REVIEW OF AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY
2023, VOL. 50, NOS. 177–178, 340–354
https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2023.2261256

Climate change, counter-terrorism and capitalist development in Somalia

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ABSTRACT
Somalia is often referred to as a 'failed state'. In addition to ineffective governance, feeble economic development, and a large anti-government insurgency, it faces increasingly severe climate change-induced devastation. This article offers a critical discussion of the role of capitalist interests and ideology as a factor in the climate crisis. It explores interlocking issues of (1) the relationship between the ruling political class of Somalia and capitalist mining interests; (2) the largely covert US-backed 'war on terror' in Somalia; and (3) the ongoing, capitalism-induced climate crisis. The article analyses current US and Somali proposals to address these issues. Many of these proposals remain trapped in the politico-ideological deadlock of capitalist developmentalism, oriented towards fossil fuel extraction and militarised accumulation. The trajectory of this current path in Somalia is leading to immiseration, oppression, displacement for millions of people, and the destruction of an already deteriorating environment. Alternative paths to avert these catastrophes require transnational solidarity, cooperation and assistance.

KEYWORDS
Climate change; Somalia; capitalism in Africa; global war on terror; natural resource extraction; climate reparations

MOTS-CLÉS
Changement climatique ; Somalie ; capitalisme en Afrique ; guerre mondiale contre le terrorisme ; extraction de ressources naturelles ; réparations climatiques

PALAVRAS-CHAVE
Alterações climáticas; Somália; capitalismo em África; guerra global contra o terror; extração de recursos naturais; reparações climáticas

Changement climatique, lutte contre le terrorisme et développement capitaliste en Somalie

RÉSUMÉ
La Somalie est souvent considérée comme un « état failli ». Outre une gouvernance inefficace, un développement économique faible et une insurrection anti gouvernementale de grande envergure, le pays est confronté à une dévastation de plus en plus grave induite par le changement climatique. Cet article propose une analyse critique du rôle des intérêts et de l'idéologie capitalistes en tant que facteurs de la crise climatique. Il explore les questions interdépendantes (1) de la relation entre la classe politique dirigeante de Somalie et les intérêts miniers capitalistes ; (2) de la « guerre contre le terrorisme » en Somalie, largement dissimulée et soutenue par les États-Unis ; et (3) de la crise climatique actuelle induite par le capitalisme. Cet article analyse les propositions actuelles des États-Unis et de la Somalie pour traiter ces questions connexes. Nombre de ces propositions restent coincées dans l'impasse politico-idéologique du développementalisme capitaliste, orienté vers l'extraction des

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combustibles fossiles et l'accumulation militarisée. Cette trajectoire actuelle en Somalie conduit à la paupérisation, à l'oppression, et au déplacement de millions de personnes ainsi qu'à la destruction d'un environnement déjà en voie de détérioration. Les voies alternatives pour éviter ces catastrophes requièrent une solidarité, une coopération et une assistance transnationales.

Alterações climáticas, luta contra o terrorismo e desenvolvimento capitalista na Somália

RESUMO
A Somália é frequentemente referida como um caso de 'estado falhado'. Para além de uma governação ineficaz, de um fraco desenvolvimento económico e de uma grande insurreição antigovernamental, o país enfrenta uma devastação cada vez mais grave induzida pelas alterações climáticas. Este artigo oferece uma discussão crítica sobre o papel dos interesses e ideologia capitalistas como fator na crise climática. Explora questões interligadas de (1) a relação entre a classe política dominante da Somália e os interesses capitalistas da mineração; (2) a 'guerra ao terror' apoiada pelos EUA na Somália, em grande parte encoberta; e (3) a crise climática em curso, induzida pelo capitalismo. Este artigo analisa as atuais propostas dos EUA e da Somália para abordar estas questões relacionadas. Muitas dessas propostas permanecem presas no impasse político-ideológico do desenvolvimentismo capitalista, orientado para a extração de combustíveis fósseis e a acumulação militarizada. A trajetória deste caminho atual na Somália está a desembocar no empobrecimento, na opressão, no deslocamento de milhões de pessoas e na destruição de um ambiente já em deterioração. Caminhos alternativos para evitar estas catástrofes exigem solidariedade, cooperação e assistência transnacionais.

Introduction

In November 2022, at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27), a national statement delivered by the President of Somalia proclaimed: 'we need to ask ourselves why are we here after 26 years? The answer is one and it is climate change and conflict!!' (Mohamud 2022). In a video posted to Twitter, President Mohamud outlined military, economic and ideological issues that would need to be solved together, in order to overcome the surge of political violence and conflict gripping the country (Villa Somalia 2022).

This article aims to conceptualise the interlocking nature of the climate crisis, capitalist developmental measures, and counter-terrorism in Somalia. It analyses Somalia's placement in the web of global capitalism, scrutinising recent attempts and proposals from Somalia and the United States that claim to have solutions to the interwoven issues of climate catastrophe, political violence and socio-economic (under)development. It questions the larger ideological framing within which these policies are being debated and enacted, assesses their prospects for success or failure, and considers what plausible alternatives, if any, may exist.

Methodology, data and framework of analysis

This article follows historical, case-study based methods of social inquiry. It draws upon primary and secondary sources on the past-to-present state of politics in Somalia, including government documents and policy proposals, and proclamations on climate change and terrorism made by public officials. Given the challenges of gathering first-hand data on Somalia, it also draws upon public commentary, news stories and existing scholarly literature.

My framework for analysis is world-scale, critical and relational, looking to understand the association between the macro-structure of our global political economy and ideological system, and how they are locally enacted and/or contested (Mueller 2023). It notes that the socio-economic 'development' achieved in many core capitalist regions of the world-system is only possible due to violent accumulation and dispossession of the 'underdeveloped' and hyper-exploited in the periphery (Rodney 2018 [1972]; Wallerstein 2011). This framework enables us to identify the long-term environmental inequalities that have become engrained in the dominant modes of capitalist accumulation in the world-system, to be discussed in greater detail later (Givens, Huang, and Jorgenson 2019).

Unequal global power relations should not prevent us from identifying compradorial classes in the periphery for their complicity in local exploitative underdevelopment. Instead, it identifies the ways that ruling elites in the periphery may seek to become tightly linked to, or alternatively resist or detach themselves from, circuits of hyper-exploitation in the capitalist world economy (Amin 2014, 2019; Rodney 2018 [1972], ch. 1; Rodney 2022, ch. 14). So, while there is a singular world-system where capitalists seek to accumulate and commodify on a global scale, this 500-year process is wracked with contradictions and antagonisms (Jameson 2012, 2017; Wallerstein 2011). Acknowledging these contradictions allows us to detect continuity and rupture.

Somalia gained its independence in 1960, shedding the yoke of British and Italian colonialism. After less than a decade of democratic independence, a 1969 military coup led by Mohamed Siad Barre initiated a period of single-party rule, under the auspices of 'scientific socialism'. Authoritarian policies and some practice (e.g. extensive nationalisation) were accompanied by an unsuccessful drive to create a Greater Somalia (Elmi 2010). This led to war with Ethiopia, withdrawal of Soviet support, and economic collapse. After a brief period of receiving aid from the US, Barre was finally ejected in another coup in 1991. Since then, the Somali state has struggled to rebuild in a democratic fashion, while US influence and intervention have become embedded, though in a context of underdevelopment, hyper-exploitation and degrees of unequal exchange (Elmi 2010; Mueller 2023).

It is in this context that the status of 'failed statehood' and 'bad governance' can be invoked by capitalist states to justify interventions in the periphery, to set up friendly regimes and new sites of extraction (Jones 2008). Accordingly, what may initially appear as an aberrant or extreme case (of 'state failure') may be a concrete manifestation of all the symptoms of decay within our world-system; what Žižek (2009) calls a *concrete universal*.

One such symptom is the global climate crisis. The next section identifies the unique way that events unfolding in Somalia are related to political, economic, military and environmental initiatives of the US government and its extractive industries.

Climate catastrophe and counter-terrorism: Somalia, the United States, and the structure of the world-system

Greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change, and 'greenhouse gases from human activities are the most significant driver of observed climate change since the mid-20th century' (EPA 2022). However, not all humans are contributing to this harm on the same scale. Through various economic, ideological, political and militarised modes of coercion, wealthy/core countries can reproduce world-systemic arrangements that outsource and distribute environmental harms to the periphery (Givens, Huang, and Jorgenson 2019; Táíwò 2022). As a political-economic hegemon, US political decisions reverberate on a world scale. Therefore, any study on the impacts of climate change *within* Somalia must be tied to an analysis of drivers of climate change originating from actors *outside of* Somalia.

The Somali government estimates that less than 0.03% of total greenhouse gas emissions in the world derive from the country (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 5). In contrast, since 1850, the US has been the largest emitter of CO_2, and its fossil-fuel drenched mode of accumulation has wrought havoc on the ecological fabric of the world-system (Evans 2021). Research shows that the issues of climate change and the US 'global war on terror' (henceforth referred to as the GWOT) are related. The GWOT not only harms local environments, but also 'the U.S. Department of Defense is the largest institutional consumer of fossil fuels in the world and a key contributor to climate change', responsible for emitting at least 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases since the onset of the wars in 2001 (Costs of War 2019).

Over recent decades, severe climate events have increased in frequency. The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) produces a vulnerability ranking, 'measur[ing] a country's exposure, sensitivity and ability to adapt to the negative impact of climate change' across a variety of metrics (ND-GAIN 2023). According to the ND-GAIN, Somalia holds the second-worst position in the world, ranked 181 out of 182, in terms of being vulnerable to the economic impact of climate change. A recent appraisal of Somalia's economy shows that livestock and agricultural production make up approximately 70% of its annual GDP (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021). The country recently experienced some of its most intense droughts of the past 40 years and multiple failed rainy seasons have put millions at risk of starvation (McVeigh 2022; UNICEF 2022).

The Somali government acknowledges the need to spend billions of dollars in the coming decade to enact water-related policy initiatives, dealing with proper resource management, food security, public health, and more (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 9–10). Water infrastructure has been wrecked by decades of war and is on life support via numerous public–private partnerships (PPPs). The sustainability of these projects is questionable, and one evaluation found that 'the levels of transparency, cooperation and coordination are missing, which increases the risk of overlapping and

corruption' (Mourad 2023, 1340). The push for PPPs in the era of neoliberal capitalism is common, and often unfolds in the periphery in the following manner:

> private sector firms approach local governments and their impoverished communities with the message of power sharing, but once the process is in motion the interests of the community are often overwhelmed by those of the most powerful member of the partnership – the private sector firms. (Miraftab 2004, 89; see also Su 2023)

The push for private-sector development – and other one-sided partnerships – need not be the only option for Somalia, as will be discussed later.

The intensifying impacts of climate change in Somalia are leading to internal displacement, as people's livelihoods are destroyed due to floods and droughts. This lends itself to increased conflict over limited access to natural resources, further exacerbating the interlocking issues of climate catastrophe, social unrest and inequality (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 2022). These issues have the potential to render significant suffering across the country as 'groups increasingly struggle to find adequate water and pasture … [while] the loss of climate-dependent livelihoods, particularly among young people, increases the risks of violence as unemployed and poor youth are lured to armed militia groups' (Federal Republic of Somalia 2022, 30). These armed militia groups, and the insurgency that has gripped Somalia for two decades, have a clear and negative social and environmental impact.

The al-Shabaab (Arabic: 'the youth') insurgency grew into the force they are today as a result of the US-backed Ethiopian military invasion of Somalia in 2006, the prolonged presence of African Union soldiers, and a Kenyan military invasion – during a period of intense drought – in 2011, among other interventions (Mueller 2018, 2023). For the past decade the US has conducted largely covert missions and killings in Somalia, while simultaneously training the Somali security forces. This has not prevented al-Shabaab from capturing large swathes of the country, often commanding more administrative legitimacy than the Somali government. Providing help to communities seeking aid during climate-related emergencies has been difficult for the past two decades, due to many of the regions being at least partially controlled by al-Shabaab insurgents.

Historically, al-Shabaab were wary of allowing foreign aid workers into regions they controlled, considering them suspicious and possibly affiliated with unfriendly foreign forces (Jackson and Aynte 2013; Rashid and Brandvold 2022). Islamist militants are deeply embedded within communities across the country precisely because the insurgency is indigenous to the region. In other words, it is composed primarily of Somalis, from the very communities that also suffer from environmental degradation, abuses from foreign forces, and unsatisfactory policies implemented by their federal government. Contradictory alliances emerge. Al-Shabaab insurgents, state militias and foreign interventionist forces have all been involved in the illicit charcoal trade. Charcoal production leads to deforestation and environmental degradation, and its continued export funds a perpetual cycle of political violence while 'exacerbating the local impacts of climate change' (Climate Diplomacy 2023; Mueller 2018, 129).

These points illustrate a complex relationship between social, political and climate-related issues in Somalia. They also show how the military-first approach to countering terrorism has failed to address the root causes of these issues. Despite the decades-long, global-to-local wars on terrorism waged by US, Somali and allied security forces, this

approach has not prevented political violence. For more than a decade the US and Somali militaries have boasted of killing militants, taking back territory, and waging a war of annihilation against al-Shabaab (BBC News 2012; Faruk 2023; Reuters 2023). In early 2023, a 'Somalia/Frontline States Summit' of representatives from Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti visited Somalia to strategise ways to find military solutions to the al-Shabaab conflict, once again touting recent military 'progress' made against the group (defenceWeb 2023).

Despite the bluster and proclamations of victory by government forces, little seems to have changed. President Mohamud's (2022) trumpeting of 'newly liberated territories and defeated terrorists' rings as hollow as the prior 15 years of counter-terrorism operations in Somalia, as the territories 'liberated' from an insurgency can swap back into the hands of those same insurgents within a matter of days, as the underlying conditions that generate an insurgency remain unaddressed. The recent 'US–Africa Leader Summit' was more ceremony that substance in terms of finding new ways to address issues of human security, with the same old neo-colonial approach towards African leadership and security manifested in Washington, DC (Al-Bulushi 2023). None of this deters the insurgency, and as Abdisamad (2023) has commented, 'al-Shabaab is more confident than they have been in the past, and they have every reason to be optimistic that they can survive' in the current political climate.

The US and Somali governments, regional military forces and al-Shabaab militants are deadlocked. State and non-state violence continues unabated, and there is little reason to believe that the regions that severe climate events have the greatest impact on will get the relief they need when the next flood, drought or famine occurs.

Resource extraction and the allure of capitalist developmentalism

Why has Somalia pursued the path outlined in the prior section? Answering this question requires us to analyse Somalia's location within the stratified world-system and its attempts at achieving development in 'modernisation' mode. The push to explore and export large quantities of fossil fuels (e.g. oil) is directly tied to the question of its political and economic planning.

Fossil fuels have played a major role in the development and expansion of capitalism as a world-historical mode of production. Capitalist firms and states now use them as a form of 'cheap nature' – as a global energy source, a means to accumulate and/or rent seek, and more, all in the face of overwhelming evidence that demonstrates their connection to global warming and climate change (Ortiz 2020; see also Evans 2021; EPA 2022). The knowledge that fossil-fuel driven capitalist development produces negative outcomes for humans and non-humans alike has not stopped the relentless pursuit to extract, and 'capital's own structural requirement of cheap energy makes it incapable of reducing carbon emissions or confronting the effects of climate change' (Ortiz 2020, 235–6).

As the Somali state collapsed in the early 1990s, 'the oil factor in Somalia' was a central question for US mining interests in the region (Fineman 1993). According to Fineman (1993), approximately two-thirds of Somalia was carved up and allocated to four major US oil corporations in the years prior to state collapse: Chevron, Amoco, Conoco and Phillips. Successful extraction in subsequent decades has been challenging, due to the civil war, insurgency and political instability in Somalia. Since the onset of the

GWOT the US has significantly expanded its presence in Africa, and major corporations remain very interested in extracting oil in the Horn of Africa (Anderson and Browne 2011; Turse 2015). Over the past several years, the Somali government and transnational mining capital interests have once again sought to turn Somalia into a site of drilling and exploration. Headlines declaring 'Somalia can overcome legacy of poverty through petroleum development' appear simultaneously with others stating that 'the US is ramping up its presence in Somalia', as US company Coastline Exploration takes an interest in the region (Schmidt 2022; Mohamed 2022).

Energy market analysts placed Somalia among the 'top five emerging hydrocarbon markets in Africa in 2022', calling it 'an attractive and competitive hydrocarbon exploration destination' (Energy Capital & Power 2022). One commentary suggested Somalia is 'one of the final frontiers for global oil and gas development', while noting that Coastline Exploration spent US$7 million to acquire seven blocks of offshore territory, in the hopes of drilling by 2025 (Mitchell 2023). Meanwhile, the northern breakaway region of Somaliland continues to seek independence from Somalia, and the oil factor looms large, as the questions of foreign capital investment and to whom the profits will accrue remain uncertain and unresolved (Kulkarni 2023; Walls 2023). Abdisamad (2023) highlights how Somalia is forging a path ahead and looking to strike deals with US oil companies, despite 'the country lack[ing] a legal framework to protect its own interests'.

Calls for domestic and external military excursions, to squash violence and allow for the smooth functioning of capital, have been routine during the GWOT era, where the US and allied interests can invoke fears of 'Islamic terrorism' as a justification for intrusion. Despite the disastrous record of the past two decades, capitalists in the US, Somalia and elsewhere have shown no intention of halting their plans for militarised problem-solving and environmental destruction. A February 2023 report in *The New York Times* outlined that the US 'campaign in the Horn of Africa is now the most active element in the "forever wars" the United States has waged since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks' (Schmitt 2023). After a dozen years of the Kenya–Somalia border being closed due to al-Shabaab activity, the May 2023 proclamation of a border reopening brought the question of natural resource extraction back into the picture. There is contested terrain off the coast of the Somalia–Kenya border that both governments suspect contains oil and gas reserves (France 24 2023a). Security issues remain a concern for companies hoping to extract in and near Somalia, as offshore oil operations require transporting materials through docks and ports in areas potentially controlled by al-Shabaab (Mitchell 2023).

There is little evidence that this form of capitalist-developmentalism is benefiting the people of Somalia in a manner to produce social, political, economic and ecological flourishing. Recent elections in Somalia were contentious, featuring a familiar cast of compradorial elites shuffling through the revolving doors of power. Accusations of corruption and electoral malpractice come from all directions (Ali 2022; Tobin 2022). The current approach of political elites in Somalia simultaneously deprives much of the population of genuine political involvement and voice, while stoking ethnic and territorial animosities (Samatar 2020). One of the few issues that produces political consensus is the continued desire to seek US-backed solutions in the region.

One way to avoid this troubling reality from becoming a longer-term trajectory is suggested by Bond's analysis of climate change and capitalist underdevelopment

in Mozambique. Asking whether climate reparations are in order, he considers whether perhaps:

> funding [could] be made available to replace Mozambique's fossil-fuel economic strategy with one based on meeting needs, i.e., to leave gas (and coal) unexploited, and to instead channel funding towards a Just Transition based on mitigating climate crisis, adapting to further extreme weather, and compensating for cyclone- or drought-caused loss and damage? (Bond 2021)

Agreement on a plan to provide reparations would have to be at a transnational scale, as the world economy was built via violent colonial-capitalist expulsions and ecological unequal exchange, creating powerful counter-interests. Somalia has been on the losing end of (largely covert) US imperial violence for the last three decades (Mueller 2023). The task of wrestling reparations from core capitalist powers is no small order, and requires us to think of other social forces that are working towards building a socially just Somalia.

Is there an alternative?

The path towards eco-social justice in Somalia is a fraught with challenges. One argument is to delink from the chains of global capitalism, not via autarky and isolationism, but to achieve a real:

> rupture with the capitalist law of value … taking local knowledges as the base for a new development from below, appropriately informed by modern science … as a method of investigation and experiment rather than one necessarily bound within the straightjacket of capitalist techno-logic. (Ajl 2021, 26; see also Amin 1987)

This is a revolutionary goal, but with many obstacles to its achievement.

Looking to alternative forces, there is a recent history of labour, youth and feminist movements in Somalia, mobilising against al-Shabaab, and in favour of social justice (Mueller 2020). The Somali Greenpeace Association (2023) was recently formed, with a mission 'to develop and promote pro-poor development and equity based positions … tackling climate change, environmental problems, food security and empowering youth'. It works with Somalis to teach about theories and lived realities related to the drivers of climate change, and was recently invited to speak at the International Labour Organization. The Somali Greenpeace Association's co-founder, Hassan Yasin, stated that 'we need a full compensation of loss and damages caused by climate change' (quoted in Planetary Security Initiative 2022). Data does not yet allow us to assess the reach of such movements beyond urban and class limitations, but it may be a development to be built on.

The Somali government has also committed to reducing their already minimal greenhouse gas emissions, developing solar and wind energy sectors, and planning reforestation initiatives across the country (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 5–6). In 2022, Khadija Mohamed al-Makhzoumi was appointed to lead the government's newly formed Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. She immediately highlighted how people around the world – and in Somalia – are prone to view social problems in the area as 'conflict' related, instead of focusing on the actual climate emergency in the country (Gikandi 2022).

For these initiatives to have a major impact would require sustained radical demands for structural changes to the political and economic policies implemented within the Somali state, and outside support from African and international partners. An alternative solidarity for the twenty-first century might mean an 'ecologically sustainable mobilisation of domestic/regional/continental resources' to promote development across Africa, without perpetual debt bondage (Sylla 2022, 15). The Dakar Declaration of 2022 offers such a blueprint for inspiration. This platform, written by scholars and activists, identifies the need for multilateral, democratic cooperation that completely rejects neo-colonial logics of domination, exploitation and debt. It rejects capitalist developmentalism as a means towards upward mobility in the stratified world economy, asserting that 'Africa's adverse incorporation into the capitalist order is the problem. We are integral to the system which could not thrive without our exploitation' (The African Economic and Monetary Sovereignty Initiative 2022).

A new vision of cooperation across the Horn of Africa, or the historical vision of Pan-Africanism at large, can hardly be compared to the actual modes of cooperation between Somalia and regional political and military forces over the past two decades, which have been marked by conflict and territorial contestation. With that said, we should not place the brunt of blame and burden of solving the climate crisis on Somalia and its neighbours. Given the historical choices made by capitalists in powerful sectors of the world-system who created the climate crisis in the first place, the chance of a fledgling ministry in Somalia having adequate resources to tackles these issues is hard to envision. Under the best of circumstances, the ministry would need resounding endorsement and support from the majority of the Somali population, which would need to link issues of climate security and human security directly to issues of economic security.

It would also require a significant amount of short-, medium- and long-term investment. Recent appraisals from the Somali government estimate that a minimum of tens of billions will be needed in the next decade to address climate change (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021). The government's recently developed National Adaptation Plan offers some hope for building international, national and local connections to address key climate issues and their relationship to conflict and development. However, they note something important when acknowledging that their 'government structures are severely hindered by the lack of financial and human resources to implement adaptation actions' (Federal Republic of Somalia 2022, 34). Olúfẹmi O. Táíwò has insisted that reparations during an age of climate catastrophe are vital, especially for people in the periphery. Simply put, 'adaptive measures to make their food systems, energy systems, and housing physically and institutionally resilient to climate-based disasters … are going to require huge amounts of funding' (McCarthy and Táíwò 2022).

Once again, the intersection of climate change and the US GWOT in Somalia comes into analytic view. Although identifying the precise amount the US spends on its counter-terrorism operations in Somalia is challenging, a recent appraisal from Ṣóyẹmí (2023) found that the US has spent at least US$2.5 billion on peace and security activities since 2007. Furthermore, this estimate 'excludes spending on U.S. military or intelligence operations in Somalia', and primarily accounts for spending by the US Department of State (Ṣóyẹmí 2023, 1). The public has no idea how much the US intelligence community spends on their war efforts in Somalia, which allows the US government to remain unaccountable for its covert activities (Mueller 2023). Billions of

dollars could easily be rerouted towards initiatives to mitigate climate catastrophe. This requires acknowledgement that large-scale initiatives are a worthy endeavour, not to be feared in the era of neoliberal downsizing of government planning. Many people in Somalia are working towards building an equitable and sustainable future, and these efforts could be augmented with a dose of solidarity and financial assistance from others in the world-system, which could also be a tangible form of 'democracy promotion' – if that term is to have any meaning whatsoever.

One path being pushed by the Somali government is to 'focus strategic efforts and engagements with [the] private sector' as the path towards 'a more resilient and green Somalia' (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 12; see also Federal Republic of Somalia 2022, 34, 39). It also shows interest in the exploration of fossil fuels: current planning and forecasting for climate change in Somalia openly acknowledges 'that Somalia could exploit its massive untapped fossil fuels reserves (particularly oil and gas)' (Federal Republic of Somalia 2021, 7). Rather than focusing on cultivating private sector growth, PPPs and oil-driven development, an alternative option may exist; but this alternative requires a federal government that has popular support and trust in the relevant affected communities.

With broad popular support, a government-sponsored initiative with robust financial and technological investment and assistance from the US (and perhaps others) – without the historically harmful IMF-style strings attached – could bring the possibility of a Somali 'Green New Deal'. This could certainly include greater investment in cleaner energy, and in no way requires private enterprise to act as the best bet to problem-solve. It should allow local communities to have democratic input in crafting environmentally sound opportunities for social and economic growth that do not prioritise extraction and narrow definitions of 'development' to define their future. It would go a long way towards rebuilding the broken links of trust between the Somali people and their government (Samatar and Samatar 2022).

A decade ago, Samir Amin (2014) identified Africa as facing large-scale 'Fourth worldization' under the current coordinates of global capitalism. Somalia is a prime candidate for such designation, given its position on the ultra-fringe of the periphery. The vision to align development and climate policies with fossil fuel extraction will surely continue limiting 'the exercise of power to a comprador state and class of profiteers' in Somalia (Amin 2019). This can be seen elsewhere in the periphery, where the prioritisation of integration into the circuits of extraction fails to deliver social gains, except for those with their hands on the levers of political and economic power.

An alternative political vision is currently being proposed. In May 2023, the Somali government announced that it is moving away from its existing clan-based, indirect political-electoral system to a one-person, one-vote system (France 24 2023b). This opens a new window for struggles to expand democracy in Somalia.

Conclusion

It is worth reiterating the value of analysing the climate crisis, forms of capitalist accumulation, and the 'war on terror' in a global and relational manner. The US position as the hegemon of the world-system has been unstable for decades. One method of (re)exerting its strength on a world scale has been to initiate interventions in the post-Cold War era,

with the GWOT expanding the scope of its militarised ambitions. The GWOT has been a catastrophe, and two decades of US-initiated/supported counter-terrorism operations in Somalia have failed to reduce violence.

This all takes place within a world economy built on the destruction of the environment, for the sake of capitalist accumulation – often enforced via the barrel of a gun. Simply put, 'national militaries help secure access to fossil fuels and other resources, and generally attempt to maintain geopolitical and world-economic stability, which enables carbon-intensive economic growth' (Jorgenson et al. 2023, 17). The ambitions of the US have caused significant damage to the environment, and its interests in Somalia remain closely tied to securing capacities to extract natural resources.

The Somali government's decision to form counter-terrorism and socio-economic developmental policies in lockstep with the interests of the US and fossil-fuel capital appears to be a death sentence for human and non-human life in the region. If 'U.S. military training in Somalia makes the potential for conflict inevitable' (Ṣóyẹmí 2023, 15), and 'planet-heating pollution caused by burning fossil fuels has made the [Horn of Africa's] ongoing agricultural drought 100 times more likely' to happen (Paddison 2023), then immediate and drastic policy changes are needed. The current path is unsustainable.

Given the prior 30 years of immiseration in Somalia, the allure of capitalist developmentalism is understandable. There are mixed feelings and results regarding Somalia's earlier period of state-planned 'scientific socialism', and the promise of 'catching up' in the world-system via 'modernisation' has been pushed by capitalist institutions for some time. Alternatively, if one questions the logic of militarised accumulation being pursued by US and Somali forces, they are likely to be accused of wanting Somalia to stay a 'failed state', or get labelled a 'terrorist sympathiser'. After all, the most visible forces resisting the US–Somali security forces are al-Shabaab.

Favouring capitalist developmentalism via fossil fuel extraction, or siding with the al-Shabaab militants in their reactionary battle with the US and Somali governments, will still lead to disaster. Both options lead to a dead end because they avoid asking the structural question: how did we end up in this predicament in the first place? To acknowledge this is to acknowledge the parallactic nature of violence in the world-system (Žižek 2008, 2009). That is to say, the 'subjective' outbreaks of violence from militant insurgencies are dialectically tied to the 'objective' violence baked into the structure of the world-system and its mode of production. This suffering in Somalia is a product of a social system – the capitalist world-system – that produces the interlocking issues of political violence, economic immiseration, and environmental degradation.

The account of contemporary Somalia provided in this article may seem pessimistic, and other analysts share such pessimism. In 2021, Hills offered a prediction on how the subsequent five years would unfold, concluding that:

> the factors influencing the calculations and behaviour of Somalia's powerbrokers and security groups will be much the same. There is little point in searching for faint patterns or explanations on the edge of observability as these will remain too insignificant to change the status quo perceptibly. (Hills 2021, 300)

Despite the possibility of prolonged immiseration in Somalia, we should aim to detect *possibilities* for change and rupture within the status quo. Any dialectical analysis must

simultaneously grapple with the destructive aspects of the object under investigation, while making an effort to locate sites from which we can harness existing energies and social forces to overcome antagonisms.

Perhaps kernels of social change can be harnessed within existing state apparatuses in Somalia, assisted by forces on the ground already pushing the state to do so. This process could be significantly assisted if core regions of the world-system offered climate reparations, providing a dose of funding and technology to offset the disastrous predicament for which they are largely responsible – the climate catastrophe. Without systemic changes, one new ministry dealing with climate change, or one new policy initiative will likely mean little in terms of substantive outcomes.

A report released in March 2023 found that at least 43,000 Somalis died because of the prior year's intense drought; an indicator of a climate catastrophe in the Horn of Africa that is already having an impact on millions of people (Anna 2023; Paddison 2023). One thing is certain: the catastrophe is not around the corner; it is already here.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks the reviewers and editors for the substantial and encouraging feedback they offered during the peer review process.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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