, its politicians and its people would be very isolated without the guidance and ability to raise awareness of the diaspora. Without the contributions of the diaspora, Somaliland would be a more invisible country. It would not be able to achieve its goals. (Respondent A).

In fact, a prominent theme among respondents was their belief that they were ambassadors of sorts of their homeland:

[…] because Somaliland has no formal presence in those countries, we all as Somalilanders kind of act as ambassadors, so our presence should be used in a way to make the people we are living with become aware of the history of Somaliland and the ambitions of its people. (Respondent D).

Although respondents mostly agreed that Somalilanders in the host land and the homeland were united in its overall aims and considered their involvement an asset to the latter, one respondent explained a lack of appreciation for these efforts:

We more or less work on the same wavelength but there are some issues that may cause conflict. I think sometimes the Somali community feels that we are lagging behind. We are not doing more. We are not achieving more. We are not producing results. We are doing a lot of work back home but nothing comes up. (Respondent A).

A possible solution to improve the relations between the diaspora and their homeland is to establish a partnership with local actors, as demonstrated by the initiatives of a Somaliland youth group:

[…] we’re going to have to work through the local NGOs. The people that we’re trying to help are based over there [Somaliland] and the people we’re trying to inspire are over here [London]. The whole core value of what we’re trying to do is establish a link. (Respondent G).

As the degree of influence of a diaspora on the host land regime sways the perspective of the homeland to the worth of this diaspora, it has potential to increase its perceived value to the homeland. One of the reasons for this appreciation may be due to the political accomplishments of this group; the Somaliland diaspora in the UK was able to elect members from its own diaspora to political office to represent its interests. As a result of their achievements, the efforts of the Somaliland diaspora were recognized by influential people in the homeland:

60. Shain and Barth, (2003), 465.
61. Shain and Barth, (2003), 464.
[...] Somaliland Minister... he was discussing a more effective connection with the diaspora people. He recognizes that the diaspora is a dependable resource so the government has become aware of the importance of the diaspora people. His government established an agency called Diaspora Agency. (Respondent D).

In summary, unity must be improved by increasing cooperation and adopting cohesive strategies within the diaspora and establishing partnerships with the homeland.

KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

During the data collection phase of this research, the researcher asked participants about the effectiveness of their adopted advocacy strategies. In addition to outlining a number of challenges to the effectiveness of their approaches, participants proposed solutions to these obstacles. As a result, three practical policy recommendations relevant to the themes of this research emerged: establishing a unified leadership, promoting cultural events and encouraging youth engagement.

Establish a unified leadership  To address the lack of unity within the Somaliland diaspora network in a city in the UK, two participants proposed a common solution, which was to establish a unified leadership. According to one participant, this would involve a hierarchical structure in which an elected legitimate leader would guide a coordinated effort of the diaspora community to create goals and outline clearly formulated strategies to achieve these common objectives within a given time frame. By doing so, another participant believes this unified leadership would ensure that there is no overlapping of advocacy efforts within this diaspora network. These activities could be evaluated through the implementation of monitoring tools.

Although the government of Somaliland sponsored the Somaliland Diaspora Agency (SDA), it is primarily focused on the involvement of the diaspora for the benefit of the citizens in Somaliland as opposed to the diaspora communities living in host land countries. Furthermore, as the SDA website does clarify the composition of its agency, by creating a board of elected representatives from the international Somaliland diaspora would be a progressive step towards creating a legitimate and unified leadership, thus allowing the Somaliland diaspora to benefit from greater unity both within its diaspora network as well as with its relations with Somaliland.

Promote cultural events  Newland identifies promoting homeland countries through art and media as a means of advocacy for diaspora networks. By promoting the culture of a homeland, this type of advocacy provides insight into the cultural aspects of

---

a country through which people in the host land can develop a thorough understanding of the homeland country of diaspora networks, including its political affairs.64

With regard to the Somaliland diaspora, one such event is an annual Hargeisa International Book Fair that is hosted by a community organizer and advocate for Somaliland from the UK in partnership with local community groups in the capital city of Hargeisa. Participants in this study believed that the Hargeisa International Book Fair was an effective means to mobilize and inform non-Somalilanders in a non-political way and to recruit influential non-political figures to visit Somaliland. According to one participant in this study, cultural events such as these—as opposed to relying on the 18 May celebrations every year—are necessary to engage both Somalilanders and non-Somalilanders, especially young Somalilanders whose creativity may be useful to create innovative cultural events.

Encourage youth engagement According to participants, youth engagement would be beneficial to the advocacy efforts of the Somaliland diaspora in this city in the UK. However, there are a number of challenges to recruit this younger generation of Somalilanders to advocate on behalf of Somaliland.

One challenge to the advocacy of this diaspora is the lack of substantial involvement of young Somalilanders to lobby for the recognition of Somaliland. Instead, these young Somalilanders play a more active role in developmental projects in the homeland. However, as these members of the diaspora are very knowledgeable with regard to social networking, their participation in lobbying would be beneficial to spread awareness. According to a participant in this study, a solution to recruit young Somalilanders living abroad to the cause of recognition is to create a link between them and the homeland since in Somaliland, younger generations are pursuing this cause more diligently because of the direct impact a lack of recognition has on their lives.

An association that exemplifies this proposition is the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS): ‘a non-government, democratic grassroots organization based inside Eritrea’ that works to ensure the active involvement of youth in the diaspora.65 This organization coordinates a volunteering programme targeted at the youth in host countries to cultivate young leaders in community development from Eritrea and around the world.66 Developing a similar organization for the Somaliland youth in the UK and other host countries may be a useful tool to maximize their involvement based on their passion for developing the homeland and, after their personal experiences witnessing the effect of a lack of recognition on development opportunities in Somaliland, this may serve as a motivational tool to actively participate in the lobbying activities of this diaspora upon their return to their respective host land countries.

64. Ibid, 10.
65. Rahel Weldeab, ‘Encouraging diaspora youth to contribute to national development: the Eritrean case,’ Pambarzuka News, 2013. In fact, during the group interview with younger Somalilanders, these activists expressed their support of grassroots organizations for Somaliland youth as a result of a lack of opportunity to participate within the existing Somaliland diaspora network in a city in the UK.
66. Ibid.
FINAL SUMMARY

Given the findings of this study, future research should focus on the advocacy of the Somaliland network in other cities in the UK, throughout Europe and internationally and use a larger and more diverse sample of participants to determine the effectiveness of adopted strategies in comparison to the diaspora network in London. Overall, this research study was able to contribute to the existing knowledge base regarding the advocacy of diaspora networks through exploring the Somaliland diaspora—an area of study for which there were no substantial academic works—by collecting empirical findings and producing and disseminating recommendations for improvement to community organizers and members from this diaspora group in London.

67. In addition to the small sample size of this study, the selected participants all have a higher education. Therefore, future research should recruit participants with various levels or no academic backgrounds as well.
Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as an Institutional Framework for Postconflict Peacebuilding and Youth Development in Collapsed States: The Case of Liberia

Samuel Wai Johnson, Jr.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is gaining greater importance in the peacebuilding processes of post-conflict societies. In addition to providing the framework for post-conflict poverty reduction, the PRSP has become a framework for stimulating economic growth, ‘conflict-sensitive’ development, and addressing youth marginalisation and exclusion, which seems to be a serious threat to stability and social cohesion in post-conflict societies. There seems to be limited evidence, however, about the extent to which the PRSP addresses these conflict-generating factors of youth marginalisation and exclusion, or reinforces the peacebuilding agenda of post-conflict countries using the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process as their roadmap for peacebuilding, economic development and national renewal. Drawing on data about the Liberian PRSP, this paper critically examines the degree to which the PRS process adequately addresses the country’s perennial problem of youth exclusion, marginalisation, and underdevelopment in pursuit of Liberia’s conflict-sensitive development goals.

INTRODUCTION

Drawing primarily on the Government of Liberia’s three-year PRSP, this research examines the extent to which the PRS process provided the foundational architecture for the country to address its problem of youth exclusion and marginalisation, underdevelopment, and limited economic opportunities that were key factors in the country’s civil war from 1989-2003. Liberia launched the PRSP in 2008 as its development agenda in an attempt to deal with its conflict-generating problem of Hobbesian style development that tends to widen political, social and economic inequalities. Constructed as a conflict-sensitive development strategy, the PRSP recognises the

Samuel Wai Johnson, Jr. is a doctoral candidate at George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution in Virginia, USA, where he currently works as a graduate lecturer. His research interests include conflict-sensitive development, the economic dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding, and post-conflict development finance. Email: samwaijohnson@gmail.com.
extreme marginalisation, exclusion, underdevelopment, and limited economic opportunities for the majority of its population especially its youth as a major reason for the country’s violent outburst in 1989.

While Liberians appear generally tired of violence and want to see the country move forward, the rising rates of unemployment and poverty among the youth in the presence of fast economic growth and reports of government corruption bring back fresh memories of the system of governance that deprived youth of their basic human needs prior to the war. These needs go beyond the physical needs for food, water, and shelter and include non-physical needs such as recognition, identity, acceptance and access to institutions of governance, which are vital for human growth and development. The core assumptions of John Burton’s basic human needs theory argue that when individuals are deprived of the opportunities to achieve their basic human needs, they become psychologically handicapped. Deprivation or exclusion is one of the many fundamental factors that generate conflict. As Azar notes, ‘groups which seek to satisfy their… needs through conflict are in effect seeking change in the structure of their society.’

Peace and development are bi-directional. While peace is generative of development, development is generative of peace only under conditions of stability and certainty. Therefore, a development intervention tagged as ‘conflict-sensitive’ cannot prevent conflict if the appropriate institutional framework to govern the implementation of the intervention is not in place and sufficiently functional. Institutions determine how the post-conflict society is structured.

In post-conflict settings, conflict-sensitive development links post-conflict economic development policies with the root cause of the conflict by stretching the elasticity of the policy implementation ‘far beyond a mere reaction to the immediate aftermath of violence.’ It is a multi-dimensional process of socio-economic development where the wealth or the gains from the economic growth of a country are equitably distributed leading to a reduction in the grievances that fuel conflict, or have potential to cause a relapse into conflict. A conflict-sensitive development intervention can improve the lot of the population and enable social cohesion and peaceful coexistence and prevent the outbreak of protracted conflict.

Originally conflict-blind, the PRSP has become a framework for stimulating economic growth and the process of ‘conflict-sensitive’ development. Nevertheless, the

---

implementation of the PRS seems to be fraught with the inherent problem of youth exclusion, marginalisation, underdevelopment, and limited economic opportunities. How post-conflict states address this problem in their pursuit of post-conflict peacebuilding and sustainable development goals seems to be an unanswered question in the peacebuilding and development literature. This article is an attempt at answering this question, using the case of post-conflict Liberia. Liberia joined the growing list of post-conflict countries adapting the PRS as a framework for conflict resolution and national renewal in 2005 with the launch of its interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (i-PRS) ahead of a subsequent three year PRS.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Azar uses the term ‘structural development’ to describe a system of governance in which the political and economic powers of a society are distributed for the equitable satisfaction of basic human needs. These needs include acceptance, security and access to institutions of governance.5 The need for acceptance means the ability of households or groups to have a voice in their own governance and feel a part of their community or society. Security needs mean the ability of groups or individuals to use their productive skills and talents to secure the economic fortunes they desire and feel secure from crime and other dangers. Access to institutions satisfies the need of a group or groups to have a voice in their governance, which is normally inhibited by discriminatory policies. Structural development removes discriminatory policies that inhibit the access of a group, or groups of people, to equitable benefits from economic growth.

Christie describes this as ‘growth through equity’2 Collectively, the satisfiers of basic human needs lead to individual sustenance, self-esteem and economic freedom and prevent a country from violent conflict. Structural development is therefore a strategy of economic development, conflict prevention, or post-conflict peacebuilding. It emphasises improving what Amartya Sen refers to as people’s ‘capability to function’ through strengthening their economic security, ensuring their food security and access to healthcare and education. In addition, it establishes the political and socio-economic institutions that widen their range of choices for economic independence and promote their human dignity.6 Structural development demonstrates an inverse relationship between conflict and economic development because ‘… every step taken towards reducing poverty and achieving broad-based economic growth—is a step towards conflict prevention’.9

The state is crucial in this relationship. The state can enhance or hinder the equitable distribution of resources that satisfy basic human needs through public policies. Public policies define the rights and entitlements of all members of society to the satisfiers of their basic human needs. Nafziger and Auvinen note that predatory public policies are the foundation for structural underdevelopment, relative deprivation or inequality and violent conflict.10 Thus, a public policy could either increase or decrease a country’s conflict risk. To ensure sustainable peace in a post-conflict context, post-conflict societies must therefore develop structural institutions and public policies that are conducive to and supportive of equitable and participatory growth, regardless of the various social cleavages that may be in existence as a consequence of the conflict.

Economic growth rate alone in the absence of structural policy actions masks widening inequalities as the distribution of its gains tend to be skewed in favour of pre-existing differences.11 This means that economic growth is conflict ‘blind’ and unless there are changes in the overall distribution of wealth, economic growth may not lead to a significant reduction in poverty, inequality or exclusion, factors that generate conflict. Del Castillo therefore cautions against the use of economic growth as a measure for determining the overall conflict-sensitive success of a post-conflict economic policy intervention.12 The conflict-sensitive success of a post-conflict economic policy should instead be measured by the extent to which it addresses the root cause of the conflict, contributes to national reconciliation and peacebuilding and sets the stage for long-term stability and economic development.13 In a country where the duality of affluence and poverty is at the foundation of conflict, this means adopting policies that are pro-poor, inclusive and targeted at addressing the inequality gap. Such policies entail the removal of institutional and policy-induced biases against the poor and economically insecure and the relatively deprived, leading to a reduction in the grievances that fuel the conflict or have the potential to cause the country to experience a conflict relapse.

This role of the state demonstrates the integral relationship between politics and economics in peacebuilding. This relationship links the macro questions surrounding economic growth, politics and national security with the less visible micro questions of relative deprivation, poverty and inequality and emphasises the importance of ensuring fair social, economic and political opportunities for every strata of the post-conflict population, including youth. Justino identifies the direct, indirect, and instrumental effects of violent conflicts on populations going through conflict.14 Directly, conflicts result in population displacement and/or destruction, and the loss of income and livelihoods, while indirectly conflict disrupts the local economy, and

13. Ibid.
instrumentally, conflict disrupts the population’s mechanisms to cope with the socio-economic shocks created by the conflict. These effects have severe impact on the economic status, the survival capabilities, and the assets—both physical and social—of post-conflict populations.

This impact is acute, especially in post-conflict countries that are less developed and have a youthful population, with consequences for human capital stock and youth-to-adulthood transition. Youth account for more than half the population of less developed countries. Limited social, economic and political opportunities for youth risk making them available recruits for conflict entrepreneurs, predators and peace spoilers.

Richards shows how the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) faction of Sierra Leone exploited the discontented among rural youth—who had felt excluded and marginalised by the policies of the All People’s Party Congress—and secured their support and enlistment. The lack of social and economic opportunities, especially education and livelihoods, constituted the core of their discontent.

Access to socio-economic opportunities provides a form of social insurance for post-conflict stability and social cohesion. However, social cohesion and stability are endangered when members of a social group in a post-conflict society feel they are being unjustly victimised by those who enjoy privileged positions in the post-conflict dispensation due to unequal access to social, political, and economic opportunities. In the case of post-conflict youth, this constitutes an infringement by the state and erects boundaries between youth and the state, which becomes a basis for youth involvement in various illegal activities with potentially negative consequences for the state’s legitimacy, peace and national stability. Thus, providing employment and ensuring equal access by youth to other socio-economic opportunities is a necessity for political stability, and peacebuilding is therefore no longer a preserve of the macro issues alone, but a combination of both the macro level and the micro level issues and the pathway to positive peace. Reichler describes this type of peacebuilding as ‘integrated peacebuilding.’

**POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY AND POST-CONFLICT STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The PRS process developed in 1999 by the Bretton Woods Institutions is primarily a development intervention for low-income countries that are labouring under the burden of unsustainable debts—to these institutions and other international creditors. The PRS requires countries to reformulate their economic management programmes through a PRSP with emphasis on increased pro-poor public social spending through a participatory and inclusive process, in order to secure debt relief. The implementa-

---

15. Ibid.
tion of the PRS begins with a one year interim PRSP (i-PRSP) followed by a full PRSP spanning at least two years. Originally not intended for conflict or post-conflict settings, the PRS process in post-conflict countries has evolved to serve the purpose of conflict-sensitive development, and post-conflict peacebuilding. 19

It has also become an essential tool for post-conflict countries to address some of the gaps created in their state functions by conflicts and regain their lost international legitimacy. These gaps include capacity, security, and legitimacy gaps. 20 The security gap refers to the inability of the state to effectively maintain control over its territorial borders and guarantee protection for people within this territory. The capacity gap refers to the state’s inability to create the institutions that facilitate equitable economic growth, and guarantee the population access to the essential social services of education, and health care. 21 The legitimacy gap refers to the inability of the state to ensure participatory and inclusive governance. 22 These gaps impede the state’s ability to deliver those public goods that are vital to the socio-economic wellbeing of the population and to reduce state fragility and social tension. Waites identifies these public goods as security and justice, economic security, the provision of basic social services, and ‘the forging of a common understanding, usually among elites, that their interests or beliefs are served by a particular way of organizing political power’. 23 The inability of the state to deliver these public goods leads to the erosion of its authority and legitimacy with consequences for social cohesion, stability and development.

The function of the PRS in post-conflict settings has received mixed reviews, however. While in some post-conflict countries it has provided the basis for inclusive governance and some degree of conflict-sensitive public financial management, 24 in others it has been exclusionary, 25 and has an ‘extremely weak’ link with public financial management. 26 Anwar Shah is therefore right in arguing that participatory processes are vulnerable to manipulation by the more powerful:

\[ \text{Participatory processes can be captured by interest groups. Such processes can mask the undemocratic, exclusive, or elite nature of public decision making, giving the} \]

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
appearance of broader participation and inclusive governance while using public funds to advance the interests of powerful elites. Participatory processes can conceal and reinforce existing injustices. [It] can be abused to facilitate the illegitimate and unjust exercise of power. It can be used to deprive marginalized and excluded groups of having a say in public affairs.27

Nonetheless, there is an increasing trend in post-conflict countries towards the PRSP as an instrument for reconstruction, social cohesion, and national renewal. However, there seems to be limited evidence about the extent to which the PRS addresses the conflict-generating factor of youth marginalisation and exclusion, a serious threat to post-conflict stability and social cohesion and whether it reinforces the peacebuilding agenda of the post-conflict countries that are using the PRS process as their roadmap for peacebuilding, economic development and national renewal.

This paper explores this gap through an examination of the Liberian PRS process (from 2006-2008), a process that prioritises youth inclusion and development as a foundation for the country’s post-conflict development and peacebuilding agenda. For this purpose, a combined participatory policy reform and political economy evaluation approach is used with specific focus on the following questions:28

- In what ways did the framework for the PRS process—ranging from conceptualisation/analysis, design/adoption and implementation, to monitoring and evaluation—underpinning the Liberian PRSP, adequately conceptualise the strategy as an instrument for peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive development?
- Who were key national/local actors in the PRS process—the implementers or the beneficiaries?
- Did the institutional mechanisms established by the strategy sufficiently address the country’s perennial problem of youth exclusion, marginalisation, underdevelopment, and unemployment?

At the core of this approach is the recognition of the interrelationship of the social, the political and the economic structures or institutions in the outcome of economic development policies, though with greater emphasis on the role of power in economic decision-making.29 This approach assumes that participatory processes are vital to governance reform and governance reform processes that enhance public participation can lead to sustainable peacebuilding and development outcomes. Using this approach can also expose the consistency or inconsistency of resource allocations and policy implementation with policy pronouncements and provide the platform to understand the dynamics of the Liberian policy arena and the challenges associated with implementing the PRS as an integrated part of the Liberian peacebuilding process. This article uses a desk review of the Liberian PRSP, National Budgets, Labour

Force Survey, and independent articles about the PRSP process in Liberia. The review was complemented by email interviews with individuals in Liberian civil society organisations.

THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR AND THE PRS PROCESS

Emerging from a brutal civil conflict in 2005, Liberia launched its PRSP in 2008, following an interim-PRSP process between 2006 and 2008 as the primary mechanism to revive its collapsed state. The impact of the civil war had qualified the country as a collapsed state by every definition. The PRSP was therefore the expression by the country to turn around its ugly chapter. The PRSP defines the country’s post-conflict peacebuilding, reconstruction and development agenda, and serves as the ‘key reference document for all development and reconstruction efforts [in Liberia] no matter the sector or issue area’.30 Built on four pillars,31 the Liberian PRSP anchors conflict-sensitive development as the most important cornerstone for Liberia’s peacebuilding process and for this reason it emphasises attention to the ‘structural conditions and processes and attitudes that sustain social and political divisions [in the country] and encourage the use of violence’.32 The PRSP lists several priority areas that require immediate attention for building peace and avoiding a conflict relapse. These include ‘the lack of opportunities for the youth, political polarization, the management of natural resources, and the relationship between the Liberian state and its citizens’.33

The PRSP makes a specific case for creating employment opportunities for the youth, noting that employment opportunities would reduce the odds for their participation in violence. Counted among the marginalised youth were the more than 101,000 individuals who participated in the country’s civil war in protest of the unequal distribution of the country’s wealth and the deteriorating social economic situation faced by them.34 They would later disarm in 2003 in anticipation of a demobilisation, disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) package, and a smooth transition to a life free of violence but rich in socio-economic opportunities that assured them of sustenance, self-esteem, and economic freedom—the fundamental goals of economic development. The implementation of this rehabilitation and reintegration package was however faced with three primary challenges which have had ramifications for the economic development potential of the post-conflict youth population and Liberia’s overall governance and social cohesion: a lack of employment opportunities; inadequate educational and training opportunities; and a lack of adequate health care services.35

---

31. The four pillars of the Liberian PRSP are ‘Enhancing national security; Revitalizing economic growth; Strengthening governance and the rule of law; Rehabilitating infrastructure and delivering basic services’.
33. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
The weak social and economic state of the country at the time of the DDRR programme and the absence of a labour-market based approach towards the design of the programme resulted in the programme becoming a source of structural unemployment, economic marginalisation and despair, instead of a source of sustainable employment, economic security and economic freedom among many of the former combatants, the majority of whom are part of the country’s current youth population. In recognition of this, the PRSP advocates a governance system that is highly participatory, inclusive of youth and has the ability to ensure an equitable distribution of the country’s wealth. In this direction, the PRSP targets increased public spending in the following areas that have the potential of creating direct social and economic benefits for youth and other marginalised populations: roads, education, health, and water, which are consistent with the framework of the African Union Charter for Youth Development.

**DISCUSSION**

The public involvement process leading to the drafting of the PRSP has been hailed as ‘inclusive’ and ‘participatory’. Among those participating in the PRSP drafting process were children and youth at every level of the drafting process—from local to national. However, like many African countries, the quality and nature of public participation in the formulation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in Liberia, remains contested. Representatives to the local consultations were local elites and gender-biased while public knowledge about the content of the PRSP at all levels including government appeared to be limited. Civil society representations were biased against organisations that were viewed as critical of the government. As a result, ordinary Liberians considered the PRSP an elite document that reflected government’s interest rather than the interest of the broader population. This leaves unanswered questions about the extent of youth participation in the PRS process up to its implementation. In addition, the government seems to have conceived participation as synonymous with consultation. While participation empowers participants in a policy discussion to influence the policy decisions, priorities and strategies, consultation does not. The chances of youth voices being included in the final content of the PRSP or development agenda based on the consultative processes were therefore in the hands of the managers of the PRSP.

For instance, legislators successively prioritised an increase in their emoluments over the welfare of the general population as a pre-condition for the passage of the national budget and other national priorities. Apart from legislators, government officials have used their oversight role to stage-manage consultations under the claims

---

42. Adejumobi, (2010).
of public participation, while local government officials divert allotted public funds for their constituencies to their private use under the guise of borrowing from government. At the sub-national levels, the management of community development programmes of the PRSP is shrouded in secrecy and poorly targeted. This is attributable to the lack of structural controls for the implementation process.

Despite this, the PRSP process has opened up the country’s historic governance system. The criticisms by youth and other private citizens against the PRSP process demonstrate their awareness of the strategy and this awareness is possible largely because of the opening up of governance space.

Achieving economic growth that is ‘inclusive and sustainable’ is a core objective of the PRSP. Given Liberia’s history, this ‘inclusive and sustainable’ growth must be equitably distributed, and can create employment and socio-economic opportunities for the country’s marginalised and vulnerable populations, including the country’s youth. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown since 2006, reaching a rate of almost 10 per cent in 2007, four years after the official end of the conflict, but it plummeted in 2008 due to the global financial crisis. Despite shocks to revenue intake, the Liberian government has consistently increased its budgetary allocations to infrastructure (public works, youth and sports, agriculture, health, and education) (see Table 1). These are the sectors that are youth-friendly and have direct and significant impact on the social and economic development potential of the youth population.

### Table 1: Government of Liberia Budgetary Allocations to Youth-Related Sectors (USD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment</td>
<td>Expense</td>
<td>Allotment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>13,805,663</td>
<td>15,004,967</td>
<td>24,426,960</td>
<td>23,944,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>10,276,016</td>
<td>10,494,013</td>
<td>16,782,190</td>
<td>16,679,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Sports</td>
<td>2,368,158</td>
<td>2,389,979</td>
<td>2,652,225</td>
<td>2,523,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>5,714,693</td>
<td>5,779,524</td>
<td>9,490,382</td>
<td>9,457,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3,231,100</td>
<td>3,259,251</td>
<td>3,722,221</td>
<td>3,722,221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


45. Ibid.


The social and economic development impact of these increasing budgetary allocations is not clear, however, with concerns among the population about whether the growth is explicitly pro-poor or a repeat of the structural policies of previous governments. Data about youth poverty levels since 2008 was not available at the time of writing, but Liberia’s overall poverty rate remains very high at 68 per cent, with deep pockets in rural areas, and the country’s human development index (HDI) remains low. Liberia’s HDI ranks among the last 15 of 186 countries worldwide. With an HDI of 0.388, Liberia is below the average HDI of 0.466 for low HDI countries and below the average of 0.475 for sub-Saharan Africa. When discounted for inequality, Liberia HDI falls to 0.251. This has meant a loss of 35.3 per cent of its human development potential due to inequality in education, life expectancy and income; 46.4 per cent loss due to inequality in education; 37.6 per cent loss due to inequality in life expectancy; and, 19 per cent loss due to inequality in income.

The case of education seems to be different with significant surge in enrolments at all levels of the Liberian educational sector, a trend that is attributable largely to government spending. There are concerns however about the quality of education, with labour market implications arising from low standards. While the country’s history is an extenuating factor, this reality seems to reflect the gaps between the macro and the micro institutional structures in the implementation of the PRS agenda.

The increase in growth has been driven largely by an increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) as a result of economic liberalisation policies undertaken in fulfilment of the conditionality for the cancellation of the country’s international debt by the Bretton Woods Institutions in 2010. Since 2006, Liberia has attracted about US$16 billion in FDI. Despite sustained GDP growth and the rise in FDI, unemployment remains high, especially among the country’s youth population. Youth in Liberia have an unemployment rate that is almost twice as high as that for the adult population. More than two-thirds of the youth aged 15-24 are unemployed, with significant gender and regional differences. A recent study by the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) estimates that unemployment among female youth and in rural areas is twice as high as males and in urban areas. In addition, the

51. Ibid.
52. Liberia, however, seems to have a higher youth literacy rate.
54. High school graduates in Liberia seeking admission to the University of Liberia in 2013 recorded the worst failing record when all 25,000 candidates who sat the university entrance and placement exams failed.
55. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank International Development Association (IDA) cancelled Liberia’s US$4.6 billion debt in 2010, enabling the country to access international credit.
one-third of youth that are employed work in ‘precarious circumstances’, with no social protection and limited possibilities for them to attain economic security.  

This suggests that the structure and quality of growth being experienced in Liberia, from the standpoint of the youth, is immiserizing and jobless. The quality of employment gives an indication of the quality of economic opportunities, socioeconomic fortunes and a measure of social insurance available in an economy. Gainful employment revives the socio-economic fortunes of conflict-ravaged populations. The significance of this in a post-conflict setting is explained by the ability of income and other benefits accrued from employment to strengthen a population’s capability or capacity to cope with and recover from the socio-economic shocks associated with the conflict. This state of youth employment in Liberia discounts the prized value of employment as a social insurance and an instrument of stability and social cohesion. While rapid growth gives an excellent indication of the macroeconomic stability of a country, it is not a guarantee for post-conflict economic inclusion, equitable growth and the recovery of the conflict-affected youth population. Given the country’s high dependency ratio, this quality of employment does not bode well for a post-conflict society whose conflict was due to inequality, exclusion, and marginalisation. It creates an avenue for elite predation where conflict entrepreneurs can ignite violence through the use of polarising myths. Solà-Martín is therefore right in arguing for a critical re-evaluation of ‘the foundations upon which the political economy of post-conflict Liberia are being built… so as to synchronise peacebuilding with development policies to boost productivity and create sustainable livelihoods.’

Infrastructure, especially roads, is vital for agriculture production, food security, private sector investment and overall economic activities. Liberia’s roads were severely damaged during the conflict, with more than half of them unpaved. Most parts of the country are not accessible by road almost half of the year when the rainy season is intense. This poor state of the country’s infrastructure might explain the high cost associated with translating the recorded huge amount of FDI into tangible socioeconomic opportunities for the population. Since the end of the conflict, attempts are being made to repair or rebuild these damaged road networks and other public infrastructure. The emphases of these attempts however are focused primarily on areas that are urban, densely populated or highly accessible. Because of this, infrastructure (re)construction has taken place primarily in the urban areas of the country, particu-

---

larly Monrovia, Liberia’s capital. This disparity has negative consequences for poverty reduction efforts, socio-economic equality, and youth inclusion in Liberia. Agriculture provides livelihoods for most of Liberia’s youth population in rural areas through produce sales. Poor road networks hinder the free movement of goods and services between rural areas and urban centres. It also poses a hindrance to the ability of rural dwellers especially farmers to access markets in order to sell their produce. In cases where they cannot get their produce to market because of the road conditions, this constraint acts as a tax and creates a disincentive for their further investment in agriculture as a source of livelihood.

**CONCLUSION**

Using data about Liberia’s post-conflict Poverty Reduction Strategy, this paper explored the extent to which the PRS has addressed the country’s development problem, and established governance institutions that address the grievances that caused the country’s civil war from 1989-2003. The theory proposed is that a post-conflict economic development intervention that is grounded in Azar’s structural development model is an instrument for post-conflict peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Conflicts are often the outcome of exclusion, marginalisation and inequality in access to opportunities vital for socio-economic advancement. It is the existence of these conditions that generate the sentimental walls of conflict—emotional factors that can be used to easily ignite a conflict—which are instrumental for mobilisation and collective violence. Thus, addressing these problems so that the sentimental walls of conflict are dissipated or removed is conflict prevention by another name.

The foundation of the PRSP in general supports this hypothesis. The PRSP process provides opportunities for participatory and inclusive governance and equitable growth so that stakeholders of the peacebuilding process can no longer have the motive to use violence to settle their differences. The origin of the Liberian conflict, like many other conflicts, can be traced to the existence of the exclusion and marginalisation of the majority population, especially youth, from the governance and economic wealth of the country. While economic growth is required for economic development to take place, the persistence of inequalities or the duality of affluence and poverty in the wake of rapid growth renders a post-conflict society vulnerable to conflict relapse. There is no doubt that gainful economic opportunities play a key role in rebuilding the livelihoods of the conflict-affected population, enhancing their ability to cope with the shocks of conflict. The lack of socio-economic opportunities for the youth also undermines their economic and food securities, their economic freedom, and their ability to determine their own destinies.

While policies aimed at spurring economic growth are essential for post-conflict economic revival, the inability of such policies to create gainful socio-economic opportunities or ensure the effective participation of youth in the economy reduces their opportunity cost for participating in violent conflict and increases the likelihood for elite predation. The state of youth unemployment in Liberia has implications for the country’s human capital stock and productivity in the long run. The value or worthiness of education is determined by its returns, measured by income. Gainful employment is the primary means for this type of income in a developing country like
Liberia. Thus, where individuals possessing relatively high human capital are poor because of the acute shortage of opportunities for their socio-economic advancement and effective political participation, education becomes an unprofitable and worthless investment. This lowers the incentive for academic pursuit among the youth, the country’s human capital accumulation and widens the inequality gap in the long run, which counteracts the impact of economic growth on income, with implications for social cohesion, peace, and stability.

The implementation of the PRS and other public policies is highly skewed in favour of the urban regions of the country. Implementing public policies with primary focus on urban centres over the rural areas under the assumption that the dividends will filter down to the rural areas and other regions or the less privileged is a risky venture. There is the danger that the rural and less privileged areas and the groups therein will eventually lag their urban counterparts in an irreversible manner in terms of structural and human development. Addressing regional inequality requires a configuration of policies that favours regions or population groups that were highly impacted by the conflict while addressing the root cause of the conflict and ensuring positive peace, avoiding trickle down economic development policies. One solution in the case of Liberia is to extend or increase the public works reconstruction projects into rural areas. The youth, especially the unemployed, should be included in the execution of these projects. There are, however, little technical competencies in this segment of the population to ensure their efficient output. On-the-job training with remuneration will therefore be needed to enable them to participate in the labour force efficiently. Besides providing them technical skills and temporary employment, this approach will also provide them a source of income which they need most to improve their own living standards. It will also improve or increase the physical infrastructure in the rural areas with potentially positive impact on agriculture as a source of livelihood for the majority of the rural population.
Decentralisation and Local Governance in Cameroon: Impact of Councillor-Citizen Relations on Service Delivery

Josiane Tousse Djou

For over two decades, the issue of decentralisation in Cameroon has been the key relational determinant between local administrative authorities of councils and citizens, especially within the context of service delivery. In cases where there exists a collaborative relationship, it has often led to the improvement of the livelihoods of the local population and enhanced democracy at the grassroots level. However, in most cases, it is obvious that this relationship between the councils and the citizens for service delivery is characterised by tensions that have tended to undermine the impact of the decentralisation process. Based on field interviews with relevant stakeholders, observation of council proceedings in Batié Local Municipality in the West region of Cameroon, and supplementary analysis of secondary data, this paper argues that these conflicts are due to the lack of institutional capacity to deliver the benefits of decentralisation that brings government closer to the people. The paper recommends the institutionalisation of forums for dialogue and cooperation, and capacity building for local officials.

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent process of democratisation, which spread across Africa, required several African countries to adopt neo-liberal governance to strengthen their institutions and deepen democracy. Consequently, decentralisation became a central reform for bringing government closer to the people and for enhancing accountability. This was due to the fact that centralisation of public management—which was the mantle of former single party dictatorial regimes—had marginalised citizens from the management of state affairs, and allowed the specific needs of the different regions in the country to be ignored. Furthermore, the uneven distribution of national wealth brought about different levels of development between localities that did not receive the same investment from central government. Reforms to include decentralisation therefore represented an opportunity for change.
In the case of Cameroon, decentralisation has been possible thanks to a constitutional revision (18 January 1996) that specified in its article 2, that “The Republic of Cameroon is a decentralized unitary state.”\(^1\) The Constitution, which provides for two types of decentralised territorial authorities, has enabled the country to lay the foundation for the promotion of democracy at the grass roots and guarantee the march towards achieving good governance at the local level.\(^2\) In keeping with these constitutional provisions, three important laws were voted into force in 2004, among them the bill on the orientation of decentralisation.\(^3\) This law on decentralisation paved the way for a new era of local development, and the reduction of poverty at the grass roots, by transferring to decentralised territorial authorities special powers and appropriate resources, financial, material and human.\(^4\) Given that there are regional and local authorities, this study therefore seeks to analyse council decentralisation, that is, decentralisation through the local authorities.

In Cameroon, local councils are territorial stakeholders who work for the implementation of the decentralisation policy. Indeed, not having enough legitimacy to enable the population to identify itself with its structures, the Cameroon government depends on council institutions to get closer to the citizens at the local level. The main objective of these local government entities is to satisfy the social needs of citizens at grass roots level. They work naturally for the cohesion and stability of countries, for the development of the individual and for collective prosperity. To this effect, the decentralised actions of administration and local governments tend to increase the credibility of the state.

In the transfer of powers for local development under the 2004 laws, local council are assigned the task of promoting economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development.\(^5\) Powers that correspond to the promotion of development in these sectors are devolved to local authorities under conditions laid down by law.\(^6\) Decentralisation therefore has an objective to enable a better understanding and appreciation of the real needs of the population in a bid to look for ways and means to satisfy them through the implementation of local government development projects that respond to their needs.

2. Ibid, Article 55 (1) specifies that decentralised territorial authorities of the Republic are the regions and the councils.
5. Ibid, Article 4 (1)
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Decentralisation has many meanings. It is administrative when it involves the creation of infra-state entities to which the state transfers special competences exercised under its control. Political decentralisation involves legislative and jurisdictional power sharing between the state and infra-state authorities. Here, it is a question of putting in place deliberative organs at the local council level through elections. Decentralisation is also financial when it provides a proper tax system that allows the council to fulfil its administrative functions. All these characteristics render the formulation of a legal definition of the concept of decentralisation delicate and complex and many writers hold divergent views on its definition. In the Cameroonian context, Mback uses the word decentralisation to refer to administrative decentralisation understood both as a legal and administrative technique of territorial administration and the political method of power sharing between the central and local authorities in a country. Hond talks about territorial decentralisation as a form of organisation and functioning of local authorities. This definition engages with the decision that the 2004 legislator gave on decentralisation in Cameroon. Similarly, Guillien and Vincent define decentralisation as ‘a system of administration that enables a human authority or a service to administer itself under the control of the state, by equipping it with legal personality, authorities and resources’. From all these definitions, in Cameroon, decentralisation is defined as a transfer of competences and resources to local authorities who control them with the aim of improving the living conditions of the population. Decentralisation is an important tool for the promotion of democracy and good governance at the local level.

Governance, for its part, is defined as ‘a complex mix of actors and institutions who do not all belong to the government, hence portraying an interdependence between the authorities and institutions associated with collective action’. Local governance aims at transferring power to the local population with a view to achieving economic and political development that should be carried out by the inhabitants themselves.

8. These deliberative organs and municipal councillors constitute the municipal council that, under the authority of a Mayor, has political and legal autonomy in the management of local affairs. This decentralisation, in addition to promoting local elections, implements the process for the establishment of council citizenship and determines the modalities for the participation of citizens in the decision-making process.
11. Republic of Cameroon, Law No. 200/17 of 22 July 2004, Law on Orientation of Decentralisation, Article 1 ‘the present law of the orientation of decentralisation fixes the general rules applicable to territorial decentralisation.’
and which lays emphasis on poverty reduction.15 The Cameroonian government depends mainly on the councils to institute governance at the local level. The actors of local governance are the state, local authorities, civil society and development cooperation agencies, all of them exercising roles that are complementary.

The council, which is an arena for the establishment of citizenship, is not a new institution in Cameroon. In fact, it originated in the colonial period. Mback defined it as a decentralised government authority endowed with a moral personality and a financial autonomy; the council is made up of a deliberative assembly elected by the population to manage council affairs.16

Decentralisation is a very topical issue in Cameroon and Africa generally. For some authors, decentralisation has a positive outcome. According to them it brings the government closer to the population and acts as a promotion mechanism for the improvement of the planning and implementation of development projects.17 Furthermore, decentralised institutions, because of their knowledge of the availability of resources, are capable of mobilising these resources for local development efforts.18 Ouattara subscribes to the same reasoning by arguing that decentralisation must be accompanied by local economic development that aims at improving the living conditions of the local population.19 If these conditions are not fulfilled, he continues, it will be decentralisation that will provoke disillusionment, dash legitimate hopes and create ill feelings against local council officials.20 Therefore the local population will appreciate decentralisation only from the changes that they will observe in their daily lives and, as a guarantor of democracy at the grass roots, they will decide through their vote on whether or not their living conditions improve.

DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN CAMEROON

Conde’s observation is that decentralisation is much more than an administrative technique; it is also a strategy for economic and social development. He argues that decentralisation enables the participation of the local population in the conception, execution and follow-up of projects derived from the expression of their needs and the need to satisfy them. In this light, decentralisation in Cameroon is geared towards enabling local authorities to establish autonomous development programmes, with their contribution being indispensable in the realisation of these programmes.21

Giving the rural population a sense of responsibility through their elected organs is the best means of ensuring their participation in the development process. Holding the same view with the aforementioned scholars, this work particularly focuses on the Batié Council, situated in the West Region of Cameroon. The study holds that decen-

---

16. Mback,(2004); see also Republic of Cameroon, Law No. 74/23 of 5 December 1974 on Council Organization.
18. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
tralisation as conceived by the Cameroonian government is far from being realised in this locality.

This article sets out to investigate the relationship that exists between the council and the citizens as well as to find out the impact of this relationship in the reduction of poverty and the improvement of the livelihood of citizens in the Batié locality. The study sets out to find out whether the improvement of democracy and the improvement of the living conditions of the inhabitants of Batié can be attributed to the ongoing decentralisation process in the Batié Council.

METHODOLOGY

This article represents a review of the literature on the subject of decentralisation in Cameroon and Africa, and fieldwork involving an opinion sampling of the key actors in the Batié Council. Documentary research was geared towards collecting secondary data relating to the subject. This was done through the analysis of relevant documentation, general and specific works as well as reports on decentralisation and local governance. Concerning primary data, information was gathered from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and direct observation of stakeholders in the Batié Council as well as members of the population. These methods were useful in order to fill the information gap, and to increase the evidence in terms of citizens’ opinions. In order to elicit as much information from the field as possible, 300 people were involved in this study with target groups of both young and old citizens. 150 individual discussions were held with 43 youths, 60 men and women, 20 municipal organs, 10 authorities from territorial and decentralised services, 9 opinion leaders and 3 traditional rulers.

GENERALITIES AND SPECIFICITIES OF DECENTRALISATION IN THE BATIÉ COUNCIL

The decentralisation process, which is an important reform, has come to restructure the administration of Cameroon. It has created a new framework for the appropriation and consolidation of power belonging to citizens, through the establishment of councils whose organs are elected. The latter fulfil their missions for unity and national integrity, and for socio-economic, educational, cultural, sanitary and sports development. The situation of decentralisation in the Batié Council shows that it was difficult to establish with respect to assigning competences and financial, material and human resources as well as their release and exploitation. However, since 2010, the transfer of competencies has been effective in Cameroonian councils; by 2013, 20 areas of competence had already been transferred, but what is the situation in the Batié Council?

Formerly attached to the Bamendjou Sub-Division, Batié was transformed into a second district before becoming a full sub-division. Its council was created by Decree No. 95/082 of 24 April 1995 and opened on 28 February 1996. It is surrounded in the north by the villages of Bamendjou and Bangam, in the west by Fotouni and Bandja, in the east by Baham and Bepa, and in the south by Badenkop and Babouantou. The Batié Council has a land surface of 77 square kilometres. It is considered one of the poorest sub-divisions in Cameroon and it has about ten villages.
As the main development actor in the sub-division, the Batié Council has a council executive, municipal councillors, a civil status agent and a secretary general. The council executive is composed of the Mayor and his deputies. In the official texts that define the functions of everyone, the Mayor wields total influence in the council and manages all the resources. He delegates responsibilities to his deputies. According to the maxim that administration is the prerogative of a single individual, the Mayor is the head of the council and a key actor of its administration and management.

The Batié Council has benefited from the transfer of a certain number of competences since 2010. These relate to education, health, tourism, and organisation of holiday workshops, etc. These competences also touch on sectors like the supply of potable water, abduction and the treatment of household wastes, afforestation, the maintenance and management of health centres, social assistance, environmental and natural resource management, planning and territorial development. On the whole, they assume responsibilities in the social, cultural and health domains.

As well as the transfer of competences, the Batié Council has also benefited from a transfer of financial resources, in keeping with the 2004 law that stipulates any transfer of competence to a council shall be accompanied by a transfer of the resources and means necessary for the normal exercise of the transferred competence by the state. This council receives a transfer of funds from the general allocation for decentralisation and has also benefited from FEICOM loans and subventions. These numerous sources of finance are far from satisfying all of the financial needs of the Batié Council, especially those geared towards realising public investments. Indeed, effective decentralisation requires human, financial and material means for the implementation of the transferred competences but in the Batié Council, there is a chronic lack of material and financial means and a shortage of experienced and qualified staff. Irrespective of all the goodwill, no one can implement local development without financial resources. This is the reality of the Batié Council whose projects are executed with difficulty.

22. Municipal councillors deliberate on all the important decisions of the council. In principle, the Mayor cannot commit the council without obtaining authorisation through municipal deliberation. Moreover, every municipal councillor represents a portion of the communal territory whose interest he is expected to defend in all the activities of the council. They are the symbol of representative democracy at the grass roots.

23. The Mayor has a triple role at the helm of the municipality and is in charge of implementing the deliberations of the municipal council. As the authorising officer of the council budget, he grants contracts, represents the council in court, oversees council works and, in general, takes the necessary measures for the execution of the decisions of the municipal council. The Mayor presides over municipal council meetings and supervises the control of the budget. In addition, the Mayor is the hierarchical head of council agents. The Mayor’s attributions, added to his electoral origin, confer considerable importance in the life of his council and gives rise to a control of central power proportionate to the level of development of the municipality.


25. FEICOM, the Council Support Fund, is a financial body whose mission is to provide aid to councils, notably through solidarity contributions and advanced payments, financing investment projects of councils or between councils. For more details, see FEICOM available online http://feicom.cm/www/ [accessed 3 November 2014].

26. Interview with the Mayor of Batié Council, Batié, 20 July 2012.
With regard to the shortage in human capital, the solution has been the accumulation of functions by the employees but the problem of human resources in the Batié Council has a much more quantitative aspect.\(^{27}\) Through observation, current staff in this municipality is largely insufficient compared to the numerous activities it has to perform. To fill this gap, they have resorted to the accumulation of functions that was expressly provided for by Article 3.\(^{28}\) The order stipulates that ‘Without however undermining the continuity of the municipal public service, nor compromising the smooth functioning of competences transferred by law, related structures akin to those in the present order can be the subject of a grouping for reasons, especially of the similarity of their attributions and according to the appreciation of the competent organs of the concerned decentralized territorial authority’.

Another difficulty encountered by the Batié Council is related to material resources, as there is a chronic shortage of working materials. As Mba observation, the shortage of material, financial and human resources, mean that councils such as the Batié Council, are obliged to ‘manage a situation of poverty instead of combating it’.\(^{29}\)

**A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE INHABITANTS AND THE BATIÉ COUNCIL**

The transfer and implementation of competences require the presence of those who are stakeholders of decentralisation and local development. In the Batié Council, these stakeholders are diverse and varied, but citizens are the most important being at the centre of the preoccupations of council organs.\(^{30}\) Admittedly, one of the goals of councils is to strengthen the democratisation process by creating conditions and modalities for the direct participation of citizens in the decision-making process at the local level, and the major challenge of decentralisation is to promote sustainable development by involving the local population in the management of their affairs. Thus, the participation of citizens in the decentralisation process turns out to be one of the fundamental elements of the success of local development and consequently, of local good governance. This is manifested by vote in the Batié Council.

**Elections as the principal mode of participation of the Batié population in council management**

Council elections are the first mode of participation of citizens in council management. Formerly, council authorities were appointed. Their election has become a general principle in all the councils. Since 1996, local elections are held every five

---

\(^{27}\) Certainly, it is clear that besides the quality of those who are now mayors and municipal councillors, there is a chronic lack of human resources equal to the different problems and challenges that the council must face (interview with the Mayor of Batié, Batié, June 2012).


\(^{29}\) Mba, (2004), 105.

\(^{30}\) Stakeholders include the mayors, municipal councillors, external services of the state, some associations, local organisations, traditional and religious leaders, etc.
years. Citizens who have attained voting age, without distinction to sex or religion, have the responsibility to take part in their council elections. This principle is spelled out by the regulations in force in Cameroon.\textsuperscript{31} Decentralisation and the organisation of multiparty council elections provide an occasion for citizens to take part in the management of their council. In its Article 2 Paragraph 2, the Constitution of Cameroon attributes great importance to the Cameroonian people by stating that ‘Authorities who are in charge of managing the State obtain power through elections by direct or indirect universal suffrage, except there is a contrary provision to the present Constitution’.

In the Batié Council, voting is an important exercise in the lives of the inhabitants. It is a unique occasion to reaffirm their citizenship.\textsuperscript{32} The enthusiasm to vote is much more voluntary than obligatory. The three elections of 1996, 2002 and 2007 witnessed massive participation by citizens.

Despite the enthusiasm for elections, people find it hard to win free and fair elections in the new multiparty system. Elections are flawed with numerous irregularities such as the exclusion of a substantial proportion of the voting population from the voting exercise, which means that all those who are eligible are not able to vote. This discourages some voters.\textsuperscript{33}

**The weakness of the information strategy of the Batié council**

The Batié citizens are rarely informed of the activities of their council even though in Cameroon ‘every inhabitant or tax payer of a council has the right to be informed or have access to the minutes of the regional or municipal council, its budget or orders of a legal nature, according to the modalities provided for by the law’.\textsuperscript{34} In the Batié Council, the citizens are only occasionally informed and sensitised about the activities of the council. The rare communiqués that are posted on the notice boards of the council or broadcast by radio rarely involve the important activities of the council. Citizens are not informed of meetings of the municipal council nor of its investment projects.

**The lack of involvement of citizens in the council’s decision-making**

Citizen participation is provided for by Cameroonian legislation that stipulates ‘Any physical or moral person can formulate on behalf of the council, proposals that can bring about the development of the council concerned and/or improve its functioning’.\textsuperscript{35} This participation enables the council to improve on quality, efficiency and durability of development initiatives. It is therefore important and even indispensable for these initiatives to take into consideration the needs, priorities and vision of both the ben-

\textsuperscript{31} Republic of Cameroon, Law No. 92/002 of 14 August 1992 to set up the Conditions for the Election of Municipal Councillors, modified and completed by Law No. 2006/010 of 29 December 2006.

\textsuperscript{32} Interviews with a citizen of the Batie Council, and the traditional ruler of Bafamgoum II, Batie, on 20 November 2012.

\textsuperscript{33} Discussion with citizens in Batie, 12 November 2012.

\textsuperscript{34} Republic of Cameroon, Law No. 2004/18 to fix the Rules Applicable to Councils, Article 3.

eficiaries and the contributors. Consequently, every citizen must have his/her part in the responsibility to manage council affairs in his locality. The situation is, however, different in Batié. Citizens lack interest in council issues, especially as the Mayor does not have any wish to involve them. These citizens, who have the opportunity of expressing themselves, ask for their rights to fulfil their obligations as citizens but find themselves voiceless.

LOW IMPACT OF COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF BATIE INHABITANTS

The impact of an intervention can be defined as a catalogue of changes that the intervention can provoke; changes that would not have been possible without it. Indeed, the end product of decentralisation in Cameroon is to bring about positive changes for the Cameroonian state as well as for the citizens. It goes without saying that ‘in Cameroon, the council is the body on which the greater part of local development depends’. It is in this connection that the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP) gave decentralised territorial authorities responsibilities to draw up and implement strategies to combat poverty. The said responsibilities are geared towards targeting the poor population and implementing on their behalf, measures and actions to reduce poverty decided at the local as well as the national levels. It is also aimed at providing a report on the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy in their localities. They are also supposed to propose accompanying measures and actions that can improve the implementation of the strategy at their level. They represent the population and are a proposition force in the re-actualisation process of the implementation, and the follow-up of the strategy.

Sawadogo has argued that in the domain of decentralisation in Africa, for a local action to be successful, it must be socially accepted by the population, meet their expectations and should be legitimately collective. What then can be said about the achievements of the Batié Council?

Council achievements in the Batié sub-division

In its development plan, the Batié Council has prioritised programmes related to improving the access of the population to basic education, health care, potable water

---

36. Interview with high school teacher in Batié, 20 November 2012.
38. The GESP is a testimony of the government’s will to continue efforts aimed at full achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is one of the second-generation PRSPs, and so has been designed by the government, following a dynamic and open process, involving full participation of the population at the grass roots, civil society organisations, the private sector and development partners.
and the electrification of some villages. Some of the poorest villages have received many equipment and infrastructure-related grants. Moreover, many projects have been conceived and realised with the collaboration of the Batié Development Committee and the Association of Elites for the Development of Batié (AEDEBA). The Batié Council and the Gendarmerie Brigade de Batié have undertaken administrative activities. On the education front, the opening of Lycée de Batié, several private and government nursery schools, and the birth of many modern private basic education centres have been well received by the region’s youth.

Lack of improvement of citizens’ living conditions by the services provided

The symbiosis of projects and the needs of the population is a fundamental element of every local policy that is geared towards the improvement of citizens’ living conditions. For this symbiosis to exist, it is important for citizens of Batié to be involved in the elaboration and implementation of development policies. This is because decisions taken by the officials of Batié Council, with a greater participation of citizens, are well founded and better address the diverse needs and interests of society than those taken independently by council authorities. This is because citizens have different needs and different demands on public services. These needs also vary according to villages. For example, in Balagou I, the population needs roads and a health centre.41 The Batié Council could only provide them with school benches in 2012. Provision of benches was irrelevant to the needs of the villagers.

Batié is facing a great challenge with regard to the supply of potable water. The majority of villages lack wells and drilling equipment and villagers have to collect rainwater or take it from the river. As a consequence, the citizens suffer from poor hygiene due to the presence of contamination in their drinking water.42 Added to this, women and children have difficulty fetching water and this adds additional burdens to their domestic duties.43 The construction of new hydraulic infrastructure by this council is therefore of paramount importance.

The education sector seems to have benefited the most from this transfer of competence to the Batié Council. However, one of the problems identified in this sector is the shortage and poor state of equipment and infrastructure as well as a chronic lack of qualified teachers.

In the health sector, the council has competence as far as construction is concerned for health centres, social accommodation, infrastructure for the supply of energy, as well as wells in the centres.44 Therefore the council has responsibility to grant related

41. Interview with a notable from Balagou I, in Batié, 18 November 2012.
42. Hygiene and sanitation is poor and improvement measures taken by the Batié Council have been ineffective. The road maintenance and cleaning department of the council lacks equipment for the task resulting in very poor health conditions in the majority of the villages of the Batié sub-division. However, from time to time, the inhabitants organise human investment days under the umbrella of the Village Development Committees.
43. Interview with a woman in the council of Batié, Batié, 18 November 2012.
44. Republic of Cameroon, Decree No. 2011/0004/PM of 13 January 2011 to fix Modalities for the Exercise of Certain Competences Transferred by the State to Councils in the domain of construction, equipment and the management of district medical centres.
contracts. Given these additional competencies, it is surprising that the Batié Council still has only one district hospital and health centres in only some villages. These centres are also not adequately equipped and lack qualified personnel.

PROSPECTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CITIZENS AND THE BATIÉ COUNCIL

In order to function smoothly, the council must promote the harmonisation of development efforts at the local level with a view to improving the living conditions of households and consequently reducing poverty among citizens. In this respect, the Batié Council is considered an institution for development within which all the actors share development responsibilities. Concerned with the improvement of the impact of public policy on the living conditions of the population, the council must therefore look for ways and means to strengthen citizen participation and reduce tension between itself and citizens. It is therefore essential for this council to involve other actors in its development efforts, in this case—citizens, for greater efficiency in the improvement of their living conditions. It should be observed that local good governance can only be possible by involving all stakeholders, specifically citizens from the grass roots. In addition, all these actors must have good relations and work in an atmosphere of peace.

The promotion of dialogue, cooperation and communication between municipalities, their citizens and local actors on local development priorities is essential to reduce poverty. Orange and Vatteville note that:

arenas for concentration are moreover, a means to strengthen mutual understanding even with the elected representatives from the political opposition. This is because, it is difficult to be opposed to a project when on the one hand, there is a large consensus within the opposition and on the other hand, when the ‘opposition’ can adopt the project without giving the impression of giving a guarantee to their ‘opponents’.45

Particular attention should be paid to strengthening the capacity of local bodies to negotiate their roles, responsibilities and collaborative actions. No matter the situation, for this participation to be possible, decentralisation must go beyond simply putting equipment in place towards defining development policies and strategies in a council where the citizens are informed about the meaning of decentralisation. That is to say, they have to understand the principles of decentralisation and the profound changes that this can bring in the expression and satisfaction of their needs. Furthermore, stakeholders of the council must take further measures to inform citizens of council activities and sensitise them of the importance of their participation in the management of the public heritage of their locality. As pointed out by

Guimenez, ‘there is no poor council: everybody is wealthy when there is popular participation’.46

Instilling a sense of responsibility in councils toward their citizens gives assurance that all those who take decisions involving the entire council or have great influence in the livelihood of citizens have the interests of all as a principal concern.

With regard to transparency in public management, citizens have the right to know the manner in which public resources are managed and local elected representatives have the obligation to render management accounts to the population. Transparency must therefore be a golden rule in the management of public heritage to dissipate reciprocal mistrust, which is an obstacle to local initiatives for all actors. However, this obligation to render accounts by the elected representatives cannot be done spontaneously; citizens must be interested in this and take the initiative to negotiate with elected council representatives.

CONCLUSION

As a method of institutional organisation that consists of making elected deliberative bodies to manage the affairs of a territorial authority, decentralisation is an irreversible option of the government recommended by funding bodies and adopted by Cameroon for good governance. Decentralisation has been on course in Cameroon for many years now, and gives more and more responsibilities to councils in the domain of administrative, financial and political management. Although it is a solution to many local problems, its implementation requires the existence of an appropriate framework and other necessities including autonomy for taking charge of the population, awareness of their needs, and the development of participative initiatives at grassroots.

In carrying out this study, the central question was: what is the impact of the power relations between the citizens and the councils that contribute to the improvement of democracy and the well being of the local population?

Placed at the service of local development, democracy and good governance, the Batié Council has the main objective of reducing poverty in the many villages around it. As a linchpin of every grass roots development, this council provides an excellent opportunity—following the transfer of competences and resources—to carry out new public policies that could improve the living conditions of citizens.

The main conclusion of this study is that the participation of citizens in decentralisation is centred on council elections but apart from this council authorities rarely involve the population in the elaboration and implementation of development policies. There also exists some conflict between citizens and council authorities, which results from the dissatisfaction around council achievements on poverty reducing development.

Decentralization Policy in Uganda: A Shadow of the Gospel

Julius Chama

Decades have passed since the adoption of decentralization both as a mechanism of good governance and as a policy of poverty reduction but many implementing countries, including Uganda, continue to register low levels of development. Studies conducted at the local/district level show that high levels of poverty and underdevelopment remain. This development paradox is the subject of this article. A review of the current literature and interviews with stakeholders in local government institutions in Uganda, reveal that conflicts, limited resources and continued fragmentation of districts by politicians have been impediments to progress. Hindrances also included the socio-economic and the political. This study recommends the sovereignty of local governments, expansion of resource bases through methods such as taxation and the institutionalisation of public sector reform programmes to ensure a sustainable base for social services delivery.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The policy of decentralization in Uganda was launched in a presidential policy statement on 2 October 1992 but the quest for democratic decentralization and good governance was started in 1986 when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power.1 The 1995 constitution—Article 2, clause (a)—provides for devolution of powers, elected local government officials, rule of law and protection of human rights.2 The Local Government Act came into force in 1997 to pave the way for full implementation of the provisions of the constitution and the operationalization of decentralization.3 It was promoted by academics such as Phillip Mawhood and Brian


Julius Chama is a PhD Candidate at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania. Email: juliuschama@gmail.com.
Smith, and by policy implementers, legislators and researchers, as a better government policy paradigm compared to others such as unitarian or federalism.4

Decentralization was advocated by politicians as a remedy and palliative to Africa’s governance crisis. The IMF and World Bank persuaded many African states to adopt this policy paradigm arguing that it would redeem them from adverse poverty and various forms of poor administration. Indeed many African countries such as Uganda adopted it themselves with limited influence from external actors.

According to Smith, decentralization can be defined in territorial terms involving delegation of power to lower levels in a territorial hierarchy.5 He states that decentralization is about the transfer of authority on a geographical basis, whether by de-concentration (i.e. delegation) of administrative authority to field units of the same department or level of government, or by the political devolution of authority to local government units or special statutory bodies. There are various types of decentralization: de-concentration, devolution or delegation.6 The policy of decentralization is simply delegation of decision-making power or re-organization of local government services into local offices that serve small areas and increase the involvement of local citizens.

Local governments receive intergovernmental transfers from central government in the form of unconditional, conditional and equalization grants. These transfers account for the bulk of local revenue, around 90 per cent in recent years. The success of decentralization also depends on the capacity of districts and urban governments/municipalities to raise their own revenue and use it efficiently for the provision of services.

However, the generation of local revenue is limited, with local governments largely depending on central government financial transfers.7 A national graduated tax—operational for many years in Uganda—was abolished in 2006, which meant that the local and urban governments had limited financial resources to fund public services such as education or health.8 The local services tax that replaced it does not head target and is shouldered only by those engaged in commodity exchange. The majority of citizens are peasant subsistence farmers. The reliance by local governments on central government creates a lack of financial autonomy that affects the implementation of development plans and consequently limits service delivery, especially since most of the funds are diverted before they reach their final destination.

**ORIGINS OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN UGANDA**

Before the country’s independence in 1962 the colonial government practiced decentralization traits. Decentralization in Uganda during colonialism involved a system of

---

local government centred on the kingdom of Buganda. Other areas were administered by hierarchical chiefs of highly decentralized non-kingdom areas, for example in the North-East and South-West. The first attempt by the British colonial regime to set up local administration was in 1919 when the Native Authority Ordinance was passed, providing powers and responsibilities to the chiefs to collect taxes, preside over native courts and enforce law and order. The native councils were neither representative nor democratic. In non-kingdom areas such as Karamoja, Lango, Acholi, Bugisu and Kigezi, the chiefs owed their creation, appointment and allegiance to the district commissioner who, in turn, was responsible to the colonial governor. In 1955, the District Council Ordinance was passed to provide for elected councils and it endowed them with responsibility for primary education, maintenance of roads, administration of police, etc.

Golooba-Mutebi explains that, in 1962, when Britain relinquished its control, Uganda was bequeathed fairly autonomous local administrations based largely on two sub-national systems—federal/semi-federal in kingdom areas, and district councils in non-kingdom areas. The 1962 constitution granted significant powers to local authorities over their own composition such as land administration and service provision. In addition, local authorities were given powers to raise autonomous revenues through graduated poll tax, property tax, market dues, rents, fees, licenses and loans. The centre also agreed to give grants to local authorities.

The majority of members of the kingdom councils and district councils were directly elected by the people and the period of independence from 1962 to 1966 witnessed a growing number of local governments. However, the central government became anxious about the increasing autonomy of local governments and started curtailing the powers of the councils on the pretext that they were breeding political opposition to the establishment. They did this by giving most of the responsibilities to central ministries. The monarchies and the federal systems were subsequently abolished, and the 1962 constitution was abrogated and replaced by an interim constitution until the 1967 ‘pigeon-hole’ constitution. This put strain on the central government/local government system and culminated in the promulgation of the 1967 Local Administrations Act, which centralized powers, service delivery functions and revenue collection.

Local governments became not only instruments of the central government and political party control, but also sources of patronage and personal enrichment. This system continued until 1986, when the regime changed and the new President Museveni unveiled a ten-point programme on which the country was to be governed that paved way for a local government system. This article focuses on this paradigm shift. It looks at the period between 1993 and 2013, and a total of eight districts (two in each region).

---


10. So called because MPs found out about the new constitution only when they received copies in their pigeonholes.
THE WAVE ACROSS AFRICA AND BEYOND

Hutchinson explains that, in Mexico, decentralization was adopted in the 1990s as a way of strengthening operational efficiency and the management of health services, and linking planning of health services more closely to overall national planning.11 In Papua New Guinea, decentralization was adopted in 1985 as a method of creating regional autonomy with a view to increasing appropriate responses to local needs and quicker decision-making. In Tanzania, decentralization in the early 1990s aimed at increasing participation of the people in planning and improving coordination between the relevant agencies, reducing duplication of services and making more effective use of the available resources. In South Africa, decentralization was employed as a means of re-addressing past inequities created by the apartheid regime.

Uganda took on decentralization as a way of promoting people’s participation in the democratic process of the country. It was also seen as a tool to achieve national consensus among different groups, given the past political instability and tribal animosities.12 The central government opted to create districts as the highest level of local government in an attempt to satisfy regional and tribal demands for political power.

THE POLICY IN CONTENT AND APPLICATION

Theoretically, there has been a growing focus on the importance of decentralization, participation and empowerment (DPE) in various aspects of development strategies and the reasons for this seem intuitive enough, but a coherent theoretical framework that explains why these factors are so important to development strategies is lacking. Falleti’s sequential theory of decentralization argues that good institutional design of decentralization policies is highly dependent on when those policies take place within the sequence of reforms. Political and fiscal decentralization policies that take place early in the sequence tend to increase the power of local government actors, whereas early administrative decentralization reforms tend to negatively affect their power. In Uganda, sequencing was not considered as all the three reforms were lumped together and delivered at once. This ultimately bred conflict and decentralized corruption from the centre to the local.

Falleti’s second argument is that there is a set of preferences of national and subnational actors with regard to types of decentralization. National politicians and executives prefer administrative decentralization to fiscal decentralization, which in turn is preferred to political decentralization. However in the case of Uganda, the majority of national politicians prefer fiscal decentralization because they view their new positions as employment and ‘opportunity to eat’.

Falleti’s third argument is that the origin or the state context in which the decentralization process takes place and the timing of each reform is crucial. In Uganda, this is not relevant because the policy was delivered piecemeal. In Latin America where

---

Falleti conducted his research in 2005, in the context of the oligarchic states, decentralization policies sought to consolidate or balance power among regional elites while in the context of the developmental states, decentralization policies sought to strengthen certain regions to make them more adequate for private investment.13

Decentralization is based on three inter-linked aspects: political and legislative empowerment of the people, fiscal devolution and control of the administrative machinery by local councils. In Uganda’s case, while introducing the decentralized system of governance, the political and administrative aspects moved faster than the fiscal decentralization. This meant that decentralized services were not matched with adequate financial resources for local governments to deliver services effectively. As a consequence, the local governments depended heavily on subventions from central government in the form of conditional grants rather than depending on local sources of funds. Decentralization reflects not only on a structural process, identifying and empowering sub-national structures, but also a political and administrative process involving people determining their own destiny through self-governance and administration. It does this while addressing problems and issues at the subsidiary level.

Mawhood argues that the problems in county councils are structural in nature, that most of them have very weak resource bases and that where resources can be earmarked there will always be a problem of realization. He further asserts that there is lack of development in the rural areas and weak collection machinery.14 This is true in the case of Uganda where one can find a district with barely enough revenue to offset its critical operations like project supervision or evaluation. Tukahebwa notes that not all the structures of district councils in Uganda are functioning under the law. These realities cast a dark cloud on decentralization policy itself because they create lack of faith in the internal operating systems of departments such as audit that may breed financial impropriety.15

**THE POLICY AND ITS PRACTICE**

Essentially, decentralization is about bringing government closer to the people. Indeed, the concern of most governments is to deliver services to their people. The motive behind decentralization is that decisions about resource allocation and service delivery can be more responsive to local needs, usually because local people are directly involved in decision making or indirectly influence those decisions. This is entirely in line with governments, including Uganda, putting people at the centre of development, and is the intention of the constitution. Decentralized governments should be more flexible, responsive and efficient.16

Normatively, the policy is classified in four broad terms: de-concentration—sometimes referred to as ‘field administration’ or ‘administrative decentralization’; delegation; devolution and federalism. Federalism stands out as a unique form of decentralization although others argue that it is a distinct form of governance; federalism is a distinct form of government in both theory and practice. Crook and Manor explain that democratic decentralization has been and continues to be advocated as an important component of policy packages to improve governance in developing countries.17

There are several conceptions of de-concentration; for example, the handing over of some administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within central government ministries and agencies and shifting of workload from centrally located officials to staff or offices outside the national capital.18 All these definitions suggest that de-concentration involves the redistribution of administrative responsibilities within the central government by giving some discretion to field agents to plan the implementation of programmes and projects, or to adjust central directives to local conditions, within guidelines set by the central ministry or agency headquarters. There are two broad types of de-concentration—prefectorial and functional systems. In the integrated prefectorial system, a representative of the centre (or prefect), located in the regions, supervises local governments and other field officers of the centre. Prefects embody the authority of all ministries as well as the government generally and are the main channel of communication between technical field officials and the capital.

In the un-integrated prefectorial system, the prefect is only one of several channels of communication with the centre. Hence, the prefect is not superior and does not co-ordinate other field officers. Prefects only supervise local governments. Examples of this system include the current Italian prefect and the district officer in Nigeria.

Delegation is the transfer of decision-making and management authority for specific functions to organizations that are not under the direct control of central government ministries.19 It involves the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations outside the regular bureaucratic structure. Under delegation, a sovereign authority transfers to an agent specified functions and duties that the agent has broad discretion to execute. In developing countries, delegation of responsibilities is to public corporations, regional development agencies, special function authorities’ semi-autonomous project implementation units and a variety of parastatal organizations. However, delegation does not cover the transfer of functions to the private sector or voluntary bodies because such transfers are usually referred to as ‘privatization’ or ‘de-bureaucratization’ yet privatization is not a form of decentralization because its relevant agencies are no longer part of the government territorial hierarchy.

Devolution is the exercise of political authority by lay, primarily elected institutions, within areas defined by community characteristics through the legal conferment of powers formally constituted local authorities to discharge specified or residual functions. It is a participative form of decentralization which provides for meaningful participation by the local people in the decision making process. Therefore, devolution is separateness, or diversity of structures within a political system.

Scholars such as Tukahebwa urge that federalism is another form of decentralization that is assumed to be an institutional response to societal divisions and diversities, with the ‘federal’ nature of the society at least roughly reflected in the forms of its constitutional and political arrangements. However others, such as Habib, contend that ‘federalism is a device for organizing two or more levels of government that assume different sets of responsibilities and manage the affairs of a country’. Theoretically, all societies can be placed on a continuum running it, from wholly integrated and undivided to wholly divided and diversified. The major social divisions, which in turn define the ‘federal-ness’ of a particular society, are ethnic, national and linguistic, with religious, economic, geographical and historical divisions playing a supportive role. Federalism is an institutional mechanism through which the balance between the forces for unity, (centralization) and diversity (decentralization) may be institutionalized. In Uganda, some tribes like the Baganda advocate for this type of system, which they term as ‘federo’.

It is imperative to note that in the case of administrative decentralization, field administrators have limited power because they are part of an organizational structure and hierarchy with spheres of competence formally defined by superior officials at the headquarters. Decentralization can therefore be increased by expanding the range of decision-making areas (the official jurisdiction) or by increasing the level of autonomy within a decision area. Related to this is Kismombo’s argument that ‘all employees of local governments are de-linked from central line ministries. A line ministry has no powers to direct local government staff even on technical matters without addressing the head of service in the district (Chief Administrative Officer)’. Such a move is a positive gesture in management of local affairs and definitely a tribute to decentralization.

The above narrative is a detailed description of the foundations that describe a decentralized or federated state entity as opposed to a unitary composite. There are also different federal systems ranging from one country to another. Some countries federate as a way of satisfying ethnic differences in what is termed as ethnic federalism for example that of Ethiopia. Resource differences and imbalances, and historical reasons in given jurisdictions, are other factors for federalism such as in Nigeria.

FROM THE CENTRE TO THE PERIPHERY: BACK TO THE CENTRE

Evidently, there is a difference between the initial intention of decentralization and local realities. Over the years, the recruitment of top civil servants such as chief administrative officers and town clerks—initially the preserve of local governments—has been shifted back to the Ministry of Public Service because of the inability of district service commissions to handle such an exercise.22 Many of them lack competences and are at times biased along tribal lines. There is little capacity at local level to perform such a function as the recruitment of top personnel.

Of late there have been several presidential proclamations and ‘purported’ local demands for the creation of new districts in the country, increasing the number from 60 to 112, but there is little evidence to suggest that this move has benefited citizens. The Mamdan Commission advised against creating new districts arguing that they would increase unproductive costs of administration, both in terms of creating an administrative infrastructure and payment of personnel.23

Some local governments were created out of ethnic sentiments—not sharing the same language (‘Tororo’) with neighbours, for example—without due consideration of its ability to galvanize the requisite resources, employ qualified local government personnel, or deliver services. Awortwi notes that the 1997 Local Government Act was amended to abolish district tender boards so that the central government could influence contract awards. Indeed the central government has gradually increased the proportion of conditional grants to wipe out local government’s financial discretion.24 Awortwi further argues that there are doubts whether the gains made are sustainable yet the same Act was also amended to introduce issues like the regional tier above local governments. Regional tier is a government system that was adopted in Uganda to unite districts in the same area under one non-political administrative entity. Such moves greatly discredit the entire essence of local government.

An annual assessment by the Ministry of Local Government as per the 1997 Local Government Act indicates that the new districts are performing poorly on nearly all fronts. In 2007, the old districts scored 81.5 per cent and many newly created ones were well below 45.5 per cent.25 The survey further notes that the majority of local councils are facing logistical and administrative challenges. In addition, in Uganda decentralization policy has suffered immense constraints because central government has relinquished some responsibilities to local governments without releasing the necessary funds for them to meet those responsibilities. One of the interviewees in this study noted that intergovernmental relations occur in a consultative, manipulative

---

22. Interview with the former District Chairperson of Wakiso District Eng. Ian Kyeyune at Wakiso District Headquarters, 12 June 2014.
environment of politics and administrative dichotomy.26 The funds from the centre come as the only resource for both development and recurrent expenditure needs. This eventually leads to personnel turnover, general apathy, project collapse, poor service delivery and poverty.

The lack of awareness of citizens coupled with the incompetence of the local administrative staff and local politicians are other factors that have continued to undermine the performance of the local government system in Uganda. Reforms, which seek to devolve authority and resources to the people through their democratically elected institutions, i.e. local governments, cannot succeed unless all stakeholders, and more so the general public, internalize the objectives, benefits and the responsibilities of reform policies.27

The assumption that decentralization promotes people’s participation in the way they are governed is premised on the thinking that they understand their roles in the decentralized system. This is an illusion because illiteracy levels are still high and several districts have been created all over the country without conducting civic education to empower the masses for meaningful participation. The effect of this rather sporadic, radical approach to decentralization, which entails a total shift in the manner in which governance is conducted, has led to a lack of consistency and compliance with the requirements under the decentralization legal framework.28

There is a challenge of corruption in local governments that cannot rely solely on upward accountability to the centre. It also requires building local accountability. Whereas periodic elections would be a mechanism for holding local decision makers accountable, they are often a crude mechanism for local accountability. In a developing country like Uganda, they are often dominated by personalities and by ethnic loyalties, with little information about policy alternatives and little access to information about the real performance of those in power.29

In Bangladesh, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana, studies found that decentralization led to enhanced transparency and reduced incidences of corruption, but it was noted that decentralization reduces grand theft but increases petty corruption in the short run. This is what others call ‘decentralized corruption’.30 Ali Mazrui highlighted the situation in Ghana where, at one time, clinics were without drugs, and nurses were without bandages, and in Uganda there are classrooms without desks and teachers without salaries, largely due to corruption and policy decay.31 This seems to be a global di-

27. Ngwilizi Hassan MP, ‘Decentralization in Tanzania,’ paper submitted by the Minister of State, President’s Office (Regional Administration and Local Government) to the UNCDF Conference on Decentralization and Local Governance in Africa, Cape Town, 26-30 March 2001.
lemma in the implementation of this policy. Crook and Manor observe that ‘decentralization in Karnakata (India) yielded paradoxical results. The number of people involved in corrupt acts increased significantly. But the overall amount of money stolen almost certainly decreased—at least modestly.32

There may be tax resistance, which can take violent forms; tax collectors avoid certain villages due to the high personal risks involved in tax collection, and other villages are only visited by collectors accompanied by the local militia. Cases of tax revolts have happened in places like Kilimanjaro Region and the Coastal Region in Tanzania.33 In Uganda, the situation has been similar; in Kampala City Council Authority and some urban municipalities around the country, tax collectors have had running battles with market vendors. Makara observes that there are ‘persistent problems in revenue sharing between the central government and local authorities; there has been no systematic attempt to match assigned functions to local authorities with requisite financing’.34 That is why some local governments have budget deficits whereas others have spillovers. There are related issues such as the failure of local governments to absorb funds released to them by the centre in a financial season, poor time management and absenteeism of staff, shortage of critical staff, poor working conditions and environment, delays in submitting statutory reports and information to the centre, corruption and poor/negative attitude towards public service.35 All of which are rendering the policy inefficient and ineffective.

Uganda also still faces challenges related to deepening and institutionalizing decentralization including technical capacity deficiencies in local governments and tensions among key stakeholders competing to maximize their role, or ‘over administration’. A report on fiscal decentralization in Uganda, which was released on 9 December 2000, established that Anecdotal evidence is that Un Conditional Grant (UCG) is financing less productive staff and activities in many districts because of mingling it with local revenues. Councillors could access UCG transfers to support their emoluments and expenses.36 This is another abuse of resources.

Closely related is the absence of capacity building, mentoring and community participation. Whereas decentralization brings with it a significant increase in levels of responsibility, both in policy-making and implementation, it does not necessitate sustainable capacity building at the relevant levels of government. For example, Mukono district in Uganda had glaring capacity gaps among the staff and political leadership in areas of budgeting, planning and gender mainstreaming and the politi-

cians who had trained and grasped the issues in various areas were not re-elected at the end of their terms.47

**EXTINGUISHED HOPES BEHIND A DISTINGUISHED STRATEGY**

Under the Uganda Local Government Act, citizens have the right to participate in annual budget conferences at each level of local government,38 but in many cases this is little more than a formality because participation is limited to a few special interest groups. In some cases there has been no opportunity for civil society groups to engage with local government.39 The majority of citizens are uninformed on what takes place in local government which is evidenced by the statement of one interviewee when asked whether they interact with their leaders: ‘We don’t know what they do; they always pass here in big vehicles.’40 Plans by government to introduce weekly meetings ‘Bimeez’ where citizens would be informed of current projects and involved in the decisions did not take off due to claims that there were not sufficient funds to implement it. Kisakye reminds us that the Local Government Statute had provided for a participative role for the people in planning and decision-making.41

Another paradox is that civil servants believe decentralization has brought better control over resources and are supportive of it, but on the other hand service receivers are not admitting that things have improved in recent years. Such a perception gap is a critical challenge that needs to be addressed.

**HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, REMEDIES AND REFORMS**

There ought to be political and economic reforms to demand effective decentralization in which the involvement of the people—directly or through their democratically elected representatives—is given paramount importance. Research by Ahikire revealed that while representation of women in the political sphere is guaranteed, this does not apply to the political arena among civil servants. Here a huge disparity exists with men dominating most positions of authority, such as heads of department, while women are concentrated in the lower echelons of district staff and cleaners.42 Gender mainstreaming should be a core interest in a modern decentralized setting, but Ahikire also observes that whilst individual women may be able to break gender discriminative and oppressive barriers, group interests cannot easily be represented be-

---

40. Interview with Mzee Rwanone, resident of Rambura Village, Nyakaabande sub county, Kisoro District, 13 April 2013
cause of the competitive nature of the women quota system. The nature of electoral politics is such that an individual candidate is at the mercy of voters.43

The civil/public sector reform aims to achieve a smaller, affordable, well paid, efficient and effectively performing public service, and to create a civil service with a professional and managerial culture, promoting democratic ideals, efficiency and delivery of sustainable social services with the people themselves being actually involved in the whole process. The new vision envisages central government focusing on national issues and programmes, and the creation of an environment that is conducive to the operation of a market economy conducted in tandem with the principles of equity and efficiency.

Local government reform should be in response to public concern over the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of a given jurisdiction. It should have the overall objective of improving the quality of and access to public services provided through or facilitated by local government authorities to hasten development at the local level.

‘Full blast’ de-concentration is not good for fragile economies like Uganda. Local councillors and inexperienced bureaucrats may end up making grave administrative mistakes that impede governance and indeed the policy itself and hence there is need for ‘small doses’ of power. This is justified by Mawhood who points out that local authorities left to govern themselves will be less competent, corrupt, will abuse their powers and fail to collect revenues due to the public purse.44

Each local government authority should have roles and functions that correspond to the demands for its services by local people, and the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the area. The structure of each local government will reflect the nature of its roles and functions. Those with natural resources like minerals and national parks should be encouraged to finance most of their own programmes with those revenues if the central ministries are willing to relinquish their grip over the proceeds from these national treasures.

Local government authorities have not been transparent and accountable to the people, and continued interference from central government has been justified by this fact. This has included monitoring accountability by local government authorities, a financial and performance audit, provision of adequate resources (human and financial) to enable the local government authorities to deliver services. Activities ought to be monitored to ensure that funds are utilized as envisaged in the budgets passed by local councils,45 and there is need for compliance assessment tools for public procurement and disposal in local governments.46

Local government reform programmes should aim at improving the quality of services and access to public goods that are provided by local government authorities. The programme needs to have components that aim to contribute to the achievement

46. Milton Tumutegeireize, ‘Compliance of local governments with the public procurement and disposal system’, Directorate of Training and Capacity Building, PPDA, Silver Springs Hotel, Kampala, 2013.
of the overall goal such as good governance, restructuring, human resource development, and institutional and legal framework, monitoring and evaluation plus programme management.

There is need for complementarity between local government reform and sector reform in implementing the Local Government Act, national minimum standards of services that have been set to guide the policy. Districts and all municipalities are bound by the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995), the Public Finance and Accountability Act and Regulations of 2003, The Local Governments Act, 1997 CAP 243, The Local Governments Financial and Accountability Regulations, among other provisions, and these must be the guiding instruments.

Strict accountability should be fostered in the management of public affairs and the use of resources should bear in mind the responsibilities of the Inspector General of Government (IGG), which include the elimination of corruption, abuse of office and impunity. There is need to supervise the enforcement of the Leadership Code, ensure arrest, cause prosecution in respect of cases involving corruption and abuse of authority or public office. This may scare off would be offenders.

Lastly, there is the need to strengthen human resources capacity by insisting on the right educational qualifications for the right engagements and to avoid scenarios like those of Moyo District Service Commission (DSC) that attempted to employ a Veterinary Doctor as the district director of health services because he was the only applicant who hailed from there. Establishing model districts and encouraging competition through awarding trophies, peer reviewing and studying experiences is imperative. Indeed, there is need to revamp model centres/districts for learning purposes. Not only equip the health centres with equipment and drugs but also with health workers.

CONCLUSION

Its proponents urged that the policy of decentralization would be a panacea to the poverty syndrome that had dogged many states in Africa, but in the outcome the policy has experienced a high turnover of district personnel, low morale and apathy among staff. It is also often claimed that decentralization is effective in reduction of poverty due to inherent opportunities for higher popular participation and increased efficiency in public service delivery, but poverty remains high in many implementing nations.

47. Patrick Mutabwire, 'Keynote address by the acting permanent secretary Ministry of Local Government', Meeting of Chief Administrative Officers And Municipal Town Councils, Silver Springs Hotel, Kampala, 2013.
51. The New Vision (local newspaper), 5th June 2013, 14.
52. Susan Steiner, 'Decentralization in Uganda: exploring the constraints for poverty reduction', Germany Institute of Global and Area Studies working paper no. 31, Hamburg, Germany, November 2006, 41.
Lambright contends that Uganda’s policy of decentralization is among the most advanced on the continent, and has earned high scores on the indices of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization, _prima facie_, but there has not been much change for local citizens.\(^5\)

Despite this, decentralization has not been a similar failure to the Ujaama model villages of the socialist Tanzania or other policy paradigms that have stood as white elephants in the recent past.\(^4\) But there is the need to review and redirect critical implementation policy pillars and strategies that hold the programme in its entirety. Inclusion of stakeholders such as politicians, academics, policy implementers and locals is critical at the planning stage to form consensus and acceptability of the policy.

---

Attempts to enhance security governance within the East African Community (EAC) reveal both progress and challenges. The progress is demonstrated in the EAC’s efforts to formulate security sector, legal, policy and institutional frameworks. The main challenge is the failure of partner states to implement these frameworks fourteen years since the revival of the EAC in 2000. This article presents a content analysis of the existing EAC security governance frameworks and observes that, despite their shortcomings, they provide a foundation from which future initiatives can be anchored. It recommends a review of the frameworks to align them to the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security and areas of cooperation that were not anticipated when they were initially developed. The region also needs to move forward to the implementation and coordination phases of security governance, which have so far not been effectively undertaken.

DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN THE EAC

The security challenges facing the EAC partner states of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are attributable to two factors. First, the internal dynamics of each state impede efforts in security governance. Their domestic environments are characterised by unique economic, political and social threats, and the key common threats facing the region include combating terrorism, piracy, refugees, cross border crimes, proliferation of illicit small arms and weapons, among others. Second, there are concerns arising from transnational threats transcending the region’s borders. Each of the five partner states neighbours a country facing instability, and this results in negative spill over effects from these countries. Specifically, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania all border Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Kenya and


Dr. Damaris Nyaboke Manyange is a lecturer at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi. Current research interests include regional and international security. Email: dmanyange@yahoo.co.uk.

Africa Peace and Conflict Journal, 7:2 (2014), 74–88. © 2014 University for Peace Africa Programme. All rights reserved. ISSN 1659–3944.
Uganda border South Sudan, and Kenya borders Somalia. The involvement of EAC partner states in the resolution of conflicts within the Great Lakes region is a source of tension between the states and constitutes a key driver for devising mechanisms for security governance. Therefore, at their national and regional levels, the EAC states tend to concentrate efforts in articulating responses to these twin challenges.

The five EAC states lack homogeneity in their economic, political, social and security spheres and are characterised by their different levels of development in infrastructure, human resources, democratisation processes and state institutional capacities. Their varying contexts inevitably define the thinking, content and practices of security governance at the national and regional levels. In addition, discussion on regional security governance of the five states cannot be equal because Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania provide clearer trends for analysing their collective security governance given their long history in security cooperation whereas, trends of security cooperation between Rwanda and Burundi with the other states in the region have a shorter history and are less elaborate. To some extent this poses challenges in EAC regional security governance.

The EAC partner states can therefore be broadly divided into two categories. First are Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania who have fairly similar historical and cultural outlooks, mainly attributable to their shared colonial heritage as former British colonies. This colonial heritage has been a key driver for their integration process, which spans a long history dating back to the colonial period. The beginning of EAC integration is traceable to British colonial policy in 1895 that aimed to promote a unified administration over its three colonies in East Africa. In the post-independence period, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania inherited and transformed several integration initiatives including the East African High Commission that became the defunct EAC (1967-1978). These three states also spearheaded the revival of the current EAC that was revived in 1999. Rwanda and Burundi joined in 2009.2

The three former British colonial states not only inherited a common infrastructure and similarities in their socio-cultural spheres, but also inequalities in the different levels of development. Kenya pursued market oriented approaches, which enabled her economy to integrate faster into the capitalist international system giving it an advantage over the others. Meanwhile, Tanzania opted for African socialism, which later failed and perpetuated her least developed status in the region. Uganda besides taking the socialist path also experienced protracted periods of economic and political crisis due to military coup d’états that led to instability until 1986 when reconstruction and recovery efforts were sustained.3

In contrast, the second category of states comprises of Rwanda and Burundi that have a similar heritage as former Belgian colonies. They have homogeneity in socio-cultural characteristics in terms of sharing one ethnic language, and also exhibit geographical similarities being both small in size compared to the other partner states. Burundi covers approximately 26,338 square kilometres and Rwanda 27,834 square

---

2. These include: Kenya and Uganda Customs Union of 1917, which Tanganyika joined in 1927; the East Africa High Commission 1961-1967; East Africa Community Common Market 1967-1977; and, the revival of the EAC 1999 which Rwanda and Burundi joined in 2007.
kilometres. The two states are classified amongst the poorer states compared to the other EAC partner states. The two states share a common history of long periods of cyclic ethnic conflicts spanning four decades of their post-independence period. The conflicts in the two states led to the signing of Arusha Agreements—in 1993 for Rwanda, and in 2000 for Burundi. Both states are classified as post-conflict reconstruction states that have in recent years undertaken security sector reforms with significant success.

Despite their divergent histories, the involvement of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda in the peace processes to end the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi has been historic and laid the foundation for the current security cooperation in the region. Rwanda and Burundi are gradually withdrawing their association with the Central African states and gravitating towards the EAC region. This is mainly because the two states’ economies are increasingly dependant on the sea routes of the EAC partner states for the export and import of goods. This is a key pull factor that compelled them to join the economic block. Therefore, their association with the region is driven by necessity, dependence and the pursuance of their individual national interests although their main challenge is their shorter span in regional cooperation compared to the other EAC states. The assessment of the region’s security governance is greatly informed by these broad issues.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SECURITY GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE EAC

The EAC states have sought security governance as a means to address the problems emanating from within the region and beyond. They have developed and envisioned the implementation of various legal, policy and institutional frameworks that seek to ensure the survival of the states as independent entities, and also as a region within the larger international system. The region’s securitising frameworks are derived from the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC Treaty) (as amended), which was signed by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on 30 November 1999 and came into force on 7 July 2000. It was later acceded to by Rwanda and Burundi on the 1 July 2007 when they officially joined the EAC. The EAC Treaty identifies peace and security as a key pre-requisite for the success of all the envisioned EAC integration processes. Specifically, the Treaty states that, without regional peace and stability the benefits of the integration will be unattainable. This is captured in the

---


EAC vision that focuses on a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa.\textsuperscript{7}

Bearing in mind the problems that led to the collapse of the defunct EAC (1967-1977), the Treaty emphasises equity as a key principle of regional integration so as to enhance the economic security of the partner states. This is based on the assumption that not all members may benefit equally and therefore any perceptions of skewed distribution of benefits and costs are likely to undermine the objectives of the Community.\textsuperscript{8}

The Treaty articulates several areas of cooperation in which the partner states engage in their integration efforts. These broad areas of cooperation include economic, political, social and defence, among others. The EAC Treaty obligates partner states to establish common foreign and security policies whose objectives should aim to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Community.\textsuperscript{9} The partner states are expected to implement their security objectives through systematic cooperation and coordination. They are also expected to define common positions on security threats applicable to all the partners, foster peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts between and within partner states and promote cooperation among the national assemblies and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).\textsuperscript{10}

The Treaty specifically addresses regional peace and security in Article 124 by stating that partner states are required to foster and maintain a favourable environment that promotes peace and security. This is to be achieved through cooperation and consultations to enhance the prevention, management and resolution of disputes and conflicts among partner states. The states are obligated to maintain good neighbourliness, to establish regional disaster management mechanisms, and enhance cooperation in cross border crimes. They also have the responsibility to review the region’s security and specifically to formulate measures to combat terrorism. Other concerns addressed in the Treaty include: cooperation and exchange in criminal intelligence and security information; border security; the conclusion of a protocol on drug trafficking; mechanisms for refugee management; and, cooperation on training and joint security operations.\textsuperscript{11}

To operationalise Article 124, the EAC Strategy for Regional Peace and Security was developed and adopted in 2006.\textsuperscript{12} An implementation plan was adopted in 2010 that identified security sector development priorities for a ten-year period.\textsuperscript{13} However, the regional strategy and the development plan were not implemented by the partner states due to procedural problems, because these documents were developed before the East African Community (EAC) Protocol on Peace and Security was concluded from which they ought to draw their mandate. In addition, the EAC Secretariat for-
mulated a Conflict Prevention and Resolution Mechanism (CPRM) and a Conflict Early Warning Mechanism (CEWM). Similar to the EAC Regional Peace and Security Strategy these mechanisms were developed before the Protocol and therefore would not be implemented due to technical hitches.

Ultimately, all the above frameworks need to be reviewed so that they are aligned with the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security and reflect contemporary security challenges and areas of cooperation that were not anticipated when they were initially developed. The review should also incorporate other stakeholders and actors (both state and non-state) who are critical in the implementation and coordination process but were not included in earlier processes to formulate the EAC Strategy.

Similarly, the development of the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security has been slower than envisaged. The process dragged on for six years (2007-2013) among efforts to build consensus between the various security sector actors drawn from all the partner states. The partner states signed the Protocol in 2013 and had up to 2014 to ratify the Protocol and pave the way for its implementation. This delay is mainly due to the mystique surrounding the subject matter of security and the challenges in agreeing to a cooperation arrangement at the regional level.

The EAC Protocol states that its main objective is to promote peace, security, stability and good neighbourliness. In implementing the Protocol the partner states are required to develop common measures, strategies, programmes and agreements so as to achieve their security objectives. The Protocol spells out eleven areas of security cooperation on which to anchor security relationships. The Protocol lays a foundation for security governance within the EAC; however what remains is its effective implementation.

Additionally, the EAC frameworks envisage several institutions and security organs that constitute the main actors in security governance in the region. At inception of the EAC in 2000, the office of the Counsel to the Community administratively handled peace and security matters until 2006 when the Department of Political Federation was formed and the functions transferred there. The peace and security unit was later formed within the department and took charge of the issues. Currently, the Sectoral Council for Interstate Security is charged with the responsibility of providing policy direction for the sector. However, there are proposals to establish the EAC Peace and Security Council as a top policy advisory organ to be accountable to the Heads of States Summit.

Other actors who have a regional security governance mandate include the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) which legislates on regional security issues, the EAC Summit which has the role of reviewing the state of peace, security and good


15. East African Community, ‘EAC Protocol on Peace and Security’, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 15 February, 2013, Article 2, Scope of Cooperation. Areas of EAC security cooperation include; conflict prevention, management and resolution, prevention of genocide, combating terrorism, piracy, transnational and cross border crimes, peace support operations, disaster risk reduction, crisis response, management of refugees, cattle, control of proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, and prisons and correctional services. The partner states also set out to establish early warning mechanisms so as to help in anticipating, preparing, responding, preventing and managing conflicts, crisis and disasters.
governance within the Community, and the Council of Ministers which plays a key role in making policy decisions. In addition the Coordination Committees composed of Permanent Secretaries responsible for the East African Community from the five partner states provides technical expertise to the Council and appoints Sectoral Committees to assist in the execution of their work.

To facilitate the work of the security sector several specialised thematic groups have been established to provide technical input including forums for the police chiefs under the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO), the forum for Intelligence Chiefs, Heads of Prisons and Correction Services, Heads of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Agencies, Heads of National Counter Terrorism Coordination Agencies and Coordinators of National Focal Points on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The process to operationalize these forums is picking up with the exception of the forum for the Intelligence Chiefs, which has never met. The other forums have developed action plans and participated in meetings to establish working modalities which, when successfully implemented, will signal the start of security cooperation at the EAC region.

These existing peace and security frameworks, actors and institutions have been ineffective in carrying out their mandates due to the delay in implementation of the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security amongst other challenges.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Regional security governance can be operationalized from either a theoretical or practical perspective. Theoretically, security governance is an emerging perspective in the discourse of security studies. It complements and contends for recognition with other viable perspectives within the constructivist school that provide alternative approaches to understanding regional security. These include the ‘security community’ and ‘regional security complexes’ perspectives. It shares most of its assumptions with the constructivist school but stands out in its incorporation of the concept of governance into the security discourse. The perspective aims to shift the focus of security from government to governance.

Operationally, regional security governance denotes common efforts by states to promote peace, security and stability and to forestall threats from within or outside the region. Flemen and Radseck define regional security governance as the formal and informal structures of authority that coordinate, manage and implement collective responses to security threats of states within a region. These security arrangements can be unilateral, bilateral and multilateral. They may also be formal and binding with clear institutional settings or articulated through norms and actions acceptable to the

membership. In the context of the EAC, the formal structures include the securitising frameworks, actors and agencies charged with peace and security mandates. The EAC anticipates a multilateral approach for security governance in the region.19

Kirchner and Sperling observe that the security governance perspective is applied to assess the problems of security management occasioned by several issues including the broadened security agenda, different patterns of inter-state interactions, and the inclusion of non-state actors in the discourse of security.20 The frameworks developed by the EAC adequately address the broadened security agenda and provide for the multiplicity of actors. Similarly, Webber et al define security governance as the coordinated management and regulation of security concerns by multiple and separate public and private actors.21 It entails formal and informal arrangements governed by agreed norms and directed towards attaining set security objectives. Therefore, assessing success or failure of EAC security governance entails understanding the extent to which common security objectives are achieved and the threats managed or solved. It also entails evaluating how unfolding conflicts, disputes and tensions are averted or resolved and an appreciation of how its formal institutions survive crises or manage challenges.

Regional security governance comprises three components: formulation, implementation, and coordination of collective responses to security threats within the EAC region. First, formulation entails agenda setting and interaction between multiple actors, which results in the development of enabling laws, protocols, rules and guidelines necessary for collective regional action to address common security concerns. It also involves designing coordinating mechanisms that facilitate the participation of various actors and agencies. This aims to ensure coordination of all plans and actions that promote collective approaches to security concerns. It is through the formulation of legal, institutional and administrative structures that regional security institutions determine the nature and extent of common security concerns and develop relevant coordinated policy and strategy responses. So far the EAC region has been successful in undertaking the function of formulating its key security sector frameworks.

Second, implementation or management refers to how the regional security functions are executed, administered and organised. It presupposes agreed mechanisms and processes that are adhered to in efforts to attain peace, security and stability in the region. It entails undertaking initiatives to attain sustainable peaceful management and resolution of disputes and conflicts.22 Third, coordination refers to the inter-agency processes that ensure the multiple actors, interests and activities are undertaken in a coherent manner. Due to the involvement of various actors, the need for central control of the actions and plans is a prerequisite for successful security governance. The EAC region has not been able to effectively undertake the implementation

19. See earlier discussion on frameworks for security governance within the EAC.
phase of its security sector frameworks when its envisioned coordination mechanisms are weak.

Ultimately, appreciation of regional security governance requires interrogation of the capacity of regional institutions to perform the key function of formulation, implementation and coordination of collective strategies to address regional threats facing member states. Franke observes that security governance is about how regional organisations with security mandates coordinate and manage responses to collective security challenges in their regions.23 The EAC has made modest progress in setting up the necessary infrastructure to address its security objectives. However several challenges exist necessitating the re-orientation of approaches to enhance security governance.

For instance, globalisation presents more challenges than opportunities to the security sector of many states. This has impacted on security governance at the domestic, regional and global levels. Lake and Morgan argue that the region is increasingly becoming the centre for security interaction and cooperation and also the preferred level of analysis in studying and seeking solutions to security problems.24 This is due to the increasing security interdependence between states, the internationalisation of the security agenda, sophistication of transnational criminal enterprises and the re-emergence and complexity of contemporary security threats.

Similarly, Buzan and Weaver contend that most security threats are almost always regional; this leads states to enter into security arrangements at the regional level to forestall their security dilemmas.25 At this level, the concern revolves around understanding whether states are able to provide security unilaterally or multilaterally across the domestic and regional levels and survive within the international system. In addition, the shift of emphasis to the regional level is given impetus by the provisions of the United Nations (UN) Charter and regional organisations that have a peace and security mandate.26 The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN charter recognises the existence of regional organisations or agencies dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security within the different regions of the world.27

Boutros-Ghali emphasises the importance of UN cooperation with regional organisations and outlines several areas of collaboration including consultation, diplomatic support, operational support, co-deployment and joint operations.28 Specifically, focusing on cooperation between the UN and African regional organisations, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1197, which contained elements of general application to all re-

gional and sub-regional organisations.\textsuperscript{29} The UNSC articulated the need for strengthening coordination between the UN and regional, and sub-regional organisations, in the area of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. The UNSC also obligated the Secretary-General to develop a framework for coordinating partnerships between states and regional and sub-regional organisations in peacekeeping operations.

Following from the above, the AU’s Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) assigns responsibility to the regional economic blocs to promote and coordinate security initiatives at their respective regional level. APSA provides guidelines for implementing the continental peace and security initiatives. Towards attaining this objective the EAC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the African Union (AU), through which the EAC benefits from APSA support programmes and established the EAC Liaison office to the AU to facilitate security cooperation.\textsuperscript{30} Through the MOU, the AU has provided support to the EAC in its efforts to develop the EAC Early Warning Mechanism and in establishing a Mediation Framework among other financial assistance to on-going programmes.\textsuperscript{31} Separately, the EAC as a region works closely with other intra and extra-regional organisations that have converging security interests. These include: The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), The Eastern and Southern Africa Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives (CHRI).\textsuperscript{32} All these arrangements provide opportunities as well as challenges in enhancing security governance.

**CHALLENGES IN EAC SECURITY GOVERNANCE**

Despite the elaborate foundation for regional security governance and the accompanying securitising frameworks, the EAC states have been reluctant to embrace comprehensive regional security cooperation provided for in the well-articulated provisions of the various documents. The states have often opted to cooperate on an ad-hoc basis, when confronted with a common security threat as opposed to acting collectively at all times to defeat common threats. They have relied more on their bilateral agreements with partner states and other states beyond the region especially the developed states for their security survival.

A case in point is the protracted war in Somalia that has spill over effects on all the partner states and is a source of terrorism and other security threats. The region lacks a common strategy to confront the threats emanating from Somalia; the partner states have intervened on the behest of AU and national interests, based on patriotism and nationalistic security interests as opposed to regional interests. The EAC partner states except Tanzania are currently involved in stabilisation efforts in Somalia. Uganda and

\textsuperscript{29} United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1197, (New York, United Nations Department of Public Information, 1998).

\textsuperscript{30} Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU, RECs and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa, African Union, Addis Baba, June 2008.


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid
Burundi are troop contributing countries to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) whereas Kenya initially unilaterally intervened in Somalia to safeguard its national interests following several incursions by the Al Shabaab terrorist group but later joined AMISOM. Regional efforts to address the common threats from Somalia have often been in rhetoric during EAC sessions and no common practical strategies have been implemented by the partner states.

From the onset, the process of formulating the frameworks for security governance in the EAC faces several challenges. For instance, during the deliberations to develop the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security, it was observed that the security agencies from the five states have different structures and mandates at their national levels which present a problem of reconciliation at the EAC level so as to enhance effective security governance. The security organs tend to carry their bureaucratic competitions, jealousies and supremacy contests from their national levels to the regional level further complicating the consensus building on common security concerns. There is also a tendency for the defence sector to dominate the process whereas the intelligence community is reluctant to participate in the processes on the pretext that their *modus operandi* was covert and not possible within the Protocol. The difficulty associated with negotiating the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security stems from the fact that the security agencies in the region are still held back by traditional or militaristic thinking and practices of security. This explains the defence sector’s attempt to hijack the deliberations and the exclusion of non-state actors in the processes.  

Additionally, a proposal to have a Peace and Security Directorate at the EAC almost collapsed the deliberations due to disagreements on the command, control and reporting procedures. The proposal was deferred indefinitely. The end result of the long process (2007-2013) was a watered down consensus EAC Protocol on peace and security that struck out most of the provisions articulated in earlier drafts. In essence, most of the progressive thinking necessary to anchor a robust and contemporary framework for regional security governance was lost from the onset. The watered down Protocol is due to the give and take practices of diplomatic processes, whereby the end product may not help to address the security problems of the region.

Beyond the issues relating to the frameworks, the patterns of enmity and amity in the relations between the partner states in the region present challenges in security governance. Friction between EAC partner states is historic and dates back to the independence period. Consequently, over time there have been continuities as well as changes in the issues that threaten the peaceful relations between the region’s states. These issues are mainly economic and political and form the basis for regional security governance in the region. This process entails appreciating the root causes of these frictions, their persistence and how they can be overcome for the benefit of security cooperation in the region.

Politically, interstate tensions and disputes have characterised the patterns of security governance in the EAC region. Specifically, each state has bones of contention with a member state or states. This complicates any venture in collective security ap-


proaches. First, Tanzania has had suspicious relations with Uganda dating to the border wars of 1978/79 between the two states.\(^35\) Currently, tensions revolve around the divergent positions taken by the two countries on the EAC integration process. Uganda supports the fast tracking of the process whereas Tanzania urges for slow gradual process. Tanzania argues that implementation of the Customs Union and the Common Market face challenges that need to be addressed before the EAC region can progress to other levels of integration; this position is opposed by Uganda and Rwanda. There are also suspicions regarding the use of Lake Victoria waters, fishermen from both countries face harassment from government authorities from either side.

Second, Tanzania faces hostilities from Rwanda and Burundi regarding the March 2013 expulsion of refugees from the two states. The two have publicly accused Tanzania of violating relations by expelling their citizens. In response, Tanzania argues that the action was guided by its national interest, which was threatened by the criminal activities of the refugees.\(^36\) This creates uneasy relationships between the states, and has impacted on EAC relations. However, Tanzania enjoys cordial relations with Burundi despite the expulsion of refugees due to the country’s involvement and support for the Burundi peace processes over time. Burundi is dependent on Tanzania for its security and stability. The two countries currently find themselves in the same group having been excluded from the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ comprising Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, as outlined below.

Third, Uganda has potent friction with Kenya over the disputed Migingo Island on Lake Victoria with public spats characterising the dispute with both states claiming ownership of the territory. The two partner states sought intervention beyond the region from the British for interpretation of the colonial maps. The 2009 moratorium to engage efforts to determine the ownership of the island temporary quelled the tensions. This however remains a point of friction between the two states.\(^37\)

A new front for enmity in the region was opened in 2013 when three partner states—Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda—entered into a tripartite agreement to enhance cooperation in the development of key infrastructure projects that excluded Tanzania and Burundi but included South Sudan. This initiative, which is referred to as the ‘Coalition of the Willing’, has ignited diplomatic tension that casts doubts on the viability of the EAC. The ‘Coalition of the Willing’ accused Tanzania of lacking commitment and frustrating the EAC, whereas Tanzania asserted it was firmly in the EAC. These on-going developments have attracted disquiet amongst the partner states and their key donors; if not addressed, it is likely to undo the EAC integration process.\(^38\)

---

Some of the region’s states are in the process of discovery and exploitation of natural resources especially oil and gas. Uganda discovered oil in the Albertine Graben belt, Kenya in Turkana area and Tanzania discovered natural gas and oil in Mtwara Region.\(^{39}\) There are efforts to enhance cooperation among the states in ensuring effective management of the natural resources, which are instrumental in enhancing economic prosperity of the region’s states. However, this is a likely area of future conflicts within the states and with neighbours who share the resources if not managed well, as witnessed in several oil rich countries in Africa and often described as the oil curse.

The continuity of tensions and conflict between the partner states exposes the failure of the existing EAC regional frameworks on peace and security to settle disputes between members or to facilitate the process of mediation. Clearly, in all the existing issues of conflict in the region, the absence of commitment to implement the EAC to address these issues is evident. This raises key concerns on the commitment to security governance in the region.

Economically, the first cracks in the relations between the states emerged soon after the formation of the defunct EAC (1967-1977). This is attributed to the divergent development plans adopted by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania post-independence. Kenya adopted a free market economy and encouraged foreign direct investment.\(^{40}\) In contrast, Tanzania proclaimed African socialism and introduced a controlled economy that de-emphasised the role of foreign direct investments.\(^{41}\) Similarly, Uganda formulated the Common Man’s Charter in 1969, which was anchored on socialist principles and akin to Tanzania’s socialism.\(^{42}\) As a result Kenya became capitalist, which enabled it to attract investment and reap the benefits of the defunct EAC (1967-1977) as most foreign companies set up their bases in Kenya. In contrast, socialism disrupted the socio-economic development of Tanzania where foreign investors were uncomfortable to invest in the socialist economy. Uganda, besides taking the socialist path, entered into periods of instability from 1971 when Milton Obote was ousted in a military *coup d’état* up to 1986 when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of Yoweri Museveni took power.

Prospects for EAC integration dimmed as Uganda and Tanzania got frustrated in their efforts to tame Kenya’s dominance, what followed were public spats between Tanzania’s President Julius Nyerere who accused Kenya of greed in the EAC referring to Kenya as ‘a man eat man society’. Therefore, Tanzania sought to prevent the advent of capitalist values and to end exploitation of the Tanzanian market by Kenya by closing its borders and disrupting trade. In response, Kenya’s President Jomo Kenyatta was unbowed and stayed the course of advancing a capitalist economy, and responded by calling Tanzania a ‘man eat nothing society’. This row led to the closure of the Kenya-Tanzania border halting all economic activity and ushered the eventual collapse of the

---

EAC. This history of enmity between Kenya and Tanzania continues to this day with Tanzania applying unofficial protectionist policies to guard off Kenya’s access to its markets despite their shared membership to the EAC.

Similarly, some partner states are uncomfortable with the current distribution of the EAC common services. There is agitation to decentralise the EAC institutions and organs to ensure all members benefit and host them equitably. The concern has been that some states host several organs of the EAC whereas others do not host any. Uganda and Tanzania host most of the organs and institutions, Kenya hosts only one, the Lake Victoria Environmental Programme, and Rwanda and Burundi do not host any. Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi are at the forefront urging amendment of the Treaty to facilitate equitable re-distribution.

Despite the negative historical experiences and rivalries, the revival of the EAC in 1999 was informed by necessity of the states to manage and respond to challenges posed by globalisation due to the interdependent nature of the region’s economies. Regional integration was perceived as the panacea for the states to act collectively to increase market access and development, but the relationships tend to grow hot and cold affecting the progress in economic integration of these states.

Additionally, the EAC region lacks clear leadership to guide its processes. Buzan and Waever observe that security interactions in Africa have been generated by weaknesses rather than by strengths. They argue that the EAC region’s power polarity is difficult to overcome due to a lack of a clear regional hegemon. The big challenge is that currently no state in the EAC region has been able to command the compliance of all the other partner states and earn the regional leadership position. Therefore, without a regional power the problems of leadership for implementation of security strategy will recur. They assert that this model works within the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that have clear regional powers in South Africa and Nigeria that help to captain security governance.

Fraizer explains the role of regional powers in the development and maintenance of security orders within regional security organisations. He argues that security orders are driven by, among other issues, the regional power roles where leaders act to influence the region’s members in specific security policy direction. The regional leaders take responsibility for initiating security agreements and leading the region in choosing preferences and coordinated sets of strategies. The EAC Treaty gives this role to the Summit of the Heads of State; however this presents challenges because the heads of states are not homogeneous. They have personality differences and are guided by their respective national interests, which are not necessarily the EAC’s interests. The rotational basis of the chairmanship of the EAC Summit plays its role in compounding the problem, as the frequency of the rotation annually does not afford

any one leader the opportunity to effectively implement and coordinate regional security governance.

Without clear leadership, the formulation, coordination and implementation of regional security governance will be stillborn. A regional hegemon will help to move the region from unilateral to multilateral approaches in addressing security threats. The closest the states have come to regional security cooperation is issuing statements to condemn acts that constitute threats in the region or in neighbouring states.

**PROSPECTS FOR EAC REGIONAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE**

Since the revival of the EAC, modest progress has been made in security governance within the EAC. The progress is evident in efforts to formulate the regional frameworks such as EAC Protocol on Peace and Security. These frameworks, despite their shortcomings, provide a basis on which future initiatives can be anchored. The region needs to move forward to the implementation and coordination phases of security governance, which have so far not been effectively undertaken. This will be tenable only if the region addresses four key concerns.

First, there is the need to shift towards a regional commitment by the states to embrace and implement regional security governance. This entails drawing lessons from the failure to implement the current security frameworks several years after they were developed. This also necessitates reworking the processes and actors involved in the formulation, implementation and coordination of the security functions. The participation of non-state actors and EAC citizens will be critical for effective regional security governance.

Second, ninety five per cent of financing for EAC programmes and activities on security are funded by external donors, mainly the European Union (EU), through the AU-African Peace and Security Architecture support programme, and the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ). Therefore, without an assured sustainable and independent source of funding for peace and security sector implementation, regional security governance becomes a mirage.

The EAC region’s donor dependency is attributed to the reluctance of the partner states to commit sufficient funds towards the objectives of peace and security that they allege to be committed to achieving. This reliance on foreign funds to enhance security continues to perpetuate the weak states’ dilemma and exposes the region to security vulnerabilities associated with dependency. Security is considered a core interest for survival of the states at the national and regional levels, which should not be left to external machinations. All the partner states underscore the importance of ending security dependency in their policies and strategies; therefore, it can be deduced that what they lack is commitment to go beyond the rhetoric.

In addition, at the national level the security sectors are heavily funded in the five partner states and enjoy huge budgetary allocations, highly trained manpower, and state-of-the-art equipment. This national prioritising and financing of the security sector should be replicated at the regional level. There is need for the region’s states to take control of their security by enhancing funding to the sector at the regional level.

---

It is not the lack of resources to fund the sector but the lack of commitment by the states in the regional security agenda. Third, the situation can be explained in terms of the existing mistrust and suspicion between the partner states and actors in the security agencies. This is compounded when it comes to the matter of security where the gatekeepers are reluctant to change, despite the progress made in formulating the region’s security frameworks in the new human security paradigm. The states are reluctant to actualise security cooperation despite public pronouncements to do so. They are also unwilling to implement the region’s security agenda; as long as this situation prevails the implementation of the regional security frameworks remains a mirage.

CONCLUSION

The endeavour by the EAC states to enhance security governance is characterised by both successes and challenges. A key consensus is the need to have a secure, peaceful and stable region without which the objectives of regional integration may not be achieved. The need for security and its collective governance is not a choice but a necessity. The region’s leadership has to be more proactive in addressing the gaps in the implementation and effective coordination of the security sector frameworks, which continue to persist. There is also need to re-orient the frameworks to address their inherent weaknesses.
Youth Participation in Local Governance: Youth Perspectives from the Coast Region of Kenya

Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen

Youth participation in local governance is currently being advanced as a policy priority in promoting youth development in the counties of Kenya. The important role played by youth in the economic and social development in the counties cannot be denied. The need for their participation in local governance processes is increasing and, as such has been recognised in the present Kenyan Constitution of 2010. However, amidst this recognition in the constitution, various factors hinder youth participation in local governance. This brief intends to explore the factors that hinder youth participation in local governance in the Coast Region of Kenya. It is based on an analysis of literature and research conducted on youth perspectives on governance in 2012. The research was conducted through focused group discussions with stakeholders and in-depth interviews with youth in the counties of Kwale, Mombasa, Lamu and Kilifi.

INTRODUCTION

The Coast Region of Kenya is situated along the Indian Ocean. It is a region endowed with many resources, including the port of Mombasa, the tourism industry and maritime resources, as well as a proposed new port, as part of the Lamu Project. Nevertheless, since independence, the region has been marginalised by successive governments in terms of its development. Coasterians have criticised successive gov-

1. The author uses the term ‘local governance’ to refer to the present county government system in Kenya. In the present devolved system of government (under the Kenyan Constitution of 2010) the political administration and fiscal powers are distributed to sub national units.
2. The research formed part of wider research conducted on youth radicalisation in the Coast Region of Kenya. The author is grateful for the organisational support provided for the research by the Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE).

Technical University of Mombasa, Kenya. Email: fazmiya@tum.ac.ke.

© 2014 University for Peace Africa Programme. All rights reserved. ISSN 1659–3944.
ernments and blamed them for their present plight and low levels of development.4 The desire to break away from the central government has been made apparent through the formation of secession movements such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), a separatist movement, and violent incidents such as the Kaya Bombo clashes.5 The devolved system of governance as promoted by the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 is considered a panacea for this situation by the government.6

The region attributing to the ‘youth bulge’ in Kenya needs to engage young people in the democratic processes of local governance in the region.7 Regions with youth bulges have shown potential for political violence.8 An analysis of the causes for violence in the Coast Region shows the following characteristics: religious intolerance, negative ethnicity and prejudice, political power struggles, poor governance, inequitable resource sharing, land issues on ownership, impunity and corruption and unresolved historical injustices. These characteristics have facilitated religious extremism, mushrooming of pressure groups, increased poverty, ethnic inequality and unemployment.9

Among these characteristics, youth radicalisation and extremism have been key issues in the region.10 Among the proposed counter-radicalisation/extremism mea-

---


5. The Kaya Bombo incident was as a result of youth groups (mainly from the South Coast of Kenya of Digo origin) bitter over alleged discriminations over land distribution policies, which clashed with and slaughtered up-country people and non-Digo coastal residents in Kenya. The incident resulted in the killing of 104 people and over 100,000 being displaced. The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is an organisation pursuing its quest for independence with its slogan ‘Pwani si Kenya’ (The Coast is not part of Kenya).

6. Nevertheless there is a critique that if proper institutions or processes are unavailable, devolution can result in further marginalisation and ethnic nationalism on the basis of regional disparities, revenue responsibilities and ethnic nationalism that can affect the instability of the country. See: Wolfgang Engler, ‘Decentralizing Kenya: four paradoxes’, The World Bank, September 2011. Available online: http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/decentralizing-kenya-four-paradoxes. [Last accessed 3 January 2013].

7. The youth bulge theory posits that a large proportion of youth in the population may result in either their nations moving forward (as demographic dividends) or due to the lack of opportunities, the unemployment rates will grow, leading a huge number of unemployed young people (particularly young men) to violent and socially destructive acts. See Henrik Urdal, ‘A Clash of Generations? Youth bulges and political violence’, International Studies Quarterly, 50:3 (2006), 607-629.


sures the need to increase youth participation in democratic processes and mainly in local governance is well acknowledged.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH IN KENYA

The definitions of youth vary from one context to another. Hence youth definitions are contextual, depending on the social, cultural, economic and political environments. Durham defines the concept of youth as a relational concept within a dynamic context that encompass a social landscape of power, rights, knowledge and cultural notions of agency and personhood. This dynamic nature views youth as a fluid concept where experiences of youth in various socio-economic conditions define youth. The only static component of the definition can be based on their age.\textsuperscript{11}

However, in Kenya, age-based definitions for youth vary. The National Youth Policy of Kenya defines youth as those aged between 15 and 30 years that takes into account the social, cultural, biological, political, physical and psychological aspects of Kenyan youth. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 defines youth as an age range of between 18 and 35, while youth development projects by the government have targeted youth in the age range of 15–35 years. Like many other African countries, the lack of consistency in definitions has complicated the definition of youth.

THE RATIONALE FOR YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE

Three dominant rationales can be identified for youth participation in local governance.\textsuperscript{12} First, youth participation can be viewed within the context of social justice. This is backed by Article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC).\textsuperscript{13} This rationale emphasises the importance of young people being active agents of their own lives. It means young people have the right to articulate or express their views freely, be heard in all matters that concern and affect them that are of policy concern, and have their views considered seriously in par with their age and maturity. Such opportunities will allow the youth to be heard, enabling them to protect themselves better, strengthen their commitment to and understanding of democracy and will contribute to better and informed policy decisions.\textsuperscript{14}

Second, youth participation can be viewed within the context of building civil society. Here the purpose is to balance the individual right of the youth with their responsibilities to their communities. This involves creating social spaces for experimentation among youth and community members so that they have legitimate opportunities to influence decisions in their communities. According to this perspective youth in local

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Deborah Durham, ‘Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to part 1 and 2’, Anthropological Quarterly, 73:3 (2000), 113-120.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Gerison Lansdown, ‘Promoting children’s participation in democratic decision-making’, UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, Italy, 2001.
\end{itemize}
governance incorporates the voices and competencies of diverse stakeholders mainly the youth in identifying, leveraging and mobilising community resources.\textsuperscript{15}

Third, the rationale for youth participation in local governance is the need to promote youth development in their respective localities. Here youth participation serves as a socialising function where the purpose is to provide youth with challenging experiences in initiating, planning and taking action on behalf of people in the state of need. Here the expected outcomes would be identifying development, peer and adult relationships, skill development, initiative and group membership. Therefore, participation by youth can be viewed as civic competence where their interaction within democratic institutions will provide them with competencies that will promote their interests as adults.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN KENYA}

In Kenya, youth remains a marginalised group in terms of their participation in development. For decades since independence their needs and aspirations have not received due recognition. Very few efforts have been taken by the government and voluntary youth agencies to involve youth in the development agenda. Apart from the National Youth Service (which started in 1964), most of the youth programmes have focused on the recreational and social nature with an urban bias.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, youth participation has been lacking in the designing, planning and implementation of programmes and policies that affected the youth and country. For example when asked about the Constitution of Kenya 2010, research participants said that they had only heard about the constitution. They were unaware on its contents and said that they were not involved in any public forums that had discussions in relation to the constitution.\textsuperscript{18} This clearly shows the lack of participation in consultation meetings resulting in lost credibility and lack of ownership of the process.

Today, like many other countries, Kenya has placed emphasis on youth participation in devolved governance. Under the devolved system of governance, youth participation has been highlighted as crucial in issues of governance and decision-making so that the policies formulated and services provided will benefit them and the country. While achieving this goal is a possibility, there is a long way to go in realising this aim. The Institute of Economic Affairs-IEA highlights the present discourse as ‘an aggressive youth discourse’ emerging as a result of ‘concerted efforts of re-configuring the social roles and responsibility of young people in the country’.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{18} Youths Leaders, Kenya Community Support Centre, Focused Group Discussions, Mombasa, 26 April 2012.
\item\textsuperscript{19} Chrispine Oduor and Abraham Muriu, ‘Opportunities for youth to engage in devolved governance and economic development in Kenya’, \textit{The Futures Bulletin}, Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya, 2013, 1–8.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
As important strides are taking place in Kenya on encouraging youth participation in local governance as in many other countries, there are factors that hinder coastal youth in their participation. The following factors were highlighted by the coastal youth as factors that hindered them from participation.

1. The lack of information on the available avenues for participation in governance. This was mainly due to the lack of awareness of policies and programmes by the government in their localities. The youth have not been aware of the existing youth forums or public meetings during the policy designing processes, even when these have been relevant to themselves or to their communities. We don’t have many youth forums in the area. We are not involved in any policy-making endeavours. Take the case of the new port project – we had very little information on it. This is in our land, and we were not part of it…the government says the project will give us opportunities. But rarely do we know the opportunities. What about its impact in the local communities?  

2. Sometimes information was available but the youth did not know how to access the existing mechanisms of redress. Youth also lacked time and resources to enable their participation. Many groups in society have no opportunity to participate or have difficulties in participating. Education or the economic situations deter participation. When you are poor you don’t want to waste the little you have or your time in joining an organisation or a youth forum. Among the geographic challenges, youth from marginal areas feel that they are not part of the forums or sometimes youth feel they have information but do not want to join a forum or do not have the motivation to participate in such forums. Discussions did reveal that youth spend their limited time on needs and interests that were of use to them (such as on family issues, opportunities for education and job hunting) rather than focus on participation in youth forum/public forums. Further, it is also important to note that the youth of today have a different set of expectations and options when compared to previous generations. The neo capitalist wave in Kenya, of economic liberalisation, has put immense pressure on the youth, wherein life transitions of youth have lengthened the time between completing education, creating a stable career and settling down for marriage. These contemporary challenges discourage young people from spending their spare time on participating in local issues.

3. The role of NGOs in youth participation was commendable. Some youth highlighted that youth forums carried out by NGOs such as the Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) and the Lamu Youth Alliance, have focused on youth participation and information sharing, including education based on the Kenyan Constitution of 2010. It was highlighted that youth needed more forums for discussions on their interests and on issues concerning their communi-

---

21. Interview with Ramadan Mwangazi, Youth Leader, Technical University of Mombasa, Mombasa, 28 April 2012.
ties. Lack of motivation and interest by youth had contributed to their lack of participation. Some members highlighted that they were not interested in taking part in issues of local governance because they perceived that government had no interest in their participation. This they attributed to three reasons: first, there was the perception among the youth that their voices may remain unheard; second, they felt that the government would not take them seriously; and third, they believed that their opinions as youth may not add value to the matters discussed. 'Usually we meet political representatives only prior to the beginning of elections. They come to ask about our problems, talk of solutions and then after the elections they are not concerned about our issues... we don’t even know what happened to the information we gave.'

4. Youth participation as tokenistic. Youth participation was considered as tokenistic and manipulated; therefore it is seen to lack meaning. 'Here youth take part in political issues/forums only when tokens are given – this also includes their choice of political leaders. They make choices based on ‘hand-outs’ given rather than on the level of capability of the policies promoted by the political candidate. This is due to the level of poverty in the region – hence the choice of leadership or policy-decision-making does not lie on their rationality...'

5. The need for training and skills to take part in local governance processes was evident as many young people did not have the leadership skills, analytical skills and problem solving skills that were needed if they were to take part. This can also be attributed to the lack of opportunities in education and training in the region.

6. The need for innovative new means for youth participation. Discussions also centred on the need for digital engagement strategies (mobile phones and ICTs) that have the ability to promote participation in local governance. While participants highlighted the need, they also recognised the limitations such as the prohibitive cost. It was agreed that participation through the use of technology has the potential to inform and engage young people.

The above discussions emphasise the need for access into a public forum and platforms for meaningful youth participation that can have an impact on important issues of governance in their counties. The lack of trust in the present system necessitates a framework that supports youth participation. This means a framework that would match the expectations of the youth and meet the needs of the government, wherein young people would feel the need to participate. Trust building mechanisms, where their views will be heard, minuted and implemented, are also required. In addition a feedback mechanism would give them confidence in the system. Finally, a youth mentorship programme is needed to build capacity through engaging with experienced decision makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As future prospects depend on growth in the region, there is a need to encourage youth to participate in development, which is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and ultimately changing the entire society. Apart from this, there is a need to encourage youth to demand accountability and concrete actions from their governments to address low levels of education in the region and unemployment. The stimulation of dialogue and introduction of youth forums to discuss governance issues would emphasise the important role that youth can play in addressing corruption at all levels. Apart from this, there is a need to help create a network of knowledge sharing and learning on good governance and anti-corruption issues among the youth.

Digitalisation has been widely accepted by youth and encouragement of their use of the web to develop new forms of social and global citizenship is a necessity. Other factors to encourage youth participation in the devolved system of governance in Kenya are recommended by Oduor and Muriu. They recommend that youth should: (i) seek for elective positions as provided by the constitution at the county level of governance; (ii) engage in public fora as proposed by the constitution through groups such as youth fora or youth organisations; (iii) participate in the vetting of officials; (iv) form political parties; (v) participate in meetings of importance at local levels; (vi) mobilise pressure against corruption by duty bearers; (vii) participate in the planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of government projects at the local level. The proposed recommendations highlight the need for enabling mechanisms to be implemented to encourage youth participation in local governance in the Coast Region of Kenya.

CONCLUSION

This analysis based on youth perspectives provides a glimpse into the current context of youth participation and engagement in local governance in the Coast Region of Kenya. While the article is not a comprehensive evaluation of the issue of youth participation, it serves as a platform to highlight youth perspectives on participation and the problems they encounter as well as the ways in which they prefer to become more active participants in local governance in their region.

In the contemporary context there is an emerging need for youth participation in the political discourse in the Coast Region. Youth unemployment, low levels of education, radicalisation and extremism, are just a few of the problems that directly affect the youth of the Coast Region, which require immediate solutions. The absence of youth in local governance processes and mechanisms that shape contemporary political decision-making means there is an aging generation of Kenyans, who will continue to shape the future of the Kenyan youth, especially in periphery areas such as the Coast Region. In other words, whether youth participate or not, the politics of today belong to the youth more than ever, and it is time for our local governance institutions to reflect this.

---

Tensions and Dilemmas around Sexual Rights in the Context of the African Youth Charter

Manase Kudzai Chiweshe
Nelson Muparamoto

INTRODUCTION

Sexuality remains a problematic area in articulating and protecting the rights of young people in Africa and this brief explores the issues surrounding the neglect of sexuality in the African Youth Charter (AYC). In analysing the AYC, silence on the sexual rights of young people becomes clearly apparent. This silence is based on a cultural system that has long denied young people sexual agency, and the following brief discusses the tensions and debates around the sexual rights issue in the Charter.

First, it explains how sexuality has been constructed within Africa, and how culture and religion have promoted heterosexuality at the expense of alternative sexualities. Secondly, it outlines the various contestations around alternative sexualities in Africa exploring how African governments have variously responded to calls for sexual rights. Finally, it offers an analysis of the African Youth Charter specifically concerning sexual rights of youth across the continent.

Sexual orientation is a source of discrimination across Africa as witnessed by laws in many countries that make homosexuality illegal. Dominant heteronormativity has also led to many youths with alternative sexualities facing various forms of abuse, including lynching, rape, beatings, imprisonment and harassment. In this brief, we aim to analyse what the Charter means to youths with alternative sexualities. Are the real concerns and experiences of ‘othered’ beings catered for in the Charter? Are people with different sexualities even recognised and, if they are, what form of protection are they accorded by this Charter? The analysis focuses on the debates and contestations that contribute to the policy directions on sexuality issues across Africa. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex — known as LGBTQI — is a
term widely used to describe a variety of alternative sexualities. It is a political statement, as well as a sexual orientation, which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid.1

BACKGROUND: AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER AND SEXUAL RIGHTS

The AYC appears to be a progressive attempt towards protecting the rights of young people across Africa: however it has a serious weakness in its omission to explicitly outline a position on sexual rights. This omission may mean that the Charter implicitly supports discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, or it may mean that the drafters were reluctant to include such a controversial issue, which they knew many governments across the continent were against. Below is a section excerpt dealing with discrimination in the Charter.2

Article 2: Non-Discrimination

1. Every young person shall be entitled to the enjoyments of the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in this Charter irrespective of their race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.
2. State Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that youth are protected against all forms of discrimination on the basis of status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs.
3. State Parties shall recognise the rights of young people from ethnic, religious and linguistic marginalised groups or youth of indigenous origin, to enjoy their own culture, freely practice their own religion or to use their own language in community with other members of their group.

Article 2 outlines protections against various forms of discrimination — especially in note 1 — yet sexual orientation is conspicuous by its absence. The majority of African leaders, states and people are averse to openly recognising the rights of alternative sexualities. There are few issues that people from opposing religious, political, cultural, social and class backgrounds agree on in Africa, but homosexuality is one such issue. Africa is a story of constant struggle for self-determination yet when it comes to sexual orientation the debate is closed.

The neglect of sexual rights ultimately contradicts the other important sections of this Charter. For example, Article 16 states that ‘Every young person shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health.’ Threats of violence, abuse and various forms of stigma negate this right for LGBTQI youths. States that imprison youths with this status are denying them the right to enjoy the best state of health. Article 7 states that ‘No young person shall be subject to the arbitrary or unlawful interference with his/her privacy, residence or correspondence, or to

attacks upon his/her honour or reputation.’ However, this does not seem to protect LGBTQI youths who are regarded as criminals in most states. Nothing is more private than a person’s sexuality, yet that fundamental freedom is criminalised by many governments. McFadden argues that there is an inextricable link between sexuality and power; therefore, control of one’s sexuality is an important part of freedom and the Charter has ignored the needs of a significant group of youth in Africa. Without clear articulation of a position on sexual rights within the Charter we can only infer about the motives of the drafters.

Article 8.2 states that young men and women of full age who enter into marriage shall do so based on their free consent and shall enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. Whilst the wording lacks clarity, it presumes marriage is between a man and a woman, meaning that any other form of marriage is not recognised by the Charter. Without clarity we cannot be exactly sure of the standing of same sex unions in this section. Across the Charter there is widespread generalisation of youth in Africa as a homogenous group. Yet sexual orientation is one factor that differentiates between young people. There are sections within the Charter that can be used to entrench non-discrimination of alternative sexualities. For example Article 10.1 notes that ‘Every young person shall have the right to social, economic, political and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind.’ One’s identity and freedom is closely linked with sexuality. Sexual orientation is therefore an important factor in the development of an individual.

Other sections of the Charter could be used to discriminate according to sexual orientation — such as Article 20.1 that notes ‘State Parties shall take the following steps to promote and protect the morals and traditional values recognised by the community.’ In particular, Article 20.1b states that States Parties shall ‘Recognise and value beliefs and traditional practices that contribute to development.’ In this instance any act or situation that is deemed not to be cultural or a danger to culture. Homosexuality across Africa has variously been described as ‘un-cultural’ and, because of this, states can claim that banning or imprisoning people based on sexual orientation is a way of promoting and protecting the cultural beliefs of African societies. The Charter has many sections that may be interpreted in this way to deny fundamental rights around sexuality. The language of the document needs to ensure that all sections are


4. The steps referred to are: a) Eliminate all traditional practices that undermine the physical integrity and dignity of women; b) Recognise and value beliefs and traditional practices that contribute to development; c) Establish institutions and programmes for the development, documentation, preservation and dissemination of culture; d) Work with educational institutions, youth organisations, the media and other partners to raise awareness of and teach and inform young people about African culture, values and indigenous knowledge; e) Harness the creativity of youth to promote local cultural values and traditions by representing them in a format acceptable to youth and in a language and in forms to which youth are able to relate; f) Introduce and intensify teaching in African languages in all forms of education as a means to accelerate economic, social, political and cultural development; g) Promote inter-cultural awareness by organising exchange programmes between young people and youth organisations within and across States Parties.
clearly written and protect all citizens. In many parts of Africa however, people are not recognised as citizens with rights because of their sexual orientation.

CONTESTATIONS AROUND SEXUAL RIGHTS ACROSS THE CONTINENT

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (the African Charter), which entered into force in 1986, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Protocol), which entered into force in 2005 all protect certain sexual rights but crucially leave out homosexuality.5 The Charter came into effect through the Organisation of African Unity, which was later replaced by the African Union and aimed to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms on the African continent. As it stands today, the charter does not list sexual orientation as a basis on which an individual may not be discriminated against, thus rendering it an ineffective instrument for keeping signatory states accountable for the violation of gay rights.6

The 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS set out goals and statements regarding youth. In advocating for youth’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, for example, it advocates to expand good-quality, youth-friendly, sexual health education and counselling services and strengthen reproductive and sexual health programmes.7 Yet there were serious debates within the African block when negotiating UNGASS. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) block, led by Zambia, supported language that would support the human rights of women and girls in matters related to reproductive health, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care. However conservative governments including Libya, Djibouti and Egypt rejected any language referring explicitly to gay/bisexual men’s vulnerability to HIV infection.8

At the African Union summit in Addis Ababa in 2012, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon argued that ‘One form of discrimination ignored or even sanctioned by many states for too long has been discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity… It prompted governments to treat people as second-class citizens or even criminals… Confronting these discriminations is a challenge, but we must not give up on the ideas of the universal declaration of human rights.’9 Many African

---

presidents reacted negatively to this speech with President John Mills of Ghana saying, ‘We have made our position well known. Ghanaian society frowns upon homosexuality and everybody has been telling us that democracy means governance for the people, by the people in the interest of the people’; whilst Liberian President Ellen Sirleaf’s stated that ‘Liberians should hold this government by her word. This president will not sign into law anything called same-sex marriage. This government opposes gay rights. In fact, government will not compromise its religious belief for any (foreign) aid.’

On 18th of December 2008 the UN produced a Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. The statement reaffirmed ‘the principle of the universality of human rights… that everyone is entitled to the enjoyment of human rights without distinction of any kind… (and) the principle of non-discrimination which requires that human rights apply equally to every human being regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity’. It argued that nation states should protect the rights of all people and ensure protection against criminal penalties on the basis of sexual orientation. The statement was backed by 66 states including six African countries but there was a counter-statement arguing against the statement supported by 60 states including a multitude of African countries. The counter statement supported by many African countries argued that protection of sexual orientation could lead to the social normalisation and possibly the legalisation of deplorable acts such as paedophilia and incest. This illustrates the divisive nature of sexual rights in African countries. Lawrence Mute asks how countries and mainstream civil society organisations which espouse human rights as universal, indivisible and interdependent still fail to acknowledge the unacceptability that fellow human beings should be killed, violated, discriminated against or excluded from society simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In Africa any variation from heteronormativity is considered ‘pathological’, ‘deviant’ and ‘unnatural’, thus sustaining gendered hierarchies while limiting public debate on such issues. Across the continent homosexuality is un-African and un-cultural. African homosexuals constitute ‘improper’ bodies and homosexuality a ‘subversive’ pleasure. According to the International Gay and Lesbian Association, homosexuality is outlawed in 38 African countries. In 13 nations, homosexuality is legal or there


13. Ibid.


are no laws pertaining to it. Places such as Mauritania, Sudan, and northern Nigeria make homosexuality punishable by death whilst in Uganda, offenders can receive life imprisonment for homosexual acts. Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe represents a view held by many African leaders when he said:

(It) degrades human dignity. It’s unnatural, and there is no question ever of allowing these people to behave worse than dogs and pigs. If dogs and pigs do not do it, why must human beings... What we are being persuaded to accept is sub-animal behaviour and we will never allow it here. If you see people parading themselves as lesbians and gays, arrest them and hand them over to the police.17

Such views are held widely across Africa though there is a lack of studies to ascertain the views of the majority. In South Africa when parliament voted to enforce sexual rights that include same sex marriage, the current President Jacob Zuma voted against the bill. In 2012 Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai on a trip to England supported homosexual rights but when he returned to Zimbabwe his office started claiming he was misquoted. That is how divisive gay rights are in many places where politicians feel it is political suicide to openly support such rights.

There is support for equal sexual rights from prominent South Africans such as Archbishop Tutu who in 2010 said, 'Show me where Christ said, 'Love thy fellow man, except for the gay ones. Gay people, too, are made in my God’s image.'18 Desai argues that in many cases, homosexual behaviour, while not always explicitly discussed or identified as such in the larger public sphere, was often more tolerated in pre-colonial Africa than in Africa after the colonial period.19 The problem however is that the same author in 2004 provides a counter thesis stating, 'but along with the other fruits of modernity—technology, industrialization, growth of literacy, the expansion of public sphere and so on – the formulation of newer forms of sexual identities is a challenge that contemporary Africa must face.'20

What we cannot escape is how the homosexuality agenda has been largely western driven. In 2011 the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, argued that sexual rights should be tied to aid. This move is dangerous for the fight against bigotry and intolerance in Africa as it gives credence to claims that homosexuality is a ‘white man’s disease’. It is important that stories of youth in Africa with alternative sexualities are not fetishised and exoticised by westerners; they are not helpless individuals to be (hyper) sexualised and preyed upon with a colonial gaze.21 As one young person argues:

---

We are not ‘progressive/forward thinking/open-minded’ for identifying within your accepted categories of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transvestites Queers (LGBTQ). Nor are ‘we’ ‘medieval/backwards’ for identifying with our various religious traditions. ‘Our’ agentivity is not yours to gauge: the multiplicity of ways chosen to live our lives (emancipation from region/family/religion/culture OR NOT!) are all equally valid… regardless of whether they measure up to your expectation.22

Thus it is important to ensure it is African young people demanding and defining for themselves who they are and how they want to live their lives.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Incidence of violence against lesbians and gay bashing in South Africa attest that the victory of constitutional equality has not guaranteed the end to social discrimination.23 Securing rights thus goes beyond mere constitutional guarantees but first we need to question how we can go beyond the ‘silences’ in key documents such as the African Youth Charter. Without focusing on mind-set change, people who discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation will remain. Beyond the debates around culture, religion and history there are real stories of young and old people suffering untold abuse; we therefore need to find a way to use platforms such as the Charter to ensure the protection of youth across the continent. The AYC should speak for all youths despite their sexual orientation. If there is a single weakness of the Charter it is this selective nature of accepting some and ignoring other human rights.

This problem of a selective application of human rights goes beyond the Charter and must be addressed in other key documents such as the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1986). The African Union should ensure the safety and freedom of all youths despite their sexual orientation. It should work effortlessly to prevent the lynching, imprisonment, ‘corrective’ rape and abuses against those whose sexualities are deemed averse to the norm. This should be based on the fundamental principles of human rights. Such rights must appreciate the divergence of beliefs and views of African people across the continent but protect all against any physical or emotional harm.

Tolerance and respect for difference should be promoted using the African Youth Charter. African youth with alternative sexualities deserve protection from all forms of discrimination. The African Youth Charter must affirm the rights of all young people despite their sexual orientation. When the charter remains silent on sexuality it inadvertently supports the continued persecution of some youth across the continent who are deemed immoral and abnormal. The African Union is a body that represents the aspirations of all African people from different races, ethnicities, genders, classes, sexualities, nationalities, languages and ages. Its youth charter initiative is a noble idea that recognises the importance of young people in Africa. This brief concludes, however, that it has failed to adequately protect sexual rights, which remain a controversial and contested issue across the continent.

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
Youth and Peaceful Elections in Kenya, by Kimani Njogu

Nairobi, Twaweza Communications, 2013.

Reviewed by Sarah Njeri

For a nation to retain a truly inclusive democratic society everyone must be involved in the political process. As has been demonstrated in many African nations however, youth — who constitute a large proportion of the population — have continually been marginalised through cultural practices that produce social and economic policies that do not favour their inclusion in the electoral process and that create their economic disempowerment. This edited volume is an attempt to highlight the challenges, perspectives and efforts of Kenyan youth. In the book, author after author offers a perspective on what needs to be done for the realisation of peaceful elections in Kenya.

The book is divided into three sections: the first looks at the youth presence in the national agenda where the authors address issues of youth policies; the second examines the socio-economic status of youth and the implications of that status in conducting peaceful elections; and the final section looks at the opportunities and challenges that youth face in their efforts to participate in the electoral process.

Kimani Njogu sets out the premise of the book when he describes the role of youth and sets the tone by acknowledging there is a different type of leadership (the ‘third’ type) that is youthful, intercultural and global in its outlook. He optimistically sees youth being nurtured through a collective humanity (also known as ‘utu’) and attributes the concept of ‘transnationality’ of youth as a positive factor, arguing that ‘the youth are not geographically or territorially bound’ (p. 6). He shakily places this optimism within a specific group of youth – the diaspora (ibid) – that can withstand challenging contexts such as pluralistic societies. The way in which Njogu envisages the transformation of youth is through redressing the negative colonial experiences that have continued to prevail, and influencing the political sphere of society today.
including the redistribution of resources that have meant their continual exclusion, not just as part of a group in society but also as groups within marginalised communities. Njogu also argues that there is the need to re-examine some of the negative cultural influences that reduce the possibility of youth undertaking a leadership role.

Each chapter in this section correctly identifies that marginalisation of youth is a problem in Kenya. Wamuyu’s chapter succinctly demonstrates the obvious lack of meaningful involvement of youth in decision-making. This is illustrated in the way in which youth policy and programme implementation processes have proceeded without any efforts to accommodate the views of youth which might effectively mobilise them towards a progressive and comprehensive youth development agenda (p. 45). The chapter identifies the tensions and contradictions of the various National Youth policies and equates the overall impact as small due to the continued huge numbers of unemployed youth and further marginalisation of youth — male and female. Owino addresses the socio economic implications of peaceful elections and comes to a similar conclusion. Marginalisation of youth, he argues, can be redressed by re-engaging them not just through decision-making processes but through economic empowerment by job creation and policies that stimulate fiscal entrepreneurship. Similarly Owino argues that a better engaged youth is one that is better integrated with efforts to tap into their sense of belonging in society and this, the author argues, would ensure that they feel they have a stake in working towards peace in the country. Unfortunately, as Churchill’s chapter notes, though youth constitutes the largest age group in the country, the leadership is yet to come up with innovative ways of tapping into this potentially enterprising group of workers.

Part two is entitled, ‘youth and peaceful elections’, however the authors do not address any aspects of youth within their chapters — something possibly attributable to the fact that this is a collection of conference papers where the presenters have not strictly adhered to the themes requested by the conveners, or the editor of this volume. However, the various authors do explain the different aspects — such as how economic, social and party politics have implications for peaceful elections. Iraki, for example, demonstrates through graphs, tables and figures what needs to be done to improve economically what he entitles ‘economic road to peace’. Here he identifies innovation as a new source of wealth, calls for more investment in science and technology and proposes the need for diversity and more trade. The section on youth is illustrated by a table that compares the demographics of Kenya and Japan to illustrate the economic potential of youth; however, he does not elaborate or explain the figures, which leaves one wondering the value added of the many graphs and figures used in this chapter. For a publication about youth, one feels that quite a number of the authors did not link their discussions to the issue at hand.

The third section somewhat saves the day. Entitled ‘youth, leadership and peacebuilding,’ the authors in each of the chapters engage convincingly on issues such as the role of Kenyans in the diaspora, children of the post colony, and violence. The last chapter addresses the role of youth in trans-local peacebuilding amongst the pastoralist communities in North-western Kenya. On the role of the diaspora, the author Olubayi identifies two groups; those who he describes as being pro a multiracial, multicultural and homogenous Kenya, and the other group that tends to be anti-Kenyan because ‘these groups will support politicians on the basis of ethnicity and no
ideology. It is these diaspora anti-Kenyanists who contributed heavily to the tragedy of post-election violence in 2007/8’ (p. 124). The author does not substantiate this claim, which is rather alarming. This is quite a dangerous position to take in a context in which the aim of the narrative is the need for peaceful solutions. This view also accords too much power and agency to the diaspora and hence perpetuates the perception of diaspora having ‘superior resources in terms of ideas and money’ (p. 124). He rightly concludes that both the pro and anti-Kenyanist diaspora need to be part of the national dialogue on national peace.

The book is well rounded off by Okumu’s chapter on the role of youth in societies that he identifies as being both perpetrators and victims of the vicious cycle of violence. A book of this nature should include the sort of analysis and rich discussion presented by Okumu. However, his view is not entirely convincing — that the emergence of the local youth as major stakeholders in these communities and the facilitation of the peacebuilding process has emanated mainly from interacting with the ‘outside’ world in terms of creating opportunities for higher education (p. 149). My view is based on the knowledge that in most African societies there were inbuilt mechanisms for conflict resolution even before the emergence of an elite society. This is something the author himself alludes to only later in the chapter having already made the contentious observation. The author outlines the processes with which the youth in these communities have engaged to address the challenges they face. He describes the role of the peace caravans; an initiative that was made possible through USAID funding as a means to mitigate the conflict caused by cattle raids amongst these communities. (A similar concept is used in Somaliland with UNDP funding through a community media company). The success of the peace caravans has included peace agreements by elders and other multi stakeholders, and the reopening of markets and trade routes in the vicinity of these communities. These peace caravans are led by the youth as an avenue for peacebuilding.

The chapter by Okumu has achieved what the others failed to do; concretely defining the role of the youth in the peaceful elections in Kenya. However, the limitation of the book is that it is mainly a collection of conference papers that address the issue of youth but in a rather disjointed manner and from different schools of thought. This was a rather ambitious effort to coherently bring together such diverse positions into an edited book. The topics were rather disjointed but each chapter on its own contributes greatly to the understanding of the issues of youth and elections in Kenya.
Democratic Uprising in the New Middle East: Youth, Technology, Human Rights and US Foreign Policy, by Mahmood Monshipouri.


Reviewed by Kenneth Omeje

*Democratic Uprising in the New Middle East* by Mahmood Monshipouri presents a fascinating analysis of how the youth-led mass political protests in the ‘Middle East and North Africa’ (MENA) — popularly known as the Arab Spring — have unravelled all the age-old assumptions, perceptions and discourses about politics in the region, especially the role of the hitherto inconsequential social agents such as youth and women. The common ingredients of these upheavals that started in Tunisia in 2011, the contagion effect of the uprising as it spread through the Arab world, as well as the context-specificity and contrasting elements of the revolt are lucidly analysed by the author. As the largely non-violent and non-ideological revolt cascaded in the MENA region, it extraordinarily impacted the foundation of the region’s autocratic regimes resulting in a montage of regime change in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, while plunging Syria into an explosive civil war and leaving Bahrain in a suspended state of apprehension and ‘topsy turvydom’. The rest of the autocratic regimes in the Arab world are directly or indirectly haunted by an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy.

Monshipouri sets out to elucidate why and how the Arab Spring happened, arguing that ‘significantly missing from the flurry of coverage of the Arab Spring has been a more considered assessment of the role of emotion, solidarity and online activism’ (p. vii). I am however, not personally convinced by the author’s claim that the role of emotion, solidarity and online activism has not been adequately researched and captured in the spate of coverage of the Arab Spring. An avalanche of journalistic, scholarly and policy research accounts have been published in the past three to four years concerning how the romanticism, exuberance, solidarity and social media activism of the youth precipitated and impacted the Arab Spring. Monshipouri’s book cannot therefore sustain its claim of originality on the strength of this disputable assumption.

I do, however, share the well-informed sentiments of Monshipouri that even though the creative activism and organisation skills of the youth have ‘resulted in an unprecedented cascade of falling regimes’ in the MENA region, it is not clear whether these largely non-violent revolts that ‘seek concrete responses to the youth demands
for freedom, dignity, employment and social justice’, and ‘facilitated by the emancipatory potential of a digital world – will prevail over well-entrenched institutions, such as the army, vested interests of privileged classes and traditional Islamist groups’ (p. 1). In fact, all available empirical evidence points to the contrary reality that the youth-led demonstrations and public protests can pull down illegitimate autocratic regimes but are apparently unable to overthrow or revolutionise the vicious undergirding political culture, structures and interests that privilege the political and religious elites. The result of this seemingly unanticipated tendency is the spate of bewildering and convoluted transitions that have followed regime change in the Arab world. The result of this seemingly unanticipated tendency is the spate of bewildering and convoluted transitions that have followed regime change in the Arab world and beyond pondering whether the ‘uprising’ and ‘change’ have been really worthwhile. The young Arabs who spearheaded the revolt, as the author correctly observes, are largely the section of society that have borne the brunt of the dysfunctional educational systems, unemployment, socio-economic deprivation and political disempowerment across a region that has conversely been heavily impacted by fast-moving technological and socio-cultural change unleashed by the forces of globalisation. The plight of these young Arabs is sharply contrasted by the extraordinary opulence of the privileged governing oligarchs and their families, cronies and business associates whose entrenched interests for aggrandisement of power and resources are some of the key drivers of the political status quo. The contradiction between the popular aspiration of the Arab youth for a satisfying modern life and their social conditions of deprivation has never been more palpable. From the standpoint of these young Arabs, anything but their deplorable status quo would offer better opportunities, dignity and hope. It is probably early days to assess the full impact of the Arab Spring but what seems clear at this juncture is that the political and social landscape of the Arab world will never be the same again.

Monshipouri’s book illustrates in one chapter after another how social media and information and communication technologies have unprecedentedly empowered the hitherto disenfranchised young people in the MENA region, and elsewhere around the world, to participate in actively shaping political discourses in their countries and regions. In the Arab world in particular, traditional politics of totalitarian control is giving way to a new politics of ‘freer space for public debate, making it extremely difficult for governments to censor information’ (p. 7). The emerging new politics, argues Monshipouri, has far-reaching consequences for western and US foreign policies towards the MENA region. The US government in particular is faced with one of the greatest strategic dilemma in its foreign policy relations with the MENA states. The traditional support of the US for old autocrats based on the pragmatic philosophy that order and stability should take precedence over democracy and human rights is no longer feasible or sustainable. Supporting democratic transition in itself does not seem to be an easy choice given the fact that democratic elections could ultimately see radical Islamist movements ascend to power through the ballot box, the very nemesis that the US and the entire western governments clearly want to avoid in the region. It therefore seems from all practical indications that the Islamist movements and their terrorist allies are potentially among the greatest beneficiaries of the open society and freedom immanent in the new dispensation. Would the US government and the west under any circumstance lend support to Islamist movements in the unfolding democratic transitions in the MENA region? The issue is intensely debated in many western
capitals, not least in Washington. Given the inevitability of the Islamists ascending to power by democratic means in the aftermath of the Arab Spring as had already been demonstrated in Tunisia and Egypt (prior to the July 2013 military coup led by the current president General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi), the US government could be pleased with a Turkish model in the transitioning states: ‘blending a secular constitution with a pronounced socio-political Islamist identity’ (p. 164). Monshipouri argues that ‘since 9/11 and the US problems in Afghanistan and Iraq, and with the improved position of Iran in the region, the United States has come to view Turkey and its Islamist-rooted party (the Justice and Development Party – AKP) as a counterbalance to Iran, Lebanese Hezbollah, Hamas in Gaza (now a Turkish ally), Saudi-supported Salafists, and al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad’ (ibid).

Generally, Monshipouri has provided us with a well-researched narrative of the Arab Spring, why and how it happened, as well as the strategic dilemmas it presents to US and western foreign policies. Ostensibly, the most innovative contribution of the book is in elucidating how the US and the larger international community (notably the west and the additional veto powers in the UN Security Council – Russia and China) have responded to the revolts, including the practical and difficult foreign policy choices ahead of them in the MENA region. Without doubt, Democratic Uprising in the New Middle East is one of the best researched and comprehensive studies ever published on the Arab Spring and political transition in the MENA region. The book is an invaluable read for all students and practitioners of non-violent revolt, youth activism, techno-politics, political change, foreign policy, and regional security in North Africa and the Middle East.