The Migration-Development Nexus in Somaliland: Critical Voices from the Somali Diaspora

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Abstract

International development agencies have recently started to mobilise the Somali diaspora for state-building programmes. Somali diaspora experts and government officials are critical of state-building programmes run by UN agencies. By relaying critical voices from Somali diaspora experts involved in state-building programmes in Somaliland, this article looks at the emergence of the idea of migration for development. After reviewing recent critical works by transnational migration scholars, this article also draws on the work of African diaspora scholars. The latter have critiqued the mobilisation of the African diaspora as a way to serve only the Millenium Development's Goals, yet failing to empower the African state (Clark, 2010; Zeleza, 2010). The article discusses how Somali diaspora experts are mobilised by international organisations in development and state-building programmes in Somaliland, and yet excluded from decision-making processes involved in those programmes. Despite the exclusion of Somali government officials and diaspora experts from the design of programmes run by UN agencies, the Somali diaspora and some local officials have been particularly active in creating the economic and political foundations that have enabled a re-emergence of the state in Somaliland and Somalia.

Keywords: Decision-making, diaspora expert, migrant, QUESTS-MIDA.

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Somali diaspora is increasingly described by international actors and scholars of development as a potential instrument of "institution-building," "peace-keeping," "post-conflict reconstruction," and "economic development" (Gundel, 2002; Sorensen-Nyberg, 2004; Lindley, 2009).

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Although numbers are not certain, the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) reported that there are over one million Somalis living in diaspora (UNDP, 2009), constituting about 14 percent of the overall Somali population. The largest diasporic population resides in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, followed by the Gulf States, Western Europe, and North America. More recently, Malaysia and Australia have also become increasingly popular destinations for this diaspora. Somalis living outside Somalia have been described as an "active element in the equation of state-building and the restructuring of the political system" in Somaliland (UNDP, 2009). To confirm this, in 2011-2012, ten out of twenty-nine of Somaliland's government ministers were returnees from the diaspora, many of whom have dual citizenship and continue to maintain transnational connections or even live in two countries. Similar patterns have long been noted in Puntland and are becoming increasingly apparent within the government in Mogadishu. The Somali diaspora has also been particularly involved in development and service delivery, as well as in the creation of business networks with neighbouring countries and the Gulf countries. International development reports stress that the main contributions of the diaspora in Somalia are remittances and financial resources. In fact, as much as 80 percent of total investments funding new small and medium sized enterprises within the country come from the diaspora (UNDP, 2009).

It is therefore important to understand the key role played by diasporic Somalis, together with local Somalis, in relation to the ongoing processes of state-building and national development in Somalia. Recently, Somali diaspora experts have been recruited by international development agencies, such as UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to participate in capacity-building programmes within state institutions in Somaliland (a self-declared independent state, not recognised by the UN, since 1991, in the Northwestern region of former Somalia), Puntland (a federal state since 1998, in the North East region of former Somalia), and south Somalia. This article presents some interviews with Somali diaspora experts who participated in a programme called Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) in Hargeysa, Somaliland. The programme is managed by IOM across different African states and supports different development programmes sponsoring the direct involvement of the African diaspora in their home country. In Somalia, IOM deployed MIDA in partnerships with different other international organisations, local and foreign governments and

diaspora associations. In partnership with UNDP, IOM developed a programme called Qualified Expatriate Somali Technical Support (QUESTS)-MIDA[1], designed to employ experts with a Somali background to support capacity-building programmes in Somali institutions.

Over the last twenty years, policy analyses and reports have featured and identified migration and diaspora populations as a seemingly unlimited resource for national development. This enthusiasm about the beneficial impact of migration for development policies, which has been ongoing since the 1990s, has been put into perspective and critically examined by scholars of transnational migration, human geography and the African diaspora. This article follows anthropologist and African diaspora scholar Kamari Clarke's suggestion to understand new forms of exclusion in the African world that are embedded in the current humanitarian mobilisation of the African diaspora in development projects. It presents some critical voices of Somali diaspora experts recruited by QUESTS-MIDA and discusses how they were mobilised by international organisations, but excluded from political and decision-making processes. Despite being excluded from the design of programmes run by UN agencies, the Somali diaspora and some local officials have been particularly active in creating the economic and political foundations that have enabled a re-emergence of the state in Somaliland.

The Ultimate Migration-Development Nexus and Its Recent Criticisms

This interest in the Somali diaspora is part of a current, dominant view in international development policy that sees migrants and diaspora as agents of and contributors to development. Yet, it is only recently that migration and diaspora have been perceived as resources for national development in migrants' countries of origin. According to some analyses, a shift in international development policy can be traced to the early 1990s with the Ascensio report that identified migrants as a resource for creating national development in their home countries, and marked a critical turning point in the discursive field of international migration policy (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002). More recently, scholarly works have historicized the relation between development and migration in three different phases since the 1950s and 1960s, and consider the shift that occurred in the 1990s as not really representing a new interest.

[1] See the programme official website at *www.quests-mida.org*

According to these scholars, the ongoing re-emergence of the migration-development nexus is the third re-articulation of similar policy discourses of the past (Gamlen, 2014; Faist, Kivisto & Fauser, 2011). The idea that migration had a positive impact on development first emerged with modernist theories in the 1950s and1960s. After the economic crisis and contestations in the 1970s, dependency theories criticised modernist theories and their optimistic view of migration for development. In the 1990s, thanks to neoclassical economic theories, the perception of migration as a resource for development circulated with renewed enthusiasm. More recently, this enthusiasm has encountered the cautionary skepticism and critiques of transnational migration, international development and human geography scholars.

Studying the implications of the migration-development nexus, some scholars have looked into the history of the analytical concepts of migration and development as two separate categories. Each category has its complex trajectory and, precisely because of the many theories and approaches within the history of each concept, they come to the conclusion that "there are several reasons why international migration will not automatically lead to development" (van Naerssen, Spaan & Zoomers, 2008:2). In other words, the problem with the nexus between migration and development is precisely the way in which the nexus is taken for granted, instead of being analysed as a result of two distinct phenomena that have been drawn together only under specific historical conditions.

Similarly, scholars of transnational studies have approached the study of the migration-development nexus as a policy and theoretical construct, which reflects the paradigm shifts occurring in dominant development theories (Faist, Kivisto & Fauser, 2011:5). Unlike other critical analyses of the migration-development nexus, human geography scholars take for granted the link between human mobility and development since its first theorizations in the 19th century, estimating its impact in both pessimistic and optimistic terms. As Gamlen (2014) writes:

> "There has long been agreement that development and migration are fundamentally linked, and these links have been important to geographers since the early days of the discipline. The idea that economic development drives emigration dates at least back to the 19th century geographer Ernst Ravenstein

> (1885, 1889), and the relationship between migration and resource distribution was also salient to the political geography of his younger contemporary, Friedrich Ratzel (see Glick Schiller, 2009). Geographers have thus been integral to debates about human mobility and development since their inception." (Gamlen, 2014:582)

Recently, the description of migration and diaspora as an opportunity for economic growth in home countries has grown into the first UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development organised in 2006. The UN High Level Dialogue brought about the creation of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) with its first meeting in 2007 in Brussels (Piper, 2009:94). Moreover, UNDP recently reinforced the view that migration can play a positive role in national development in the 2009 Human Development Report (Gamlen, 2010). In the last twenty years, the "migration-development nexus" has also been re-articulated in both policy papers (Ghosh, 2006; Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004) and scholarly works (Adepoju, Van Naersessen & Zoomers, 2008; Brinkerhoff, 2008; Piper, 2009; Castles & Delgado Wise, 2008; Faist, Kivisto & Faurer 2011; Bakewell, 2012).

In contrast to the enthusiasm about the positive impact of migration on development expressed by the UNDP, the World Bank and other international agencies, many scholars from different perspectives raise cautionary doubts or even radical criticism of migration-development policies, as well as their implications and impact. Some scholars of transnational migration (Glick Schiller and Faist, 2009) have criticised the belief held by many international agencies that consider migration a solution to problems of underdevelopment (UNDP, 2009). At the heart of some of these critiques is the accusation that international agencies, as well as scholars in migration studies who practice the migration-development "mantra", have lost sight of the asymmetries in the discourse on migration and development that relegates nation-states in the Global South to a marginal role. To address these asymmetries, Nina Glick Schiller has proposed an alternative global framework of analysis that must exceed the "methodological nationalism" still prevalent in migration studies. This perspective, focused on the nation-state, neglects the study of particular localities in relation to ongoing processes of global restructuring of financial markets (Glick Schiller & Faist, 2009). An alternative view based on "a global perspective on migration" instead

allows for an analysis that addresses the asymmetries and exposes the paradox inherently formulated in migration policies that perceive migrants as simultaneously agents of national development, and threats to nation-states' frontiers (Glick Schiller & Faist, 2009). Other scholars of migration share a similar criticism of the migration-development nexus by bringing attention to the social issues within the debate (Piper, 2009). They call for a more central role for migrants in this debate, extending beyond the dominant discussions in the field, which focus on the economic and structural impact of migrants' participation in national development primarily as economic actors through their remittances.

Scholars of transnational migration also criticise the nexus because of its emphasis on development, a vague concept with implications of linear progress and growth. The valorization of development discourse serves to conceal the ongoing processes of border securitization and the restrictions of migrants' mobility rights, dynamics that are not peripheral, but central to, the problem of migration and diaspora (Glick Schiller & Faist, 2009).

The term "transnational" appeared in migration studies at the beginning of the 1990s, and helped to see migration as a phenomenon not only resulting from economic and rational reasons (or the idea that migrants are all acting rationally according to the model of the *homo economicus*), but also as the simultaneous outcome of different factors, such as nationalism and racism. This approach allowed for the inclusion of both countries of origin and destination in the same analytical framework (Isolato, 2009). Although scholars who pioneered transnational migration studies intended to bypass "methodological nationalism" and to expose capitalist processes of restructuring labour resources globally (Glick Schiller et al., 1994; Glick Schiller, 2009; Coutin, 2007), the transnational approach was also re-appropriated later to support "neoliberal political purposes" in support of the promotion of international development and security policies that prevent the mobility of many migrant workers (Isolato, 2009). In other words, processes of developmentalization and securitization of migrants and refugees' mobility are simultaneous and coeval. Projects of national development, which focus on the participation of migrants in their home countries, are also meant to serve security concerns around national borders raised by destination countries (Isolato, 2009).

More recently, studies on the migration-development nexus from a transnational perspective have raised further criticism by addressing the assumptions that characterised the last hype about the nexus. By placing the migration-development nexus against the backdrop of ongoing socio-economic, cultural and political, structural transformations, they question the optimism surrounding the positive impact of remittances for development (Faist, Kivisto & Faurer, 2011). In fact, there are no concluding research data about the efficacy of migrants' remittances on origin countries. Moreover, because migration cannot be proved to be the formula that can fix all problems of underdevelopment, social welfare and democratic governance, it follows that the basic assumption in policies that promote migration for development is simply unsubstantiated.

Human geographers have expressed similar pessimism about the latest optimistic migration-development "mantra" (Kapoor, 2004; Gamlen, 2014). Their critiques challenge the nexus because it is not really new, because it is "driven by hidden political and economic agendas", and because it is characterised by "simplifications and exaggerations" (Gamlen, 2014:581).

This article also questions the ongoing optimistic views that continue to sustain and deploy programmes such as QUESTS-MIDA in Somalia. Indeed, the enthusiasm that international agencies and policy makers invest in the migration-development nexus often conceals other concerns about security of North European and North American national borders and about citizenship rights and integration in migrants' host countries (Faist, Kivisto & Faurer, 2011). Most importantly, the migration-development nexus is often invoked by international policy actors as a solution to problems of underdevelopment in migrants' sending countries, but never used to address problems of labour exploitation or the concerns of racial, social, and economic discrimination, that migrants and diaspora experience in host countries.

Interestingly, international agencies and NGOs use the term 'diaspora' to refer to Africans (including Somalis) in the diaspora interchangeably with the term 'migration'. In the literature that sees migration as a resource for development, the terms 'diaspora' and 'migration' often overlap and are used interchangeably. By keeping these two terms as separate expressions of diverse theoretical contributions, this article argues that to talk about diaspora instead of migration allows for critical understanding

of the implications of the migration-development nexus. In particular, by choosing to focus on the narratives of Somali diaspora experts, this article intends to shift the ongoing scholarly criticism against the migration-development nexus to frame the problems observed in Somalia from a different perspective. The aim of this article is to move beyond a criticism focused on the migration-development nexus, and to redirect the analysis to the relationship between the Somali government and its emigrant population, drawing on an African diaspora perspective.

The politics of African diaspora: mobilisation and exclusion

African diaspora scholars have strongly emphasised the political difference between the terms African 'migrants' and 'diaspora'. The concept of 'African diaspora'[2] pays homage to the important historical experiences of Africans in the diaspora. These scholars attest that the concept of African diaspora works against the often impersonalized depiction of African migrants, allowing Africans' voices and experiences of slavery and economic migration to be more conspicuous and relevant. Building on an African diaspora perspective, this article highlights the use of the term "African diaspora", taking into account the historical dimensions of slavery, discrimination and racialization, which are invoked and implied in such a term.

Recently, African governments as well as African activists, NGOs, IOs, humanitarian associations and donors, are supporting the invocation of the African diaspora by formulating new claims or what Clarke (2010:49) calls "new ontologies of diaspora". These new claims diverge from black Atlantic ontologies that were formulated around the centrality of slavery. State-building projects, such as the programme described below (QUESTS-MIDA in Somalia), also support the idea of African diaspora as a resource for national development. Clarke defines these new claims to diaspora as "diasporic humanitarianism," which serves as a tool for what she defines as "neoliberal governance." By "diasporic humanitarianism," Clarke (2010:49) means to describe the emergence of new movements or

[2] As Brent Hayes Edwards observes, while many black artists and intellectuals have been practicing and discussing international links and relationships among people of African descent since the 19th century, it was only in the 1950s that the word diaspora began to emerge out "of the growing scholarly interest in the Pan-African movement in particular, and in black internationalism in general" (Edwards 2001:45; Harris 2001).

collaborations (i.e. the Darfurian diaspora and the Save Darfur movement) between "those of the Global South with institutions of international power whose mission is tied to the protection of human rights, the eradication of poverty, and the related protection of victims". Working within this claim, Clarke underlines the rhetorical and institutional power of diasporic humanitarianism, which also serves to recognise the historical parallels between the ways in which humanitarianism has been mobilised in the past, to end slavery, for instance, but which actually works to reproduce new forms of inequalities. For Clarke (2010:49), these new claims of diaspora, which are cloaked in humanitarian terms and language, serve to conceal the problematic "workings of the nation-state and the politics of race and development". Diasporic humanitarianism is the result of a convergence of international institutions, new global nodes of economic interests, and trade regulations. The UN promotes "capacity-building" programmes in Africa (as well as in other parts of the Global South) in partnerships with donors, policy makers and governments of the Global North (i.e. the G8 state leaders). The Digital Diaspora Networks in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, are examples of the UN's Information and Communication Technologies programmes. Its aim is to create connections between African professionals in the diaspora and African entrepreneurs as a means of addressing the issue of separation among refugee family members. Clarke argues that while the use of the UN's language of humanitarianism actually mobilised African diasporic elites, these kinds of interventions propose only external solutions to African problems.

Clarke's appeal to reconsider the history of the category of African diaspora helps to clarify the political aspirations, black political formations across Atlantic linkages and beyond the nation-state, which the term diaspora has traditionally claimed. It also provides an argument to start unsettling the goals that the Millennium Development agenda[3] sets through international agencies in Africa and across the third world. Her concern echoes some of the critiques of the millennium-development nexus voiced by transnational migration scholars Glick Schiller et al. (2009), Piper (2009) and Faist et al. (2011), international development

[3]The Millennium Development goals established by the UN are eight. Those are: to eradicate poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AID, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop global partnership for development.

scholars Bakewell (2008, 2012) and Davies (2012) and other scholars of the African diaspora Zeleza (2010) and Davies (2007). However, scholars of transnationalism are not concerned about the effects of the mobilisation of the concept of African diaspora on development processes. Their work is more concerned with defining and constructing "transnational migration" as a distinct analytical approach (Levitt & Khagram, 2008; Levitt-Jaworsky, 2007; Vertovec, 2003; Faist et al., 2011). In contrast, Clarke's argument is significant because it provides an analytical framework that connects the history of slavery, which placed racial exclusion at the foundation of the modern nation-state, to "contemporary exclusions in the African world" (Clarke, 2010:51). By contemporary forms of exclusion, she also means to refer to the dynamics of "brokerage" of postcolonial African states, whose "decisions are brokered outside the country with international donors and institutions" and fail to protect the rights of African citizens (Clarke, 2010:49).

Although Clarke raises many important questions and concerns, she has not been exempted from criticism (Zeleza, 2010; Rahier, 2010). While summarising the debate sparked by Clarke's intervention is beyond the scope of this article, the discussion she prompted around the new appropriations and mobilisations of the African diaspora as a cultural, economic, social, and political category, highlights the importance of reinserting the historical problems of race and slavery into the ongoing discussions on migration, diaspora and development in Africa. The contribution of historians and anthropologists to African diaspora is a critical reminder of the history of slavery in its present manifestations. These works offer a poignant political dimension to the idea of African diaspora, which, unfortunately, is so often missing in debates by policy makers and academic studies on the migration-development nexus. Including such perspective is crucial precisely because it re-inscribes in contemporary processes of state and nation building Africans' experiences and accounts of exploitation, exclusion and racialization that are often erased or neglected in policy and academic discussions of governance and state-building in Africa.

Somali diaspora experts are also excluded from decision-making processes in programmes of migration for development. Somali ministries and government officials do not have the last say in how and when funding for these programmes can be disbursed, because UNDP has direct and exclusive liaison with international sponsors, such as the

European Commission or representatives of European governments. State-building is brokered outside the government in Somaliland and Somalia, thanks to interventionist development policies that have characterised much of the development world across Africa so far (Bakewell, 2008). Despite its rhetoric on participation and Somali ownership of the process, QUESTS-MIDA's priorities of intervention are set by the UNDP and foreign donors.

QUESTS-MIDA and SIDP

QUESTS-MIDA is a project created from the collaboration between UNDP and IOM to develop governance skills in former Somalia. It operates through agreements with the governments of Somaliland, Puntland and Mogadishu in the South Somalia region. The IOM component of the project, MIDA[4], is part of a larger reconfiguration of global migration policies, whereas QUESTS was a former project of UNDP Somalia.

QUESTS-MIDA priorities are designed by the Somali Institution Development Project (SIDP), a programme within UNDP Somalia, and in consultation with Somali institutions. The institutions in which Somali experts are to contribute with their skills and knowledge are selected according to UNDP's pre-existing work of capacity-building. SIDP was created in early 2009, was re-designed by mid-2011 and 2012, and is expected to end in 2015[5]. The re-design of SIPD, which included the project QUESTS-MIDA, coincided with the time that the author was conducting research between Hargeysa (Somaliland), Garowe (Puntland) and Nairobi (Kenya)[6]. SIDP's task is about "supporting the [Somali] government to better serve the Somali people." Its priorities are to develop policy and legislative systems and processes, to develop human

[4] MIDA is a programme that "aims to build partnerships between host countries and countries of origin of migrants, and encourage the return of African professionals on temporary assignments" (Black 2006:10).

[5] See the current official description of SIDP on UNDP Somalia's official website at: http://www.so.undp.org/content/somalia/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/Somali_Institution_Development_Project.html

[6] When doing research in Nairobi, it was not easy to get hold of SIDP's managers, and after many unanswered emails, the author gave up. UNDP field officers, Somali diaspora experts, civil servants and Ministers of the Somaliland and Puntland governments were more available for interviews than UNDP officers and managers based in Nairobi.

resources; to implement a Public Finance Management (PFM) system and public accountability; and to develop physical infrastructure and operational support.

Before joining IOM's MIDA programme, UNDP had modeled QUESTS after an earlier programme called Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), a programme to channel back home expertise acquired by migrants abroad, first implemented in Turkey in 1977 and now run by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme[7]. In 2010, IOM took over the implementation of QUESTS-MIDA, while UNDP deals with the work of consultation with Somali institutions and ministers to establish the priorities of the programmes, collect their needs, draft Letters of Agreement (LoA), design a Terms of Reference (ToR) matching the needs in the field, and paying salaries to the experts. IOM deals with the logistics of the programme, the recruitment process in North America and Europe, and takes care of local arrangements to support Somali diaspora experts' first day in the field and follows the participants' daily activities with regular meetings every month.

Between April 2010 and July 2011, QUESTS-MIDA recruited seventeen experts from the Somali diaspora to work in Hargeysa in several institutions. Six more experts were to be recruited in the following months while the programme was being redesigned. According to UNDP and IOM officers, the programme was about to be completed in 2012 or 2013 because there was no further funding. The programme was supposed to hire sixty Somali diaspora experts, twenty in each Somali region (Puntland, Somaliland, and South Central). Started in 2006 as QUESTS, the programme was combined with the MIDA component in 2009[8]. A thorough process of redesign of SIDP began in 2011, after a new SIDP manager was hired and the programme was still active.

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[7] An account of the official history of Tokten can be found on the official website of Tokten Lebanon at: http://www.toktenlebanon.org/about/about.php. The programme was created by UNDP in 1977, and came under the umbrella of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in 1994. A current official description of the programme is on UNV's website at: http://www.unv.org/en/what-we-do/countries/viet-nam/doc/tokten-channels-global-expertise.html

[8] An official flyer written by IOM and available online provides some basic facts about QUESTS-MIDA (IOM, March 2014). The programme was extended to December 2013 and it had three phases. In the first two phases forty-two experts

Critical voices from the Somali diaspora

QUESTS-MIDA recruits Somalis in the diaspora with the following profiles: professional experts in Human Resources Management, Public Administration Reform, ICT Policy Development, Tax Law and Revenue Reform, Counselling Psychologist, Educational Planning, Strategic Planning, and Natural Resources Environmentalists/Engineers. The role of these experts is to work in collaboration with what UNDP and IOM have identified as target institutions in Somaliland, such as the Ministries of Planning, Finance, Family Affairs, Labour, and Public Works, the Auditor and Accountant General's Offices, as well as the Central Bank.

In order to understand how knowledge, skills, ideas, assets, and practices about state-building are transferred from Somali diaspora expatriates to people in institutions in Somaliland, while staying in Hargeysa the author conducted a 16 months fieldwork project between the US, UK, Kenya and Somaliland. Between October and November 2011, and then again between March and May 2012, the author conducted participant observations and semi-structured interviews with eleven of the seventeen Somali QUESTS-MIDA experts that worked in Somaliland[9]. This was possible thanks to a list of Somali QUESTS-MIDA experts obtained from IOM field officers in Hargeysa, and UNDP officers in Nairobi. The city of Nairobi in Kenya not only hosts the UNDP headquarters (from which QUESTS-MIDA is also administered), but also all the main headquarters and regional offices of international development agencies working in the Horn of Africa and East Africa. Hargeysa, the bureaucratic capital of Somaliland, is a central hub where international development programmes, often planned in Nairobi, are implemented. QUESTS-MIDA primarily targets state institutions and the public sector in the city of Hargeysa.

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were placed in the three Somali regions (Somaliland, Puntland and South Somalia). The third phase planned to place other 20 experts across the three regions.
http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Somalia-QUESTS-MIDA-Qualified-Expatriate-Somalia-Technical-Support.pdf

[9] The remaining six Somali experts on that list had either terminated their one year contract with QUESTS-MIDA, or were not available for an interview while the author was in Hargeysa.

Overall, the interviews with Somali diaspora experts reveal a disparity between the design and actual enactment of the programme in which they were involved. In the field, they could not practically attend to all the tasks and prescribed duties as drafted in their work plans. After the first round of discussions with them, it was clear that in their daily routines they had encountered many unexpected challenges. In the following excerpts of interviews, four major themes of challenges emerge. First, they complained about lack of material resources. Second, they questioned the very sustainability of the programme. Third, they were surprised at the lack of capacity assessment of their hosting institutions. (UNDP is supposed to evaluate the institutional capacity of hosting institutions and assess their needs according to the suggestions of Somali institution officials). Lastly, and most importantly, they pointed out the intrinsic problem of the programme: QUESTS-MIDA does not allow for Somali diaspora experts and Somali officials' participation in decision-making processes. Final decisions on how and when to intervene with capacity-building programmes depend on UNDP. All these challenges were largely unanticipated in their Terms of Reference, a document that described their job tasks and was prepared by UNDP in consultation with the hosting Somali institution.

A Somali diaspora macroeconomics expert recruited from Norway, hired to work at the Ministry of Planning and National Development in Hargeysa, described the gaps between the work he was supposed to do and the actual reality he faced after he started his job:

> "I was supposed to create a framework for the GDP in Somaliland, but it was difficult because there are no data available in the country. So, I started with a review of the fiscal policy, but there is no Central Bank Act in Somaliland at the moment. What we have here is rather a Treasury, and there is no monetary policy analysis available either.
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> To estimate a GDP you need to find data about agriculture and livestock economy as well as other sectors of the economy, and once you have these data, you can know a country's GDP's in three or five years. … You can only create a GDP that is comparable with the world standards, but you need a lot more resources than just one person like me.

> I looked at the United Nations System of National Accounts as a model, which was released by the UN in 2008[10]." (Interview, Hargeysa, October 2011)

The theme of scarce resources, either material or human resources, to conduct and implement their work tasks, reappeared in many interviews. Many had to wait a few weeks, or months, for office space. A Somali, who lived in Sweden for twenty years, a Training and Curriculum Development Expert at the Civil Service Institute in Hargeysa, was frustrated about the lack of financial support from UNDP both to purchase necessary materials and to conduct the activities he planned:

> "There was no single book about Curriculum Development. UNDP could not support the cost of the material. In my reports, I asked for it, I need to buy books, I said. My problem was how to work with UNDP, because without the books I can't develop anything. I have no budget to buy books, nor to visit other institutes in South Africa (Public Management Institute), Turkey, or Kenya ... we wrote the budget for these visits, but UNDP rejected it." (Hargeysa, Interview, October 2011)

A Tax Law and Revenue Expert, originally from Mogadishu, who lived in the Netherlands before taking on his one-year position at the Ministry of Finance in Hargeysa, talks about similar challenges:

> "I do not have funds, I didn't have a computer, nor a table, it was hard to get one when I started to work. I did not have an office either." (Hargeysa, interview, October 2011)

On the same issue of the limited allocated budget for trainings and trainees, a Somali with a background in electronic engineering and management from the US and UK, who worked for one year as a Spectrum Management Consultant at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication in Hargeysa reported:

[10] International standards for national accounting are defined by the United Nations System of National Accounts (USNA). The most recent version was published in 2008 and the integral text is available online on UN statistics official pages: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/docs/SNA2008.pdf

> "The challenge to work here was the lack of equipment (jamming and scamming equipment), but also the lack of funding to provide training to take the staff to Kenya (where there is an independent committee to monitor the law enforcement process, the Kenya Communication Commission). The funding was promised but IOM didn't fulfill their promises.
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> Otherwise, Quests MIDA is a good programme, but there is nothing in place before you come, which I did not realise from my ToR. That said, the idea of speaking to Somali experts is good." (Hargeysa, interview October 2011)

A few months later, when the author met him again after the completion of his work with QUESTS-MIDA, he reiterated his point about the lack of support and resources needed to be able to attend to his planned tasks:

> "…the transfer of skills was not as successful as I wished it to be, it could have been better if we had equipment. I wrote a letter on behalf of the Minister stating that we need equipment, like jamming and frequency scanning equipment, but UNDP said they didn't have the budget for this. I didn't have the tools to work here." (Hargeysa, Interview April 2012)

Many of the Somali diaspora experts and local representatives interviewed found that the programme's one-year length was too short. One year was not enough to attend to all their tasks.

A Somali financial consultant from Sweden, former lecturer in Macroeconomics in Tanzania, and consultant in the late 1990s with the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank in Somaliland, was hired as Macroeconomics expert through QUESTS-MIDA. In one of our interviews, he addressed the issues of "time" and "sustainability" of the programme:

> "I came back here with QUESTS-MIDA. We report to IOM. My contract ends in May. Not sure if they are going to extend it, probably not. They might re-advertise the post.
>
> The problem here is the short time, and when you start, it is not enough. Sustainability is important, and the redesign [of QUESTS-MIDA within SIDP] stopped many things. This

> programme needs continuity, if you start something, you have to know where you are reaching, then you can redesign, otherwise you do not know what you redesign. This can create disturbance, lack of motivation. Even if I am going to leave, but the programme continues, the person who might replace me should be meeting with us, and continue. This could be better than leaving and starting from zero again." (Hargeysa, Interview, March 2012)

A majority of Somali diaspora experts described QUESTS-MIDA as lacking continuity and sustainability and they were frustrated about the short timeframe to develop their work. Because of a lack of material resources, they often started attending to their tasks only a few months after their arrival. This left very little time to accomplish their tasks in the remaining part of the year. Things can take a long time, also because many of them needed time to settle in and become familiar with a new social and working environment after their European or North American experiences. Many of them were not familiar with Hargeysa, because their family connections were not from there, although they could still relate to the Somali context. Here a different notion of sustainability and continuity was at stake. The programme was not designed to fit the temporal expectations of Somali diaspora experts and local institutions.

Another shared concern among Somali diaspora experts and government officials was the frustrating experience of exclusion from decision-making processes. Most of their criticism was directed at UNDP's management.

A Somali from the US diaspora, who had a background on Public Administration and expertise on Gender Based Violence programme planning with UNHCR, was recruited by QUESTS-MIDA as a Gender Technical Advisor at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA):

> "The previous Minister requested an expert for my position, the Letter of Agreement (LoA) between the Minister and UNDP was signed in a different political moment, and nobody went to the current Minister now to ask if having an expert like me at MOLSA was also her priority. When I arrived here she just told me "You find something to do," so I looked at the national policy, and the mechanisms of its implementation, but there were none

> of these mechanisms in place, so I created them, and a lot of donors came to fund this." (Hargeysa, Interview, March 2012)

By the time this US-based Somali expert started working as a Gender Technical Advisor at MOLSA in November 2010, the minister had changed. After Somaliland's election took place in June 2010, another minister was elected. The relationship between her and the new minister was challenging because, as she describes above, the minister was not involved in the decision-making process of the design and recruitment of an expert advisor on gender. Her priority could have been different, but UNDP having committed to a previous agreement, proceeded in its programme, leaving the Somali expert to work on her own in a hostile environment.

When the author returned to Hargeysa (March–May, 2012), during follow-up interviews and conversations with some of the same Somali diaspora experts met a few months earlier, interviewees would often comment on the redesign of QUESTS-MIDA and SIDP. Generally the re-design was described as an imposed and disruptive process that did not leave much room for participation, but created a difficult situation and a feeling of uncertainty and impotence among Somali government officials, diaspora experts, and public servant trainees alike. Many of those diaspora experts hired by UNDP to work at the Ministry of Planning and National Development in Hargeysa were either upset or worried about their situation. They felt as if they were living in limbo, while the programme was re-designed in Nairobi. During the re-design of SIDP programmes, which included QUESTS-MIDA, UNDP suddenly cut their salaries without consulting them on how the re-design could be approached.

It was clear from the interviews that the diaspora expatriates were excluded from decision-making processes which were exclusively led by UNDP. Moreover, QUESTS-MIDA does not have a long-term and comprehensive vision beyond the two or three year budget plans allocated for institution building under SIDP. The current Minister of Planning describes UNDP officers as those who are only giving instructions and neglect the importance of consulting and listening to the needs of those in charge of Somaliland's institutions[11]. A Somali diaspora

[11] Interview, Hargeysa, April 2012.

expert pointed out that UNDP officers often interact with Somali ministers, acting like donors and giving them instructions on how to proceed. They are simple intermediaries or implementing agencies that act on behalf of donors. Some Somali experts complained that most of the decision-making process happens in Nairobi, or in New York City.

In Somaliland, experts recruited from the Somali diaspora are supposed to bring knowledge and transfer technical skills, but donors and development agencies do not consider those skills and knowledge to be part of the political process. Yet, this process of reconfiguration of state institutions is also obviously political. International agencies are uniquely concerned with designing programmes that are described as a technical transfer of governance skills. However, in the process of designing capacity-building programmes, setting priorities and creating new civil servants, international agencies, such as UNDP, often neglect Somali institutional representatives. Their political legitimacy and decision-making power is almost entirely suspended. Projects like QUESTS-MIDA are imported into Somaliland as programmes of technical expertise, and kept separate from the formal political process of state-making. Rather than promoting capacity building, QUESTS-MIDA often achieves the opposite objective. By recruiting Somali experts from the diaspora (via UNDP and IOM), this programme reinforces the idea that Somali administrative structures are weak, thereby creating more legitimacy for external expertise and intervention, rather than setting the basis for political autonomy. Yet, the Somali diaspora has been involved in the socio-political and economic process of state-making since the 1980s. (Gundel, 2002; Osman et al., 2007; Kleist, 2007; Horst et al., 2010; Pirkkalainen, 2013). Moreover, Somalis from the diaspora are currently engaging their home government independently, despite the negligence and discrimination experienced with international development actors.

Recently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Somaliland officially recognised the Somaliland Diaspora Agency (SDA). Following a few years of lobbying and independent initiatives of engagements with the Somaliland government, the SDA has now become an agency of the MFA. The SDA also recently drafted a policy that should help with coordinating and creating a database of the Somaliland diaspora's investments and initiatives in Somaliland.

"Diaspora strategies" are not new but are a constant and inherent transformation of the nation-state that appeals to its emigrant population (Gamlen, 2011:21). A deeper understanding of diaspora and development should begin by considering diaspora policies and diaspora initiatives, engaging with the state as part of a *longue durée* of relationships between the two (Iskander, 2010). International relations scholar Francesco Ragazzi articulates this point further, saying that "the evolution of emigration policies, the increasing transnationalization of state practices and the proliferation of the diasporic discourse" are "modifications of the state itself" (Ragazzi, 2009:379). Thus, Ragazzi suggests that the mobilisation of diaporas is actually occurring in a variety of ways. Diasporas are being mobilised by their states of origin, by the states that host them, and by international organisations. At the same time, diasporas reach out to their countries, to their host countries, as well as to international agencies (such as IOM) in order to lobby their specific cases. "In brief," Ragazzi concludes, "the proliferation of state-led diaspora policies must be understood as a process, as the result of the unequal, heterogeneous, yet increasing spread of 'neoliberal governmentality' as a modular deterritorialized rationality and practice of power; and, the discourse of 'diaspora' has been an effective performative discourse in the legitimation of this shift"[12] (Ragazzi, 2009:10-11).

Following Ragazzi's argument, this article posits that the relationship between Somaliland and its diaspora is better understood as a reconfiguration of the "art of government" under changing historical conditions (Foucault, 1978). Within this theoretical framework, the migration-development nexus can be understood both as an instrument for global governance, and the ongoing restructuring of state power in a given historical moment. One of the manifestations of this reconfiguration of state power is its transnationalization through the mobilisation of diaspora discourses. State power in Somalia, and in other African countries, has been reconfigured through the work of outsourced governance by international agencies and Somali diaspora's

[12] "While in the two previous moments the nation-state model remained the referent despite transnational governmental practices, in the neo-liberal moment the diasporic condition is legitimized and normalized. Dispersion is considered as an economic and political resource: economically through the constant flow of remittances, and politically through the claim of channeling political lobbying." (Ragazzi 2009)

developmental initiatives. In other words, the "art of government" has been exercised beyond the legal rational state, with the involvement of transnational actors, including diaspora groups and international agencies. If this is only a result of "neo-liberal governance" as Ragazzi concludes in his study, it is to be explored further as far as Somalia is concerned. The unique trajectory of the Somali state, as an African state, needs to be understood in its own terms, beyond the buzzwords "neo-liberal governance".

CONCLUSION: The Somali Diaspora and its Government

While building on the critique of the migration-development nexus from a transnational perspective (Faist et al., 2011), this article draws on the contribution of African diaspora scholars (Clarke, 2010) to highlight the processes of exclusion underlying programmes of state-building in Somaliland.

The QUESTS-MIDA programme is premised on a view of Somalia and Somaliland as weak and fragile states. In general, this view serves only to create more technical capacity-building programmes, brokered outside those states. This understanding is effective in creating the need for the design and funding of yet more migration-development programmes for state-building. Yet, the main effect of such programmes is to disempower and weaken Somaliland and Somalia's autonomous political capacity. Despite this dominant UN view and new forms of exclusions embedded in it, what emerges from Somaliland might be compared to ongoing processes also observed in other contexts. Tiger economies such as South Korea and Malaysia have pursued "post-developmental state strategies,"[13] which delegate technical projects to global enterprises while maintaining control over resources, populations, and sovereignty (Ong, 1999). More recently, anthropologist Biao Xiang has described transnational migration in Asia as the result of a substantial and constitutive relationship between processes of transnational migration**s**, return and nation building (Xiang, 2013). In Asia, initiatives for return migration are part of the nation-state agenda.

[13] "Transnationality induced by accelerated flows of capital, people, cultures, and knowledge does not simply reduce state power, as many have claimed, but also stimulates a new, more flexible and complex relationship between capital and governments" (Ong, 1999:21).

Similarly, transnational business initiatives undertaken by the Somali diaspora, and official policy strategies currently pursued in Somaliland, (the Diaspora policy draft, and the institutionalization of the Somaliland Diaspora Agency) aim at reinforcing the nation-state in Somaliland. The state in Somalia is not weak nor the result of "extravertion" (Bayart, 2000), but it is currently taking on new transnational forms.

To conclude, while migration-development programmes, such as QUESTS-MIDA, weaken Somali government's political autonomy, Somalis in the diaspora successfully aim at reinserting state power in other productive ways. Official migration-development programmes' see diaspora as resources for state-building but in practice this article has described how QUESTS-MIDA weakens the Somaliland government's capacity to govern. In contrast, through lobbying as well as private business initiatives, the Somali diaspora's priority is to rebuild and strengthen the state in Somaliland and Somalia on their own terms.

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