



Security on the move

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Introduction

Following decades of violent conflict and general insecurity in Somalia, large numbers of Somalis have been displaced. Forced displacement, subsequent urban migration and economic changes have contributed to the growth of cities across Somalia since the 1990s. To interrogate the link between urbanisation and (forced) displacement in Somalia, a team of researchers is preparing to undertake a research project entitled *Security on the Move: Everyday Security of IDPs in Rapidly Growing Somali Cities*.

This research project by Durham Global Security Institute (DGSi, UK) is in cooperation with the Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU, Norway), UN-Habitat and the South West Livestock Professional Association (SOWELPA, Somalia). It is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The aim of the project is to research and communicate the experiences and strategies of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and related stakeholders, to organisations and actors that address the multiple vulnerabilities that accompany rapid and war-induced urbanisation processes. The project seeks to contribute to ongoing attempts to promote sustainable city-development in Somalia and to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

On 5 December 2017, the Rift Valley Forum hosted a full-day workshop to facilitate the exchange of knowledge on these issues between the researchers and various stakeholders. In addition, the event sought to foster early cooperation between partners, working to support sustainable

city-development in Somalia and improve the livelihoods of IDPs, and to ensure that the research addresses the relevant knowledge gaps. Participants in attendance were from academic, governmental, non-governmental, donor and humanitarian organisations.

The research project and team

The research project, running for 18 months from September 2017 to March 2019, will focus on migration, urbanisation and security from the perspective of IDPs in Somalia. It will look at the reasons for their flight, as well as the risks and threats they face in their everyday life. The project will collate the experiences of these people as they settle in selected Somali cities and explore the agency and capacity they build to mitigate their vulnerability and improve their conditions.

The four objectives of the research are to:

- Produce insights on the process of *urbanisation* and how these processes impact the security of IDPs.
- Explore the factors that shape *(in)security*: Social, political, economic and environmental (access to resources, infrastructure, services).
- Assess the *strategies* people develop to cope with, and improve their situation.
- *Share knowledge* with organisations that aim at addressing urban vulnerabilities to promote sustainable city-development.

The research will be done in four Somali cities with significant in-migration namely: Mogadishu, Hargeysa, Bosasso and Baidoa. The choice of these cities was based on the large influx of IDPs and how these cities differ (most-difference principle). In addition, the existent IDP corridor (Mogadishu), the relative peace in Somaliland since the late 90s (Hargeysa), a vibrant commercial hub with high

numbers of migrants (Bosasso), and an under-researched city (Baidoa).

The project is organised by Dr Jutta Bakonyi, Dr Kirsti Stuvøy and Dr Peter Chonka. Dr Bakonyi is the Director of the Durham Global Security Institute, Durham University. Her research interests are the causes, actors and dynamics of violence and war, orders of violence beyond the state, state dynamics and international interventions. Dr Stuvøy teaches in the field of international relations and development studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Her research focuses on security theory and practice, state-civil society relations and war economies. Dr Chonka is a postdoctoral researcher at Durham University. His focus is on Somali-language media and the relationship between communications technologies and political or security related change. UN-Habitat has joined this project under DGSi leadership to build the body of knowledge on durable urban solutions and to facilitate practical research on the ground through their presence in Somalia. The research in Somalia is conducted by SOWELPA, under the lead of Abdirahman Edle.

Why security?

During the project presentation, Dr Bakonyi and Dr Stuvøy explained their focus on security. First, security considerations cause migration and shape migration patterns. Security is critical in a person's decision to stay or flee and where to move to. Second, security is neither static nor necessarily permanent. Security is distributed differently among different people and places. It is influenced by power relations and is continuously adapted and negotiated. Third, security does not mean the same thing for everyone. It is defined by the individual migrant's perspective and how they experience it.

Furthermore, the researchers use the ideas of positive and negative security. Adapted from Johan Galtung's concept of positive and negative peace, the project explores security not only in the form of absences (be it the reduction of fear from physical threats, poverty, illness, hunger, environmental degradation) but also in the form of capacities people develop to mitigate against risks and threats. The aim is to develop a nuanced understanding of how IDPs conceive of their own security, gather information, and make decisions

that enhance their personal security, beyond seeking temporary protection.

In order to achieve this, the research will ask the following questions:

- What does security mean to IDPs in Somali cities?
- Which factors shape dynamics of everyday security, and how?
- Which security arrangements do urban IDPs rely on every day?
- How do everyday security arrangements change in the course of migration to the city?
- How do newcomers learn to navigate city spaces to increase their security (city learning)?

Given these important security concerns, the researchers then asked the question: Who are the IDPs? To begin with, they do not want to define IDPs as a unitary group, but as individuals with various characteristics. Moreover, in the Somali context it might be more pertinent to ask, who is *not* an IDP? The researchers were interested in hearing more from the workshop participants on who to target based on factors such as age, gender, clan affiliations, among others.

The research design and methods

The research project has a 3-pillar research strategy. It combines document analysis, interviews and focus groups with a photo-voice methodology, intended to give a voice to people who are usually overlooked or silenced. Through this approach, the research will focus on people affected by displacement and how security considerations have shaped their movement to cities so as to produce new and differentiated insights on urban vulnerabilities.

The three phases of the research will be:

1. *City mapping (December 2017 – April 2018)*: The first phase will generate contextual knowledge on what is already known about the cities and city spaces from various sources such as documents, memos and databases. Interviews will be conducted with IDPs to gather experiential knowledge on their migration history and security, which might or might not be reflective of the document analysis. The

research team will also talk to authorities in local governments and IDP administration.

2. *Photo-Voice (May – August 2018)*: The second phase is aimed at collecting the IDPs' subjective knowledge through photos taken by the IDPs. The research team will hold workshops with the IDPs to explain how they will take photos of their everyday lives so that they can be presented in an exhibition.
3. *Travelling Exhibition (December 2018 – March 2019)*: Assisted by UN-Habitat, the last phase of the research will be a travelling exhibition to communicate the research knowledge. The photographers will present selected photos at exhibitions where different stakeholders will be invited. The exhibition will begin in the four cities then travel to Nairobi, to engage with the partners from this workshop. It will then move to London and Oslo, cities with large migrant communities, to engage in dialogue on what these photos communicate regarding security. An online exhibition is also planned.

Exchange of knowledge: Participant questions and reflections

The second part of the workshop was an interactive session where Dr Bakonyi and Dr Stuvøy responded to questions, and workshop participants also shared their thoughts and gave recommendations on the project. It was moderated by Aude Galli, the Coordinator of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), a coordination and knowledge hub on durable solutions for displacement affected communities. Some of the questions, answers and suggestions from this segment are as follows.

What is the size of your sample?

The research team will select 30 respondents in every city, through interviews, with each city to have about 10 photographers to be chosen from the respective sample group. They anticipate a total of 120 respondents.

How are you defining IDPs? Are they returnees, those who are integrated or those who are not returning home?

The researchers explained that their preference is not to predefine who an IDP is by going into the

research with certain categorisations, which may not be how people see themselves. Rather, the questions are, do people see themselves as IDPs? Do they consider themselves settled in the cities? They acknowledged that it is not easy to define an IDP as many people in Somalia have fled for various reasons with seasonal migration also being an aspect. Such seasonal migrants, for example, do not fit into the classic definition of IDPs. Following this response, the participants could appreciate their holistic approach but suggested having some parameters as a substantial political economy of internal displacement has emerged in Somalia.

To what degree are the researchers focusing on urban environments and the triggers of displacement from home? Will they look at those left behind? What, if any, is the relationship with the place of origin?

The researchers will look at those already in the cities. Through the stories they tell, the researchers will know what their journey has been, links to other family members and their places of origin. In these narratives, they hope to gather information on how many times they have fled and whether they plan to return (emphasising that a plan to 'return' is not necessarily realised). They shall trace the links through the perspective of the IDPs, especially on safety, to understand how the city is made and re-made through the presence of these people.

Why is the research focused on cities only? Is it because of a ready concentration of people or are you looking at other links, networks?

The researchers' focus is on urbanisation, through the lens of space, hence the focus on cities. They are interested in finding out how certain places are viewed and differentiated. They will look at these aspects through those who come and go, like IDPs, their livelihoods and the flow of resources.

On the perceptions of spaces, will this only be through the IDPs or through other networks?

The researchers' understanding of space will be done through spatial analysis, methodologies such as the photo-voice and observations grounded in people's experiences.

Violence-driven displacement is the focus of the research but there is also the climate/environmental-driven displacement which is very important as it is a continuum.

In the research proposal, the link between security, poverty and environment is central, and this overlap is precisely one of the reasons for the project. It is often difficult to pin down the main reason why people have fled and a variety of reasons may overlap or change over time. Did they move because of the environment AND the fighting? Or just the environment? What were the most pressing reasons for the move for them? The researchers hope that they can avoid politicising responses that lead to huge expectations in the respondents.

When conducting interviews, how will you manage the very high expectations linked to such projects where humanitarian assistance is often expected?

Research fatigue is experienced everywhere and is acknowledged as an 'issue' in Somalia. The team plan to be very honest right from the beginning on their academic affiliations and goals so that those who choose to participate in the project are fully aware of the end results. They will continuously monitor the interviews to ensure that ethical standards are met and to evaluate if the questions are still relevant as the research progresses.

There is the issue of wealth creation surrounding IDPs. The IDPs flee genuinely but there are those who make money out of this situation, such as the gatekeepers of the camps. When IDPs are resettled in another area, they tend to return to the camps without having made much of their resettlement due to the resources in these camps.

This observation is considered critical in most conflict settings, not just in Somalia, where some people in conflict profit from it, including from internal displacement. The researchers are interested in generating knowledge on these gatekeepers. They do not have a systematic research question for this, but will reflect further on it.

Is there equal representation within the different groups (clans) in the methodology?

The researchers will not be able to capture all possible clan and sub-clan affiliations due to the complexities of clan relations, but they plan to interview IDPs from different clan groups to shed light on clan related patterns of flight. One of the interesting questions relates to the relationship of IDPs to the majority clan in the city or a particular location in the city. Are they from the same clan group? If not, what form does this relationship take? The researchers noted that people tend to move to places where they have relatives, which is a very important security consideration. It was explained that the value of this research does not lie in gathering a representative view, but in gaining in-depth knowledge of the IDPs and their perspectives. However, factors such as gender, age, clan affiliation will be considered in the selection of interviewees to see how this might affect their experiences. The researchers hope that through the photos they will see certain aspects they had not anticipated or considered. They are very conscious of ethics and ethical considerations (security first, getting consent for publication of photos, avoiding inappropriate and sensationalist photos).

You said the photo-voice is the IDPs' voice but later you call it IDP subjective knowledge?

It was clarified that the use of the term subjective knowledge is to be interpreted within the sociology of knowledge. The term subjective is used to denote that the exhibition wants to focus on individual voices, while the subsequent academic publications aim at providing more general and abstract forms of knowledge that move from the individual story. Subjective does not mean that what the IDPs will show is not true but that it is individual and specific. This specific and individual knowledge is also linked to how people approach security. Consequently, the two parts of the project data generation will bring out which ideas of security are being explained through the IDP stories, similarities and differences and how power relations are made/re-made.

How do you plan to share the research knowledge and how will this influence advocacy on policies?

Results will be produced through interim policy briefs and in the exhibition, which will be shared for use by different stakeholders. As they travel through the cities, the IDPs will also communicate their concerns to a broader policy public in Somalia and abroad, with the hope that the relevant authorities will listen to them. There will also be academic publications (two journal articles).

Group discussions: Methodology, political economy of migration and drivers of conflict

For the research team to also learn from the workshop participants, three themes were agreed on for further group discussions. The participants were encouraged to link the day's reflections to their ongoing work and give any input on the research project with regard to:

- Methodology and categorisations
- Political economy of migration and space
- Drivers of conflict and emerging themes

This session was moderated by Danielle Botti, Coordinator at the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) that aims to improve the management of protection and assistance response to people in mixed migration flows within and beyond the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden or Red Sea in Yemen.

Methodology and categorisations

The first group identified areas the researchers could explore in relation to the project methodology and considerations on definitions that could be useful in framing their project.

- Clan inclusivity/composition
- Definition/identification of IDPs
- Targeting
- Participatory approach
- Photos risk and security
- Contextual/location differences
- Existing studies and approaches

- How will information be fed back?

The group recommended that the researchers look at existing information on clans in each area of study and host-community interactions as local networks are important. Are the IDPs finding family? Is there any role for the diaspora? There is a potential negative connotation with the use of the term IDP that may imply someone does not have family or support. Reflecting on why and how persons choose to identify as IDPs, the group saw it as strategic for getting support from agencies/organisations. The researchers need to see how this positioning influences their research. Could the term 'IDP' be missing the most vulnerable or marginalised? Should the researchers be open to other vulnerable or marginalised people in some areas? Do we need to be thinking of another term that does not exclude the groups affected by poverty? How do different types of IDPs exhibit different coping mechanisms? There is also the issue of pastoralism, whether it is linked to the identity of an IDP or not and how local knowledge influences these identities.

For a participatory approach, the researchers should have a feedback loop where information gets back to the IDPs, not just to foreign entities. On the photos, there should be inclusiveness in terms of gender and even in the selection of photos. The team should give training on the technical process, how to get consent, how to de-link it from registration cards, how to identify topics/photo subjects that could be problematic and how the photos will lead to stories. There was also a suggestion to showcase the oral nature of Somali culture by adding poetry to the photo-voice.

Political economy of migration and space

The second group discussed the political and economic factors that keep IDPs in urban areas. They underscored the importance of clear definitions on who an IDP is as they determine their livelihoods and coping strategies depending on how they identify themselves or who they are incentivised to identify with.

Some of the reasons for IDPs staying in situations of conflict are tied to the humanitarian assistance they can access from gatekeepers/informal systems of management. They are also a resource in terms of cheap labour and attract settlement in certain

areas, which adds value to land. They also link the informal local governance systems to the formal government systems, which can influence a political settlement especially closer to elections of governments. Certain organisations such as UN-Habitat, TANA and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) are working on enhanced governance/accountability on IDP issues.

The group suggested that the researchers do a special mapping on land issues (settlement, value, access, tenure, titling, controls, justice systems) to have a contextualised analysis. They could include questions interrogating these land issues for the information to be compared with other knowledge. As the political economy varies in different places, an important question to ask is, can people transition out of identities tied to loops of humanitarian assistance and security? What can help the move away from these identity-based politics?

Drivers of conflict and emerging themes

The third group listed different drivers of conflict that lead to migration, which could be factors that are relevant to this project.

- Land disputes and limited access to land. Return processes sometimes exacerbate competition over resources.
- Poor infrastructure that prevents people from accessing markets and doing business efficiently. For example, the poor state of roads can mean that milk gets to the market in the late afternoon instead of early morning.
- Road blocks limit movement and market access.
- Taxes are prohibitive.
- Marginalisation and power relations.
- Access to services.
- Drought.
- Gender, Sexual/Gender Based Violence (SGBV).
- Youth unemployment that drives displacement within and without the country.
- Justice systems that often do not deliver, leading some to have more faith in al Shabaab

justice systems on matters such as land (which in turn affects access).

- Identity creation where some people move to 'prove' themselves.
- Jealousy towards the diaspora, seeing relatives/friends enjoying a better life.
- Education opportunities that could be available in another area.
- The socio-economic context of the city of migration.

Other participants also added that the situations people face recur and these influence their decision to move onwards. For example, Bosasso is the main point of departure to Yemen and there are IDPs there. How do they make the decision to move onwards? Other IDPs choose to go to urban areas as most international actors are based there, meaning better access to services. These drivers, decision-making patterns, the security implications for IDPs and how that links to onward migration are aspects participants would be interested to see addressed if the research can elicit more information on them.

Utilisation of the research: Avenues for cooperation and dialogue

Dr Bakonyi and Dr Stuvøy expressed their gratitude to the participants for their insightful feedback. They took note of five key things from the discussions. First, the definitional issue on how to categorise IDPs. On the one hand, a categorisation can be imposed on people but on the other hand, it can be a self-identity used by IDPs to navigate spaces and resources. The researchers will use this duality to see how people see themselves and how the categorisations play a role. Second, land has been noted to be a key issue that they will take into consideration as well. Third, they see the role of the government as important and they will adapt the research to see what impact it has and whether IDPs recognise this role. Fourth, the researchers will see how gender, clan and other factors are related to the economy of migration. Fifth, they will look at spatiality and how spaces are classified: which are considered safe zones and what are the social, psychological and political effects of some of the places the IDPs live in. They will include the suggestion to look at the existing

security arrangements in a city and how the IDPs engage with them, beyond interviewing the IDPs on this, so as not to miss some nuances.

In conclusion, the researchers affirmed their commitment to keep the partners involved by:

- Reviewing the definitions and methodological approach considering the workshop suggestions.
- Sharing information with the participants, starting with the report from this workshop and subsequent research articles/briefs.
- Taking stock with the participants in six months' time and reporting back on Phase 1 results before embarking on the Photo-Voice phase in May 2018. The Rift Valley Forum expressed willingness to host this and any other events sharing information on the different research projects on urbanisation, security and migration. The RVI shall also discuss further with ReDSS on the proposal for a centralised repository on urban migration research.



Credits

This report is based on the record of an event organized by the Rift Valley Forum for the Durham Global Security Institute, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, UN-HABITAT and SOWELPA. The rapporteur was Ndanu Mung'ala.

The Rift Valley Institute works in eastern and central Africa to bring local knowledge to bear on social, political and economic development.

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