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PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN SOMALIA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

EDWIN BARASA-MANG'ENI

Abstract

Peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) has gained popularity within contexts that experience instability and armed conflict. This paper examines the Somali context, notably where attempts have been made by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies to apply PCIA in facilitating sustainable development. Exploring the linkage between sustainable development and peace, this discussion examines the plight of minority ethnic groups in Somalia, the related power dynamics within the local socio-political environment, and how this effects wider trends of participation in development. The article argues that with improved application PCIA can be an effective tool for empowering the marginalised and creating opportunities for them to define their own paths towards peace and sustainable development.

Keywords: emancipation, empowerment, participation, marginalisation, sustainable development, conflict, peace

Introduction

Peace and conflict impact assessment (PCIA) is a development methodology born from observation of how humanitarian assistance in conflict settings carries the potential to exacerbate conflict or contribute to peace[1] (Collaborative Learning Projects 2013). Since the late 1990s, development agencies have been much concerned with analysing the possibility of their efforts giving rise to both peace and conflict through PCIA frameworks (Fischer 2003, 3). Today, PCIA is the focus of academic debates related to its conceptual clarity, knowledge gaps and effectiveness (Schmelzle 2005, 2). Both the definition and implementation of PCIA remain contentious among scholars and practitioners alike. Disagreements still exist as to whom PCIA is for, whether there is need for shared and usable criteria and indicators, and to whom projects subject to PCIA should be accountable (Hoffman 2001, 17).

The critical connections between peace and development underlie the argument made here that the *commodification* of peace by external actors is one of the major obstacles to people-led development. The use of available tools and strategies to suit donor interests and state tendencies to manipulate development initiatives to their advantage with little regard for the needs and contributions of benefici-

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aries are identified as some of the manifestations of the *commodification* process. With this in mind, PCIA is considered a methodology that has the potential to ensure that people (and not external actors) are in control of development.

Recognising that PCIA remains contentious, this paper calls for the empowerment of marginalised communities through PCIA and advocates for its continued application in violence-prone societies. The article analyses power and power dynamics within sustainable development, conceptually and in practice, revealing the extent to which development can be exploited to the advantage of certain stakeholders over others. The article further discusses preconditions and approaches for enhancing participation, including empowerment strategies in conflict-affected environments. In particular, it promotes the empowerment of marginalised communities through PCIA strategies that ensure inclusion, emancipation and social dignity.

The article discusses a number of examples of PCIA application in Somalia. These cases present positive though still limited efforts to achieve transformation in a context that has been dominated by expert discourse on peace and development. The study illustrates how powerful actors manipulate societal structures in conflict-affected contexts, thereby determining access to as well as ownership and utilisation of key resources, leading to the exclusion and marginalisation of ethnic communities. The experiences, actions and challenges of development agencies in Somalia, and their overall failure to fully integrate PCIA, have led to little more than marginal development-related gains while exacerbating the marginalisation of ethnic minorities.

In this paper, PCIA is viewed as a means of ensuring that development reflects the priorities and values of local people. It is also a way of ensuring that local people define and design development, and thus the future, in terms that they understand; a factor that both empowers them and promotes sustainability. PCIA provides opportunities through which effects of violent conflict that are detrimental to the marginalised and to the wider population can be mitigated. The conclusion herein is that PCIA can effectively facilitate the empowerment and emancipation of the marginalised, mitigate the overbearing tendencies of the state and development agencies and provide a framework through which sustainable peace can be realised.

The paper is situated within peace and sustainable development literature and draws upon the author's own experience of over two-and-a-half years of working and researching in Somalia — specifically in Bossaso in the Bari region of Puntland, Borama in the Awdal region of Somaliland, and Dollow in the Gedo region of Somalia. The study was pursued with an emic focus. Data were collected through observation, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.[2] Using progressive focusing, data were analysed throughout the data collection process. They were interpreted with sensitivity to the social context of events, as well as to the shared thoughts and actions of interviewees.

Framing the Study

Commodification of development and implications for sustainable peace

Sustainable development is expected to enhance the quality of life of the objects of growth, i.e. people in general (Selassie 2001, 2). In what he frames as a necessary connection between peace, development and human rights, Elliasson (2011, 15) states that

> There is no peace without development; there is no development without peace; and there is no sustainable peace and development without respect for human rights. If one of these three pillars is weak in a nation or a region, the whole structure is weak.

In recent times, donors' capacity and willingness to deal with important human-rights-related development issues such as the empowerment, social exclusion, discrimination, assertiveness and self-organisation of marginalised entities have been questioned by development experts and stakeholders, who are becoming more informed by the day. This is because peace and development have largely been commodified and packaged in Western terms, politicised to favour certain sections of society while obfuscating the real intentions of donor countries. Further, the pursuit of 'coordination' and the principles of ownership and control are contradictions observable in development assistance programmes (Uvin 2012, 7–11).

Diagnostic studies such as conflict assessments are mostly looked at in terms of how donors and development agencies feed into country strategies. Such assessments also serve as mechanisms through which such agencies narrowly measure the success of their own interventions (Slotin 2010, 6). Often, they are not in step with new thinking, and fail to draw upon and make sense of existing and sometimes divergent arguments about the causes and nature of conflict.

The commodification of development can further be observed in existing development discourses, including PCIA debates. Such debates are usually pursued at a level that is out of reach of most community level actors, who, to a large extent determine impact. They are too expert based, mostly dwelling on how better to understand reality rather than focusing on privileging local knowledge in developing practical solutions to developmental challenges. Looked at critically, this represents a form of exclusion and disempowerment, as the tools of control and manipulation are handed to a distant other (Uvin 2002, 16).

Development agencies commonly develop analytic tools, conceptual approaches and technical processes that fail to recognise and incorporate local knowledge in problem definition. The customisation of such tools is incredibly time consuming. Further, such a 'tools mentality' inhibits the development of an analytic culture both within development agencies and in local contexts. There is only limited space for local experts to participate in such ventures. Also, local actors rarely own such processes given the limited space available for alternative thinking based on local experiences. This results in processes that are largely externally owned and driven under the pretext of responding to local developmental needs. Prioritising development assistance in line with state developmental priorities does not necessarily result in popular needs and desires being addressed. States often dominate analytic processes intended to inform development practices, under the guise of consultation. On another front, there is always tension between responding to real-time events and conforming to state and donor timeframes in planning for intervention. In most cases, donor and state priorities supersede those of beneficiaries. In effect, there is limited evidence of that information and knowledge emanating from diverse tools and frameworks meaningfully informs donor policies, strategies and development decisions (Woodrow & Chigas 2009, 1–2). Where this does happen, it is often way out of line with local priorities, leading to largely ineffective development assistance. Furthermore, there

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seems to be limited attention to the question of *who* in actuality controls development and *how* this impacts on peace and conflict.

Economic well-being, improved freedom of choice, social stability and social justice, good governance, and respect for individual and minority rights all seem to be a necessary part of development that supports not only domestic peace but also peace with external entities (Wood 2001, 18). In view of the potential for development to cause conflict, building up state capacities to manage continuing (and accelerating) change, while protecting human rights and preventing violent conflicts, is now seen as both a vital means for and a continuing goal of development (Wood 2001, 20). Nonetheless, there seems to be a disconnect between 'the people's' peace and what is advocated by development actors that more often than not seem to harbour economic and political interests (Illich 1980, 5–7).

Development agencies' hasty proclamation of a positive development impact by must be approached with caution, as it may just be a smokescreen. The claim that societal transformation has taken place must be based on evidence of a connection existing between observed changes and the priorities and engagement of local people. The lasting effect of said changes is what is commonly referred to as 'sustainability'.

Power and power dynamics in sustainable development

Most development interventions maintain 'sustainability' as a desired goal, despite the debates explored above. This is also true for Somalia, where years of conflict have resulted in the destruction of essential infrastructure and social relations. This continues to impact negatively on the ability of communities to adopt traditional resilience mechanisms in the face of adversity and to shape and determine their futures. This is certainly the case in south-central Somalia. One of the critical factors determining sustainability, apart from the availability of resources to drive development, is the participation of individuals and institutions that claim a stake in development interventions. Indeed, most humanitarian organisations maintain that Somalis should be able to sustain themselves once the humanitarian situation eases.

For primary stakeholders, the opportunity to participate in development interventions reflects a recognition of their importance as key contributors to the success of such initiatives. Interventions should generate opportunities for all stakeholders to be part of decision-making processes, able to negotiate their roles in these processes, determining their likely impact and the share of benefits accruing from societal transformation processes. In practice, however, the process of participation in decision-making is determined by varying levels of power amongst stakeholders, concern for procedural compliance by development workers, and competing interests amongst stakeholders. This can result in disillusion and distrust, hence the failure of development interventions (Cheney et al. 2004, 228–229). The feeling that everything has been predetermined reduces the appetite for participation amongst beneficiaries and negatively affects impact. In such situations, most stakeholders view themselves as unequal to others, excluded from the mainstream and having little to contribute.

For all stakeholders to participate effectively in development processes, interventions require built-in mechanisms geared towards empowering those who are considered weak or marginalised. It is only through empowerment that the marginalised can take charge of their lives, through subscription to positive values, actions, goals, policies and objectives that aid human development (Inglis 1997, 5). But in the quest for a people-led development process, empowerment is not the final goal. It is rather a stage that uplifts

the status of individuals to a level where they enjoy the freedom to make choices about their lives, and legitimates means through which their visions of development can be brought into being. The end result is the full emancipation[3] of a people, which is central to the achievement of a sense of security (Booth 1991, 8–9).

Emancipation results from structured empowerment processes involving the critical analysis of power relations and conscious resistance to excesses of power that result in marginalisation. Emancipation becomes a necessary goal in situations where certain sections of society experience marginalisation and oppression. A process of empowerment that seeks and supports emancipation must therefore target forms of oppression that become normative, internalised and taken-for-granted habits, accepted by victims as normal and not deserving rectification (Ratner 2013, 9).

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Power is vested in rules, regulations, discourses and practices that dominate human interaction (Inglis 1997, 4). Such manifestations of power do not have to be formal to be recognised. Indeed, the existence of power is determined by the relationship between two or more entities involved in the struggle for control over ideologies, practices and resources. For instance, the act of dispossessing minorities in Somalia and looking down upon them emanates from age-old practices that have become the norm.[4] Power in this situation is expressed in political structures that favour the clans' military might, population and lineage. This largely determines who has access to, use of and ownership rights to important resources in Somalia.

In stable environments, the question of power and stakeholder participation can be negotiated institutionally, promoting people-led development through empowerment and enhanced participation that guarantees sustainability. This is not easy to achieve in conflict-affected contexts such as Somalia. The effects of protracted conflict in such contexts include the loss of life, displacement, loss of income and assets, and damage to infrastructure. Other effects include cuts in social spending, increased opportunism in economic transactions, capital flight and a legacy of poor policy, all of which conspire to impact negatively on sustainable development (Africa Development Bank 2009).

Protracted conflict creates complex relationships at all levels of society. While attempts are made to resolve conflicts and development-related challenges, those who benefit from prevailing arrangements often resist such attempts. Worse still, inasmuch as development sets out to respond to such challenges, the methods used by development agencies in effect further exacerbate conflict (United States Agency for International Development [USAID] 2007, 3). To a great extent, power dynamics determine who participates and who does not.

Addressing power dynamics in development

Is it, then, possible to pursue and implement sustainable development in such a scenario? In thinking about how to respond to this question and shape interventions in such contexts, Lederach (1997) poses two additional key questions. First, what conceptual frameworks are most useful for dealing with the structural and psychological nature of contemporary conflict? Second, what practical approaches and activities have the greatest potential for moving these conflicts towards peaceful outcomes? The answers may be found in a comprehensive, integrative and strategic approach to the transformation of conflict and promotion of peace in such contexts (Lederach 1997).

Discouraging quick-fix approaches to interventions in conflict-affected contexts, Lederach gives prominence to forms of engagement that recognise the dynamic and long-term nature of conflict. Involving the top level (where hierarchical power and authority rest), the middle level (e.g. academia and civil society organisations) and the grassroots level (e.g. community-based groups and the masses) of leadership is key to achieving sustainable peace. Such an approach is complemented by a 'people-led' coordination of interventions, the dedication of resources and the integration of actions towards the long-term goal of sustainable peace.

For emancipation to fully be realised, there have to be deliberate efforts to challenge the structure and content of processes that claim to deliver societal transformation. This is in order to bring to the fore all aspects of socio-economic or political imbalance and contradiction that contribute to conflict through oppressive power relations. All too often, such power relations are inadequately taken into consideration, if at all, in development interventions. Further, the potential of such interventions to transform power relations is also overlooked or, worse, ill considered.

In Somalia, the state (in its current and contested form) has failed to respond to the needs of its marginalised ethnic minorities, largely because it is dominated by four powerful clans. On the one hand, development interventions taking these minorities into consideration may tilt the balance of power, further threatening what remains of the Somali state. On the other hand, interventions by both local and international agencies have persisted without taking into consideration the plight of the marginalised, thereby perpetuating existing power relations. Indeed, engaging marginalised minority groups may be misconstrued (or recognised) as a challenge to the powers that be.

The situation of relative deprivation and deliberate exclusion is the product of influential individuals, clans and state structures that possess power and use it to manipulate development-related processes to their advantage. Such interventions in essence reinforce the power of dominant clans over minority groups, further reflecting and reinforcing the power of development agencies in determining the ways of the powerful in relation to the marginalised. For instance, in one of the areas inhabited by minority clans in Dollow district, Gedo region in Somalia, technical staff from an international organisation had a difficult time persuading potential beneficiaries at a community meeting to share their thoughts on a cash-for-work project. In what appeared to be a protest, they informed the agency that there was no need for consultations, since the District Commissioner had already shared everything of relevance about them.

Beneficiaries in similar situations often resign themselves to either acts of sabotage or compliance to reap the little they can from projects.[5] Such political exclusion breeds egocentric attitudes that spiral into different levels of conflict, from individuals to groups and institutions (McLean Hilker & Frazer 2009, 11). Were such disempowering tendencies to be recognised by the people, the threat of conflict and the eventual failure of development would become terrifyingly real. A solution then lies in deliberately empowering the marginalised and excluded with a view to emancipating them from an unjust situation.

Where power imbalances and dynamics are evident in development contexts, PCIA has the potential to play a significant corrective role. In recognising the empowering though controversial potential of PCIA, Bush (1998, 9) vouches for the application of PCIA by communities in violence-prone areas like Somalia as a means of assessing the utility, relevance and efficacy of externally driven development initiatives. He further states that PCIA may present an opportunity for stakeholders to engage more effectively with

formal development actors in the peacebuilding process by providing a common framework for dialogue and cooperation (Bush 1998, 9).

Taking an informative critical stand, Leonhardt views PCIA as having limited potential as an empowering tool, especially in emerging conflicts. He attributes this to the fact that conflicts break up communities, leaving little room for people to constructively interact and voice their concerns with and against armed groups (Leonhardt 2003, 64). Additionally, PCIA processes may stretch way beyond their immediate mandate by engaging in overburdening ventures such as empowerment (Schmelzle 2005, 6).

Yet, such thinking is advanced with little appreciation of existing realities in fragile contexts such as Somalia. No war has ever been known to totally erase the opportunity for constructive human interaction. Even in the most destructive armed conflicts, the potential for peace always exists in the form of 'life-lines' that facilitate local-level communication and decision-making, trade and humanitarian assistance. This could serve as a starting point towards negotiations for peace. For instance, despite years of armed conflict, the Xeer[6] system of traditional dispute resolution, although weak in terms of facilitating dialogue among key actors at the national level and across clans in Somalia, has had some success in mitigating community-level disputes that affect livelihoods (Sage 2005, 32–35). Such community-level structures point to potential avenues through which PCIA could be used to support local-level empowerment processes.

The empowering and emancipatory potential of PCIA should be assessed based on its ability to reveal power relations amongst actors, expose existing gaps and present opportunities for utilising these relations (or establishing new ones) to make sustainable development possible. PCIA therefore serves not only to raise questions but also to facilitate means through which answers can be provided. This may be in the form of development agencies redirecting their assistance to the intended beneficiaries after an analysis has revealed the true identity of legitimate beneficiaries, or providing an opportunity for dialogue about the marginalised and disempowered in society. This may end with negotiations on new development strategies. Such strategies may include a joint analysis of the context which will identify specific areas of empowerment, a decision to adopt affirmative action to ensure inclusion of the marginalised, and/or adoption of implementation strategies that guarantee the retention of resources in communities. This may promote better income and employment creation during infrastructure development projects, contrary to the popular procurement systems of development agencies which depend on external contractors and labourers.

In seeking to correct power imbalances and (re)negotiate relations, PCIA ceases to be a minimalistic analytical methodology and starts to influence development processes in ways that contribute to peace.

Bush lends support to this notion when he states that PCIA has to guide development by looking for conflict and peacebuilding impacts, notably by paying attention to stages, types and dynamics of conflict and peace (1998, 25–31).

PCIA as a Tool to Address Marginalised Minorities in Somalia

The case of war-torn Somalia examined here sheds light on the situation of minority ethnic groups and how systemic deprivation has contributed to their subjugation. The study reflects upon PCIA interventions undertaken by development agencies, both local and international, and how they have confronted challenges that the conflict-prone context has brought their way. The section illustrates the limited yet promising efforts by

a number of like-minded agencies in applying PCIA. Opportunities for PCIA to address the marginalisation of ethnic minorities in Somalia are also proposed.

Context

Over three decades of violent conflict has resulted in the disintegration of Somalia into three political authorities based in Puntland, Somaliland and the Mogadishu-based federal government (Cliffe 2005, 5). Somalia is a state contested amongst four major clans, namely Rahanweyn, Dir, Hawiye and Darod. These clans dominate the socio-political and economic spheres in the country. Ethnic minorities in Somalia include Bantu communities, Bajuni, Benadirs, Shebelle, Garamarer and Gabawin. All have different origins and mostly have come together for security purposes. It is estimated that the current total population of such minority groupings stands at 20% of the national total (Waal 1996, 2).

Caught between inter-clan conflict and the contested state, minority groups characteristically experience poverty and lack of political representation. They do not engage in the acquisition of small arms and light weapons as do the major clans that exhibit an appetite for political power. Their condition is made worse by widening disparities occasioned by dispossession, rape, racial discrimination, violent assaults, and evictions from their areas of occupation. Violent conflict, insecurity and the rigidity of community boundaries constrain their own and their livestock's movements. This limits access to markets, water and pasture in times of dire need and negatively impacts on traditional coping strategies. Their livelihoods are at the mercy of dominant clans that subject them to servitude in agricultural plantations and homesteads where they suffer harsh labour conditions. Their access to humanitarian relief supplies, including food, medical services, and livelihood support inputs, is subject to acts of tokenism, often at the whim of their employers or clan leadership.[7]

Ethnic minorities are marginalised in local and national socio-political and economic agendas. Economic marginalisation and political exclusion, mainly based on racial stereotypes built over time, are to date used to create boundaries between clans and ethnic groups. Ignorance and, to some extent, racist attitudes are used to label minority groups, further downgrading their social status over time (Webersik 2004, 524–526). This is replicated at the national level, where the representation of minority groups in governance structures is low. However, it must be noted that the new government has promised to turn over a new leaf and reverse the trend by adopting more inclusive approaches to governance (Federal Republic of Somalia 2013, 22).

In view of the above, an agenda to deliberately empower the marginalised and to challenge the status quo without further fuelling conflict is a key but challenging priority for sustainable peace and development in Somalia. The prevailing situation presents a good example of a context dominated by drivers of conflict that continue to subjugate minority communities to underdevelopment. Given this context, PCIA may be a promising peacebuilding and sustainable development tool given that its application has the potential capacity to unravel power dynamics that fuel exclusion while generating opportunities and strategies that may be employed to transform power relations.

Development organisations in Somalia: limited application of PCIA

Since 2011, PCIA has been applied by some development agencies, though admittedly in limited ways. At the forefront of this application are the Saferworld-Somalia Programme, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO-Somalia), United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF), Care-Somalia and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Somalia. The work of these agencies is informed by analyses that provide insights into the prevailing social, economic and political conditions that either support or act as obstacles to their interventions. For instance, Saferworld undertakes participatory security and conflict analysis as part of its community safety and violence reduction programme. The continuous engagement of beneficiaries and local leaders through joint reflection forums between communities and project staff (most of whom are Somalis) has meant that the findings of such studies have fed into implementation processes. This ensures both a better understanding of the context and conflict-sensitive implementation (Saferworld 2010, 12).

Selected interventions by the FAO in Somalia represent attempts to see PCIA go beyond diagnostics. In its resilience programme, FAO-Somalia has invested in community consultations to identify development priorities. Further, measures put in place to predict conflict through the participatory identification of conflict indicators within the project cycle have greatly enhanced early response to conflict within programmes. The linkages created between communities, the FAO, local administrations and civil society provide a platform for resolving threats to project implementation (Fowler & Kessler 2013, 20–24).

Recognition among development agencies that development interventions need to be increasingly aware of socio-economic dynamics within Somalia has informed the emergence of joint reflection forums[8] involving FAO-Somalia, the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), the Danish Demining Group, PACT and the Danish Refugee Council. Their continued appreciation of the need to further understand the plight of marginalised ethnic minorities, and their status in accessing development and humanitarian aid, remains a priority. Investment in statebuilding in terms of building the capacity of line ministries by offering operational resources, training, supporting strategic development plans and organising study tours are some of the strategies applied. The involvement of local civil society actors as partners in diagnostic studies, including peace and conflict assessments, and in project formulation and implementation has also contributed to capacity-building and empowerment through knowledge and practical skills transfer.

Challenges limiting the effectiveness of development agencies in Somalia

Despite the aforementioned efforts, development agencies in Somalia face profound challenges that constrain their ability to effectively discharge their mandate of working with the marginalised and underprivileged without fuelling conflict. In attempting to do so, they risk working against forces that determine their continued operations and existence in the country.

To date, insecurity remains the greatest challenge to development in Somalia; especially as brought about by the presence of illicit arms in the hands of the populace, and the administration's inability to enforce law and order. The existence of proscribed groups such as Al-Shabaab and clan militias still poses a threat to development efforts and to the future of Somalia (Newroom 2013).

Limited technical capacity among local staff and implementation partners, low levels of transparency and accountability between local and external actors, and difficulties in accessing project information among stakeholders remain critical factors that need to be addressed if any progress is to be realised in sustainable development in Somalia. Difficulties associated with identifying credible partners and evaluating interventions in

security zones continue to pose a challenge to external development actors. Furthermore, external actors have also been accused of a reluctance to cede ground for local actors to take charge of development interventions. Perceived as domineering, these actors and their efforts often contribute to local discontent and eventually project failure.

Frequent changes in governing authorities, from the local administration through to the central government, as well as the patronage of clan leaders and low levels of public confidence in governance structures have left development agencies in a difficult position. They have the unenviable challenge of determining effective ways of engaging with the state without being perceived as biased and corrupt.

Other challenges faced by development agencies are self-inflicted due to their failure to consider PCIA strategies. For instance, in two focus group discussions held during the study, participants cast doubts on the intentions of local and international NGOs, pointing to the tendency of both to commodify peace and development at the local level. Specifically, examples were given where development interventions were used as tools of negotiating and bargaining between NGOs, the state and community-level beneficiaries. Development agencies under threat of expulsion by local authorities for failing to comply with demands for favours would offer to undertake development projects in areas selected by influential individuals in the local administration in order to win their protection.

Furthermore, individuals with political interest have also used their linkages with development agencies to bargain for political power by presenting themselves as capable of utilising these connections to deliver peace and infrastructure development. Cases were also cited where marginalised minority communities were forced to comply with conditions set by the administration, such as vacating land under dispute or expressing public support for policies and decisions associated with certain leaders, before they could access relief supplies.

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Failure to implement projects or to meet development objectives contributes to both local and international NGOs being labelled as spies against proscribed groups or else as emissaries of the US (which appears to be largely viewed as being against Islam, the dominant religion in Somalia). These accusations also come to the fore when development agencies (regardless of the outcome of their projects) are seen to be working closely with sections of society that are strongly linked to major socio-political forces, such as marginalised groups or ethnic minorities.

As a coping strategy, development agencies have resolved that supporting local-level actors and empowering them to confront local realities is the way to go if development interventions are to proceed in Somalia. Joint planning and training sessions outside the immediate context (e.g. in neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia) are popular strategies for enhancing partnerships with local actors. Remote-sensing technologies have also been employed, mostly by UN agencies, both before and after interventions, to track evidence of changes in target areas. By this means, one can generate evidence of inclusion or exclusion of areas occupied primarily by the marginalised communities.

The engagement of local NGOs by their international counterparts is often poorly undertaken. Access to particular areas and the need to justify continued operations often

supersede the recommendations of peace and conflict analyses. This has led to a political economy of interventions that feed into conflict and perpetuate corrupt practices in ways that implicate development agencies (Vaughan-Lee 2012, 7). Where are the real beneficiaries in this picture? Suffice it to say that PCIA ownership by communities, capacity-building for stakeholders in PCIA, and the application of PCIA to giving programmes strategic direction at agency level have yet to take root in Somalia.

PCIA in Somalia: moving forward

PCIA has the potential to facilitate Participatory Processes in which context analysis is undertaken by all stakeholders with a view to identifying not only challenges but also areas of contention that may need advocacy and mediation to ensure equity in the development process, in Somalia and elsewhere. For external actors, the involvement of local stakeholders is important given that the latter need to identify with interventions intended to change their plight. This presents an opportunity for such processes to be subjected to negotiations between development agencies and beneficiaries. It may also mitigate risks such as insecurity that external actors may face.

A partnership between the state, the local administration, local leadership structures (both religious and traditional) and external agencies is critical in the development process in Somalia. However, due to prolonged conflict that continues to impact negatively on both the state and civil society, suspicion and mistrust are rife. This paints a grim and hopeless picture of a situation that may not change soon enough. Indeed, the general socio-political and economic situation, of which marginalised ethnic minorities are a part, will not change for the better immediately.

Such change can only be expected when the state and multiple stakeholders (operating under well-negotiated terms that guide their efforts) elect to engage in a partnership for a considerable period of time. This is because demolishing pillars of conflict and injustice is a complex process that entails changing perceptions and attitudes and investing in local capacities in order to empower and emancipate the weak. PCIA, through participatory engagements, has the potential to pave the way for communities to lead in terms of highlighting challenges encountered and proposing ways of resolving them nonviolently, keeping minority issues at the fore.

Those enjoying elevated powers and benefiting from unjust social arrangements will always be reluctant to change the status quo. Any attempt to shift the balance may exacerbate conflict, leading to further suffering of the marginalised, notably Somalia's ethnic minorities. PCIA efforts must be implemented with care, cultivating processes whereby those wielding political and economic power come to appreciate that empowerment of the marginalised can be a win–win situation for all parties in the long run. In this scenario, PCIA has the capacity to provide sound analysis and gauge the effects of such actions, while setting the stage for the empowerment of minorities by continuously implementing strategies aimed at breaking the vicious cycle of subjugation and domination.

There is already nascent evidence of attempts to incorporate PCIA in the community-oriented work of FAO-Somalia, Saferworld and other agencies in the region, which can be built upon. In Dollow district of Geddo region, concern for the plight of marginalised ethnic minorities has caused increased attention to be given to their situation. Agencies have made deliberate decisions to include them in all development consultations as a first step while lobbying the district administration for their representation in all decision-

making forums. Targeted interventions in micro-enterprise development have helped the marginalised to consider other alternatives while safeguarding existing livelihoods.

Such efforts ensure that marginalised minorities attain a level of economic independence, while civic education on human rights and responsibilities support and prepare them to engage with other communities as equals. The involvement of ethnic minorities in project appraisals, problem-solving forums and dialoguing with wielders of power uplifts their status and gives them the confidence that is required for effective participation.

These efforts have opened the door to possibilities for dealing with grievances that would otherwise result in violent conflict. The idea of PCIA-oriented consultations, and decisions taken at stakeholder level are guiding reflections on the potential for conflict and how to deal with it while exploring ways of enhancing peace through development interventions. It is hoped that a social network will emerge intent on promoting a state–donor–beneficiary relationship that is based on mutual consideration of the roles and needs of each party. The end result may be a development intervention that is under the primary control of local people, hence achieving a sustainable, positive impact that includes emancipation, restoration of dignity and socio-political and economic development.

PCIA has a clear role to play within the process of development, through analysing power relations and putting in place measures to address power imbalances that lead to conflictual relations. Marginalised minorities may benefit from PCIA interventions that provide an arena for dialogue and even challenge power brokers, donors and political administrations in an effort to ensure that space is created for the marginalised to participate in local initiatives. A transformational approach to this process which includes participatory peace and conflict analysis and community introspective dialogue may be useful. Corrective measures such as confidence-building at individual and community level can help in restoring people's dignity. Deliberate inclusion of the marginalised in decision-making structures, structured dialogue with perceived aggressors and joint development programmes between warring communities are some of the measures that could be pursued in an effort to realise peace and development.

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On the part of external development agencies, there is need for a high level of honesty in terms of communicating development objectives and creating space for communities in Somalia to interrogate development strategies and pass judgement on their viability in the local context. Improving community access to information through identification and utilisation of effective channels of communication and simplifying information should be prioritised at every stage within project cycles. In the final analysis, critical steps such as monitoring and evaluation should be well designed to ensure accountability that is multi-directional, not just bottom up.

Conclusion

PCIA's relevance is not limited to conflict-affected environments such as Somalia, but extends also to areas that either have the potential to experience violent conflict or face contention over access, ownership and utilisation of common resources. Development

practice remains largely skewed and works in favour of development agencies that wield great power through financial and technical resources. However, there is great potential to change this tendency by using PCIA as a tool to serve inclusive development and, in particular, to empower marginalised communities in the development process.

Though the commodification of PCIA by interested parties has slowed its progress, its advancement will largely depend on a deliberate decommodification process to pave the way for actors at community level to be viewed as equal partners in development. To serve empowerment aims, PCIA cannot depend on donor-driven frameworks and facilitation; it should evolve and adapt, allowing community-level actors to exercise leadership in determining their destiny. This should, however, not be viewed as a radical move towards disregarding existing tools and frameworks. On the contrary, this paper calls for a dual approach in which beneficiaries, donors, states and development agencies can use jointly developed frameworks for context analysis, design relevant actions to engineer change, support monitoring processes and enhance accountability and reporting.

In closing, it should be noted that the points of convergence for this dual process entail creating common understandings on multiple fronts. Notably, these include shared analysis of context and social dynamics, defining parameters for collaboration, clarifying the roles of each stakeholder and clearly articulating the outcomes and impacts pursued through development interventions. These points of convergence present opportunities for constantly and reflexively interrogating concepts and actions. They will also allow the crafting of a common roadmap for sustainable development, popularising PCIA as a practice through which state, donor, community and individual actors analyse and shape human relations and development intervention. Doing so would promote PCIA as a tool for empowerment, bringing it back to its originally stated purpose.

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Endnotes

[1] As used in this article, 'peace' refers to a state of contentment dominated by strong relations between individuals and groups, in which grievances are negotiated non-violently and resources shared equitably so that individuals and groups have equal opportunities for advancement based on their own level of knowledge, effort, skill and judgement.

[2] A total of three focus group discussions were held in Borama, Dollow and Bossaso. A total of 12 key informants were interviewed, distributed evenly in the three areas.

[3] 'Emancipation' is herein understood to be the process through which people (as individuals and groups) are set free from constraints that prevent them exercising their inalienable rights to determine their destiny.

[4] Key informant in Somalia.

[5] Focus group discussion in Dollow Gedo region, Somalia.

[6] Traditional system of governance and dispute resolution through a council of elders, based in customary law and Islamic sharia law.

[7] Key informants in Bossaso. The same situation of ethnic minorities also featured in focus group discussions in Bossaso and Dollow.

[8] Still in its nascent stage, this forum serves as an opportunity for experience-sharing about PCIA that informs adoption of relevant programme implementation strategies in Somalia.

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