

**INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL,
HISTORICAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ON CONFLICTS AND ECONOMIC
DEVASTATIONS IN MOGADISHU, SOMALIA**

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**ASIA e UNIVERSITY
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INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL, HISTORICAL, AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ON CONFLICTS AND ECONOMIC DEVASTATIONS IN
MOGADISHU, SOMALIA

YAHYA AMIR HAGI IBRAHIM

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the influence of political, social, historical, and natural resources in conflicts and economic devastations in Mogadishu, Somalia. The study employed the Conflict Theory, the Elite Theory of Power and the New War Theory. The conceptualisation focused on politics, social characteristics, natural resources, historical factors variables, and their effect on conflict and economic devastation in the country. The research site was sixteen (16) administrative districts located within Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia. A sample size of 320 participants was recruited from the selected districts. Probability-sampling techniques were employed to minimise biases. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and interviews. The data collected during fieldwork was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) tool and thematic analysis, respectively. The findings indicate that politics in Somalia have led to civil wars and protracted violent conflicts and that ethnic manipulation, political exclusion, chronic marginalisation and neglect, and manipulation of state resources are risk factors inciting ethnic violence in Somalia. Further, on examining the social characteristics, the findings have shown a correlation value of -0.322, and the significant value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05, translating that any negative change in social characteristics of areas most affected by war would escalate conflicts and economic devastation in Somalia. The study found a relationship between Somalis' natural resources and conflicts and economic devastation in Somalia as shown by a correlation value of -0.212, the significant value was 0.001, which is less than 0.05, and this reveals that any negative change in the role of various natural resources would escalate conflicts and economic devastation in Somalia. On the other hand, a correlation coefficient was recorded on historical factors leading to conflict and economic devastations in Somalia as shown by a correlation value of -0.212, the significant value was 0.001, which is less than 0.05, and this reveals that any negative change in historical factors leading to conflict would escalate conflicts and economic devastation in Somalia. Based on the study findings, the study concludes that Somalia is the epitome of a politically fragile state, which poses a major challenge to the Somali government and the international community. Historical divisions along clan lines and competition for political and clan leadership positions have resulted in violent conflicts among the Somali people. Scarcity and in-abundance of natural resources significantly contribute to violent conflict, based on the political and socio-economic conditions at play, deterioration of social amenities, mainly in areas most affected by war, reduced average economic growth and increased state fragility in Somalia. There is a need to promote political stability in the region in order to ensure economic growth in Somalia; the government of Somalia needs to focus on not only ending violence but also removing the root causes of instability and creating the conditions necessary for peace. Given that historical and cultural sensitivity plays a significant role in ensuring economic growth in Somalia, the Somali government needs to consider the important unifying role of clannism. There is also a need to institute policies that govern the country's exploitation of natural resources and trade.

Keywords: Political stability, natural resources, conflicts, economic devastation, civil wars, peacebuilding, Somalia

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in quality and scope, for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted in fulfilment of the PhD degree is my own work and that all contributions from any other persons or sources are properly and duly cited. I further declare that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. In making this declaration, I understand and acknowledge any breaches in this declaration constitute academic misconduct, which may result in my expulsion from the programme and/or exclusion from the award of the degree.

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Signature of Candidate:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AMISOM	African Union Mission on Somalia
AMYC	Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CO2	Carbon dioxide
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CVI	Content Validity Index
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UN	United Nations

UNCAC	United Nation Convention Against Corruption
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WEO	World Economic Outlook

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Conflicts and economic devastations often arise from underlying historical, social, political and natural resource factors. Today, evidence indicates that conflicts have not only become complex but are now lasting longer (Johnson, 2021; Linke & Ruether, 2021). About one-third of the world's population is estimated to live in countries and regions currently affected by or under conflict (World Bank, 2020c). The close link between conflict and several underlying causes and challenges complicates the resolution process. Further, conflicts are no longer defined by borders but are affecting citizens and countries far from where they originally began (Bebbington et al., 2018).

The effects of conflicts on countries, regions and people continue to receive close scholarly attention. Research indicates that conflicts can adversely affect the economy, society, security, and even the environment if they are not properly resolved (De Waal, 2020; Fabrycky, 2019; Farole, 2018). Further, conflicts have been established to have devastating effects on the political economy of countries and societies where they are left unresolved or exist for prolonged periods (Bacon & Byman, 2021). Governments worldwide have, therefore, been persuaded to take more effective measures to prevent them entirely or intervene and resolve conflicts when they occur (Makanda, 2019). Without government, non-state actors such as the United Nations (UN) and regional bodies have taken over and instituted intervention measures to try and bring conflicts to an end or under control (Bolognesi & Leonardi, 2018).

It is equally thought that singling out any one factor as the only driver of conflicts and economic devastations is to deny the complex inter-relation between the

different forces, both external and internal, that aggregately contribute to conflict. Indeed, rarely does one single factor drive a conflict, and the effects of conflicts are often multifaceted. However, notable drivers of conflict stand out, and these include natural resources, politics, social factors, climate change, historical facts, illicit international trade in drugs, arms and human migrations, among others (Ajala, 2020; Cesar & Jhony, 2021; Leader Maynard, 2019; Wasike, 2021; Yusuf, 2019).

Burgeoning evidence from around the world reveals how such political, social, historical and natural resources play significant roles in driving and sustaining conflicts and their economic impacts in countries and regions. In the Middle East, conflicts in and among countries are often caused by social, political and natural resources (Fabrycky, 2019; Yıldız & Çitak, 2021). For instance, in Syria, political regimes have initiated and fuelled protracted violent conflicts. Throughout this war, violence has been used to capture natural resources, which are then controlled and distributed unevenly, further fuelling conflicts in the country (Linke & Ruether, 2021). Additionally, natural calamities such as drought and loss of agricultural land and livestock have also intensified tensions and generated conflicts between different communities in Syria. This, coupled with fights for both political and economic power among different groups, has resulted in the country sliding into a prolonged civil war, insecurity, displacement of citizens, war crimes, illicit trade, including the sale of arms and drugs, destruction of archaeological and protected sites and a dire economic state of the country (Ide, 2018).

Other Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, provide additional evidence of how politics, historical and social factors, and natural resources, including oil and gas, have fuelled conflicts in these countries and devastated their economies (Bacon & Byman, 2021; Brennan et al., 2020). A report by

Lukácsová (2020) on conflict in the Middle East notes that geo-political, economic and social factors continue to fuel violence and conflicts in the region and calls for a more diplomatic approach to addressing complex social, economic, resource and political issues that the region faces.

Conversely, in South America, evidence indicates the roles played by natural resources, politics, and social and historical factors in creating and escalating regional conflicts. For instance, in Colombia, significant control over land and territory rich in earth minerals, oil and gas, and fertile land for agricultural productivity has resulted in incursions and expansion of different agents of internal conflict. These include armed militiamen promoted by businessmen, warlords, politicians and landowners interested in developing mineral, agricultural and energy projects which are the fundamental driving forces of the economy. The overall effect is a deep social, productive and political crisis in the country (Rincón & Fernandes, 2018). Further, Colombia is also infamous for its coca leaves, which are the primary product of cocaine. This has created an entire drug trafficking industry and network in the country, making it one of the largest hard drugs in the world. Militia, warlords, mafia, money laundering, violent conflicts and displacement of people have resulted from this drug trafficking industry in Latin America (Vélez-Torres & Lugo-Vivas, 2021). In Brazil, exploiting natural resources, including forests, minerals and fertile agricultural land, has also led to fights over territory. This is fuelled by the illegal appropriation of land and inequality in land distribution, which creates socio-territorial conflicts in which militiamen, warlords and businessmen are heavily involved (Clements & Fernandes, 2013; Oliveira, 2016).

In Africa, notably Sub-Saharan Africa, several countries still struggle at the lowest levels of demographic, health, economic, and well-being indicators. Dictatorial

regimes, resource extraction, debt entrapment, conflicts, climate change, and inequitable trade deals have exacerbated conflicts and precipitated disastrous economic outcomes (Feinberg et al., 2020; Johnson, 2021; Ujunwa et al., 2021). In addition to economic devastation, conflicts on the African continent have led to migration to other continents, such as to Europe and North America, by people fleeing human rights violations, political persecution, civil wars, tensions, insecurity and political instability (Giménez-Gómez et al., 2019).

For example, natural resources such as oil have long been the source of prolonged conflicts and civil war in Nigeria. This often arises from unequal income distribution from exploitation of natural resources, unsustainable development and bad governance practices. New evidence shows that Nigeria now has additional drivers of conflict, including fighting over land and cattle (Ajala, 2020). Further, terrorism [notably Boko Haram insurgency] is also contributing towards destabilising the country. The terrorist groups have significantly contributed to creating insecurity and economic as well as political instability, especially in the Northern part of the country (Umar, 2020).

In Central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has long been embroiled in conflicts, mainly arising from exploiting its vast mineral resources (Sweet, 2021). Additionally, poor governance, human rights abuses, a brutal colonial experience, and historical injustices have fuelled conflict and contributed to the economic devastation of the country and its people (Snyder et al., 2020).

Finally, East African countries have also experienced pro-longed conflict and worsening economic outcomes mainly driven by underlying political, economic, social and natural resource factors. The region has a long history of geo-political struggles

and conflict that persists in some countries to this day. For example, South Sudan has been in a protracted conflict since it gained independence. Before independence, it had already witnessed prolonged violent conflicts and civil wars. Factors such as natural resources, including oil and gas, clan and tribe wars, and fighting for economic and political power have played the primary role in the conflicts. Illegal arms, armed militia, and warlords have established footholds, creating serious insecurity and politically destabilising the young East African nation (Agwanda & Asal, 2020). Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti have also witnessed sporadic fighting and prolonged conflicts driven by various historical, social, political and natural resource factors (Grindaker, 2020; Woldemariam, 2018). The effects of these conflicts on the economy, society, political stability and long-term peace continue to be witnessed to this day.

Somalia, the country of focus of the current study, has been in the middle of a prolonged conflict, war, environmental degradation, and a deteriorating economy for nearly three decades now. At the centre of these are various political, social, historical and natural resource factors that have fuelled and made the situation worse (Olcay & Bayram, 2020). The causes of Somalia's conflicts are numerous and interrelated, which has complicated the resolution process (Wilson, 2019). Somalia has been characterised by war, insurgencies and violent conflicts since 1991, after the collapse of the military government, which was brought down by clan-based insurgency.

Clans have had a more salient role in the Somalian conflict. De Waal (2020) and Ingiriis (2018b) both observe that armed conflict in Somalia has been fuelled by political and social factors, including clannism, which has created a political marketplace in the country. Competition for territorial control and political power by warlords and clan militia heavily destroyed state apparatus and fragmented the southern half of Somalia into small-scale political entities.

Since the 1990s, Mogadishu and Baidoa have been the main cities affected by violent actors, notably several clan-based militias, Islamist groups, and international forces intervening in the conflict (Bakonyi, 2021). Mogadishu emerged as the major focus of militia and clan battles for power. For instance, fighting between the Hawiye clan family and militias resulted in the division of Mogadishu into smaller regions controlled by different militias from various Hawiye sub-clans (Ingiriis, 2018b). The clan militia also raided and occupied agriculturally productive land and the city of Baidoa. However, other clans responded, notably the Rahanweyn, which formed their militia to fight competing clans from occupying their territory. The instability in clan militias resulted in their fragmentation along sub-clans creating new militia sub-groups, further fuelling fighting and conflict in Somalia (De Waal, 2020). Clan politics have thus significantly contributed to economic devastations. For years, clannism has resulted from manipulations by political leaders, often for selfish interests (Ingiriis, 2021). Clannism has been used as a base for political and economic dominance and a route to provide some benefits to clan members at the expense of their clans. Clan politics have been a strong force in the fragmentation of Somalia due to the manipulation of ignorant and poor citizens for political ends, which has become a strong incentive for conflicts in the country (De Waal, 2020).

New evidence continues to show that clan conflicts persist in the country to this day. A report on Somalia by Human Rights Watch (2021) notes that inter-clan and intra-security force violence has injured, killed, and displaced thousands of civilians. The report further finds that due to pro-longed clan conflict in Somalia, which is fuelled by politics and fights over access to natural resources such as water and pasture, among other factors, the country continues to witness the loss of life, insecurity and

large displacements of its population. De Waal (2020) supports this, pointing out that in many Somali cities, people are displaced and entrapped in cycles of displacement.

A report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2020) observes that in Somalia, the total impact of internal displacement was estimated to be over \$1 billion, about 1/5th of the country's Gross Domestic Product [GDP] in 2018. The displacements are also emerging as an economic opportunity, where residents are moving into and out of one camp to another whenever aid is provided to camp occupiers. There is little long-term interest in minimising or eliminating displacement because of international aid that is received and other accruing benefits (Bakonyi, 2021). Therefore, A peace dividend is not a long-term desire; rather, the status quo is preferred among some displaced people. Another country report on Somalia by Stiftung (2020) collaborates with this and finds humanitarian aid has been turned into a commodity used by business cartels that control humanitarian food aid. A burgeoning number of gatekeepers in and around camps facilitate civilian access to international organisations supporting vulnerable people, especially internally displaced persons.

The prolonged absence of a formal central government resulted in the formation of various Islamist groups that sought to take over the leadership of the country. The al-Shabab militia, which is heavily linked to radical Islamism and terrorist organisations (including al Qaeda), has long taken over government functions such as collecting taxes on farms, transiting vehicles, agricultural products, people, goods and sales from livestock. The militant group has also introduced the registration of vehicles in a taxation system that appears to be systematic, organised, controlled and monitored properly (Stiftung, 2020). The militant group is even known to keep records and receipts to avoid double taxation. However, threats, violence and

intimidation are used to enforce tax collection, further exacerbating social and economic problems. For instance, several farmers and traders were displaced after they fled when al-Shabaab continued the levying of taxes even during prolonged droughts and famine (Stiftung, 2020).

The Somalian economy is the worst hit by long-standing war, inequitable distribution of the available resources, and the existing structural inequalities. Political, social, economic and natural resource factors have different roles in devastating the Somalian economy. The latest available data from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund [IMF], and the World Economic Outlook [WEO] indicate that the estimated per capita Gross Domestic Product [GDP] in Somalia is US\$ 500 as of 2019. This ranks the country among the poorest in the world, with more than three-quarters of the total population wallowing in abject poverty (Stiftung, 2020). A summary of key economic indicators of Somalia is presented in Table 1. These provide a summary of how the Somali economy has performed based on the latest available data from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Economic Forum, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations.

Table 1.1: Economic indicators of Somalia

		2015	2016	2017	2018
GDP	\$M	4049	4198	4509.0	4721.0
GDP growth	%	-	-	-	-
Inflation (CPI)	%	-	-	-	-
Unemployment	%	14.4	14.3	13.9	14
Foreign Direct Investment	% of GDP	7.5	8	8.5	8.7
Export Growth	%	-	-	-	-
Import Growth	%	-	-	-	-
Current Account Balance	\$M	-	-	-	-
Public Debt	% of GDP				
External Debt	\$M	2893.9	2864.5	2958.0	2932.0
Total Debt Service	\$M	0	0.1	0	0.1
Net Lending/Borrowing	% of GDP		-	0	

Tax Revenue	% of GDP	-	-	0	-
Government Consumption	% of GDP	7.9	8.6	11	11.3
Public Education Spending	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Public Health Spending	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
R&D Expenditure	% of GDP	-	-	-	-
Military Expenditure	% of GDP	-	-	-	-

Sources: (as of December 2019): International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Development Indicators, The World Bank, World Economic Outlook, Military Expenditure Database, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

A report by the World Bank (2020c) and the African Development Bank (2020) indicates that the economy in the country grew by an estimated 2.9% in 2019, a marginal increase from 2.8% recorded in 2018. Inflation rates were equally reported at 5.1% in 2018 and 4.4% in 2019. Current account deficits also improved from 9% of GDP in 2018 to 8.3% in 2019, mainly due to livestock exports and a slower growth in the volume of imports.

The data illustrates how years of fragility and conflict have left Somalia's economy with several challenges, including acute poverty and vulnerability, population growth outstripping economic growth, climate shocks and recurrent external trade. Further, weak state institutions, militancy, insurgency and an incomplete political settlement have devastated the country's economic strength (World Bank, 2020c).

A war economy has emerged and flourished in the Somalian state. The main profiteers in the war economy are warlords, militia, businessmen and clan families. The individual territories and networks that they have carved out have been turned into bases for the exploitation of confiscated property, seaports, airports, drug trafficking, issuance of fishing licenses, plantations, and arms trade (Stiftung, 2020; World Bank, 2020c). The conversion of public goods such as ports, fishing licenses, fees, and arms