

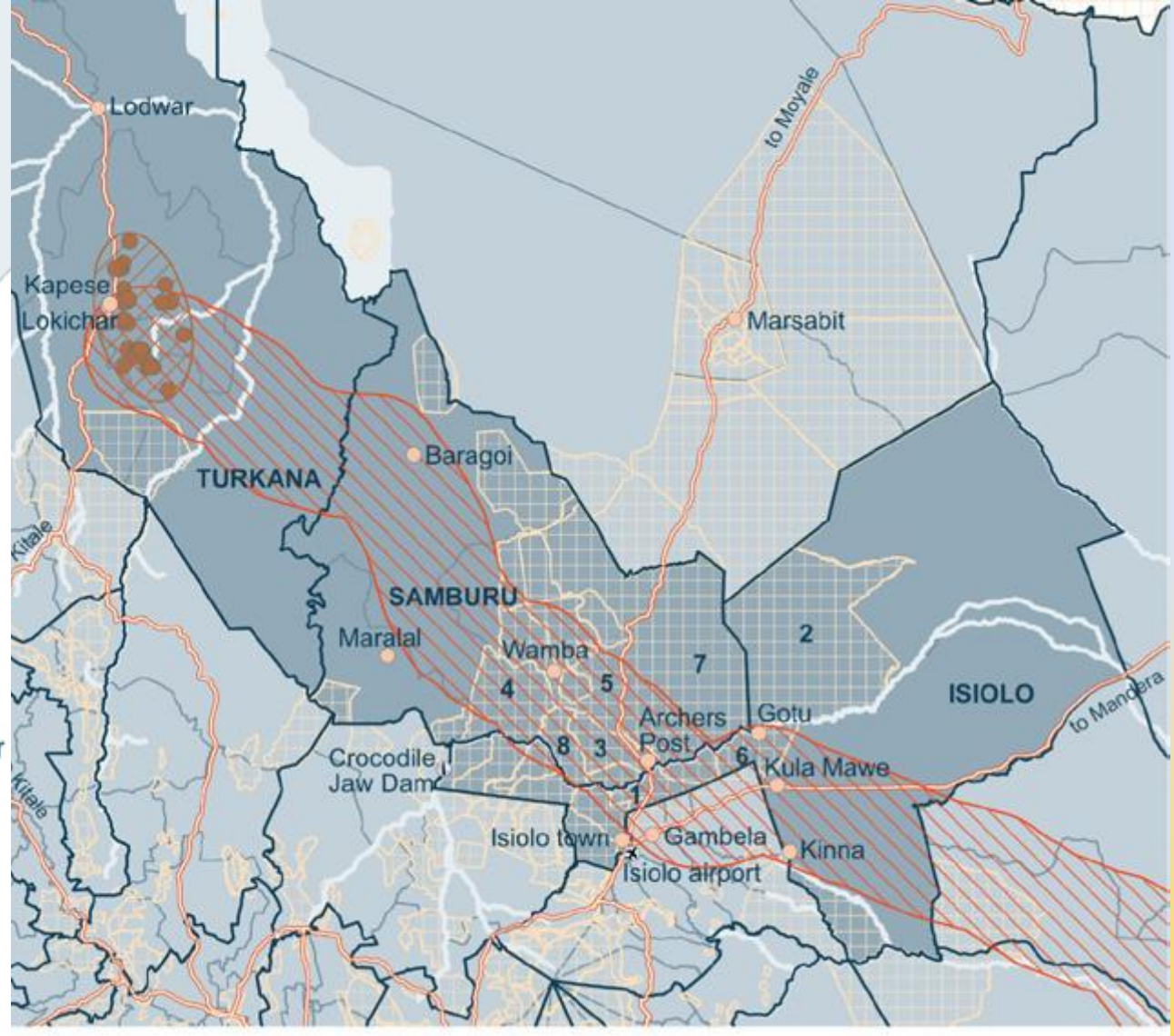
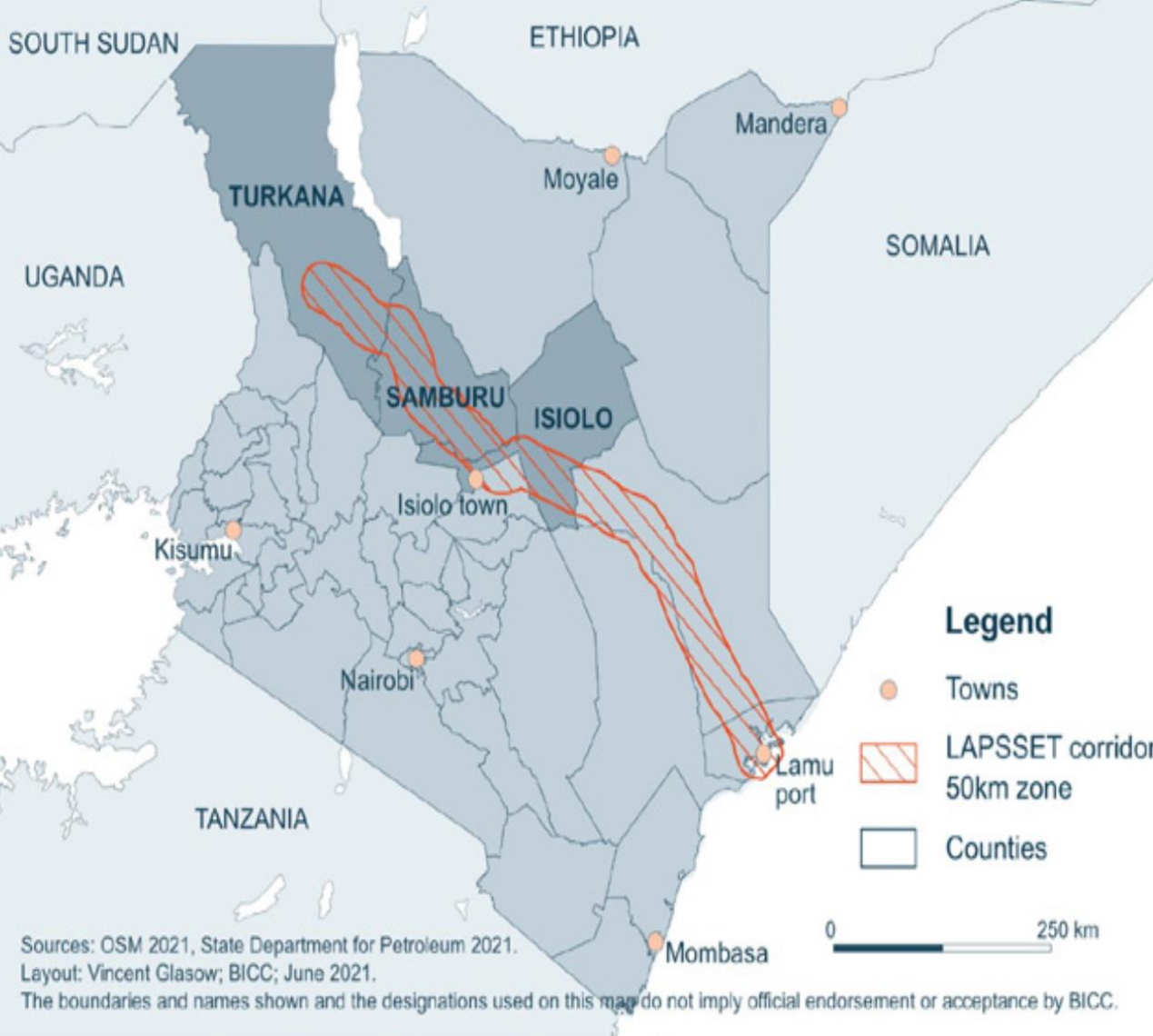
ANTICIPATION AND CONTESTATION ALONG THE LAPSSET INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR IN KENYA



KENNEDY MKUTU, PRESENTATION AT BICC CONFERENCE 29/11/2022

Introduction

- There is a complex link between infrastructure and conflicts. Most works focus:
- The economic benefits of infrastructure
- Investments
- Little is known on how infrastructure affects the risks of conflicts in fragile countries, and its socioecological effects and implications.



LAPPSET CORRIDOR

Intended to join other corridors across Africa from Kenya to Cameroon

Megaprojects in rural Africa

- Often presented by policymakers as having the potential to bring widespread socio-economic benefits
- But common themes in Sub-Saharan Africa are disruption to rural livelihoods, displacement, dispossession and exclusion (Deininger et al. 2010; Fratkin 2014; Galaty 2014).
- Policy makers have often viewed rural areas as unoccupied and unutilised, in need of civilisation— a perception shared by colonial governments 100 years previously (Moseley and Watson 2016; Schetter 2012; Enns and Bersaglio (2019).

Megaprojects in rural Africa

- Rural communities tend to be disadvantaged by weak legal frameworks, especially for communally owned land (Wily 2012)
- Together with marginalisation, this makes it difficult for them to benefit from development
- However, projects become embedded in local economies and are shaped by local dynamics (Chome et al. 2020)
- Different actors have different capacities enabling them to grasp the benefits (Greiner 2016).
- Different actors have different ways of interacting with the projects (Alders et al 2021, Björkdahl et al. 2016)

Understanding anticipation, participation and conflict

- Promises of future benefit are enchanting for a wide range of people (Harvey and Knox 2012)
- When construction does not go as planned, this may invigorate rather than dampen the longing for fulfilment (ibid.).
- Future-oriented practices are driven by dreams, imaginations and emotions, as much as by calculated decision-making about benefits and risks (Cross 2015).
- I use the concept ‘anticipation’, taken from Cross’s study of the ‘economy of anticipation’ in an economic zone in India (ibid.).
- All kinds of people, even those who are displaced by these zones, have various dreams and mobilise in various ways to deal with their future.
- As a result, new ‘relationships of power, consent and struggle’ emerge (ibid).

Security dynamics in LAPSSET counties

- Regional security complex
- International arms trade involving Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda and Somalia
- Inter-communal and clan conflicts
- Ethno-political conflicts, often superimposed on the above, have been severe during election times
- Terrorism and radicalisation especially near Somalia border (Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu): attacks on police posts and telephone masts
- Armed banditry and criminality
- Tensions with investors



FINDINGS

Turkana: struggling to benefit from oil and LAPSSET

- Tensions and conflicts over land, environment, employment and compensation.
- Local politicians cornered many benefits:
 - Taxi scheme with cars provided by Tullow Oil, gradually bought by drivers
 - A portion of the community oil revenue share.
- Increased conflict between Turkana and Pokot pastoralists over boundary, and also roadblocks by the Pokot, to agitate for local oil revenue shares and jobs.
- Speculation by elites on LAPSSET route
- Inadequate participation and even intimidation of pastoralists to give way to LAPSSET route. Turkana County government took it to court where it remains.

Turkana: struggling to benefit from oil and LAPSSET

- *The elites in the community who know where it will pass are prepared. Some people have earmarked the land where LAPSSET will pass, put up structures and registered the land (county official).*

Samburu: What happens in group ranches?

- Group ranches created from 1960s onwards in Maasai and Samburu lands to organise and develop their land. Many failed and are subdividing into private plots.
- In Samburu many group ranches joined to become conservancies and LAPSSET will pass through many of these.
- Conservation actors are a strong voice and have been able to shape LAPSSET plans.
- The government wants more conservancies, and controversially therefore more armed conservancy rangers to help secure the conflict-prone north where LAPSSET will pass.
- Conservancy boards have been able to negotiate compensation for electricity pylons under another large project (KETRACO). But conservancy boards are often not trusted by the communities in the distribution/use of that compensation leading members to demand for the “ATM” option.
- Kalama conservancy is collectively investing in land in Archer’s Post

Samburu: What happens in group ranches?

- *The moment we heard the snake [LAPSSET] is passing, we started seeing things. Members within [the conservancy] started demarcating land. Others started grabbing. The church came [in the name of] religion, then grabbed. (Ward administrator)*
- *Recently, we got almost 50 million shillings [\$500,000] from KETRACO as compensation ... What we saw is 8 million that was given to members. The remaining money, we were told, will be kept for us; they will build for us a project, so it goes on and on ... All those golden opportunities like the snake [LAPSSET], they will pay group-ranch management. (Member of a conservancy in Samburu)*

Isiolo: The land rush and interethnic tensions

- A hub of LAPSSET developments and other developments: the Isiolo–Mandera road; a planned resort city (in Garbatula sub-county); and the Crocodile Jaw Dam, to the west of Isiolo town.
- Numerous examples of speculation. One respondent mentioned that his father's land had been taken and sold on in the previous week.
- Isiolo airport project: from 2014 relocations were riddled with corruption and false claimants (several elite grabbers) and hundreds remain displaced.
- Elliot (2016) describes individual and collective 'propertying' in Isiolo town – that is, acquiring land titles, with different ethnic groups trying to prevent others from political domination (ibid.).
- In September 2019, the Ministry of Lands issued a notice to adjudicate a large part of Isiolo county which was successfully opposed by several Isiolo County representatives.
- Meru-Isiolo boundary: a long-standing conflict has been inflamed by LAPSSET. Meru county have begun administering a contested area and issuing titles there (same administrator as the airport fiasco)
- Not only an ethnic issue, even some Meru farmers have been displaced



CONCLUSIONS

Isiolo: The land rush and interethnic tensions

- *People are hearing about LAPSSET and coming to buy land. Many rich people are coming to buy land. The locals are worried ... The Meru come and say, 'I have papers, and where you are in Gambela is my land'. I see that when the road comes, the situation is going to get worse. We hear that the lands where our animals graze are taken. We hear rumours from neighbours our land has been taken (local Borana man).*
- *We will refuse LAPSSET. We are pastoralists, and our livelihood is animals. LAPSSET will finish us. This is the fear ... We, Borana, are in trouble ... Meru are in Ngaremara; Meru have woken up because of the road; all the jobs, benefits will go to Meru ... They want to snatch our land. Blood will be poured if they want to take our resources. (Borana elder)*
- *The land issue has brought tension. Marking is done by everyone including outsiders. The entire area is now marked red, blue, green, white (local businessman)*

Isiolo: The land rush and interethnic tensions

- In rural areas pastoralist groups are strategically settling near the new development zones both for economic opportunities and compensation.
- Garissa-based Aulihan Somali pastoralists increasingly settling in Isiolo due to LAPSSSET and the Isiolo-Mandera road (B9).
- Tensions: numerous media accounts of deaths and displacements, and in one area in 2021 explosives were used by a Somali group against a Borana settlement.
- The conflict is widely viewed by the Borana as territorial, rather than resource-based (though also rainfall sparse since 2016 (Mkutu 2022))
- In response, certain Borana political elites have encouraged Borana to also settle near the projects and prevent Somali from doing the same: “Mobilisation-Occupy B9.”

Conclusions: Economic opportunities and economic exclusion

- While economic opportunities brought by LAPSSET can potentially boost entire communities and offer a trade-off for increased challenges to people's livelihoods, they can also worsen inequalities.
- Elites or non-pastoralists more likely to benefit
- 'The fruits are too high for the locals to reach.' This is an issue of capacity.
- The same pastoralists likely to be displaced are also poorly placed to anticipate and plan for new opportunities.

Conclusions: Participation inadequacies and ironies

- For less empowered citizens, there are many limitations on effective participation in pastoral areas and inadequate budgets
- Several more empowered citizens have been informed and have positioned themselves to benefit. Participation may not overcome this if people are party to inside information.
- Participation may replicate and reinforce inequalities where elites have acted as intermediaries (also observed by Rodgers, 2021).
- Local elites are not all ‘bad news’; some also use local knowledge and position to ensure representation, fight for land rights and provide employment for pastoralists.

Conclusions: Privatisation and enclosure

- There is a trend towards privatisation and the enclosure of common resources (also Cormack 2016; Elliott 2016, 2018; Greiner 2016; Lind et al. 2020).
- Even pastoralists are involved speculation and privatisation.
- In Samburu there is both individualised grabbing of community land and collective speculation in a nearby town.
- Similarly, Borana in Isiolo are creating ranches as a collective ethnicised land claim (similar to Elliot 2016). However this limits communal land also.
- Creation of conservancies is also an anticipatory activity by pastoralists to protect their land, which results in enclosure.
- As noted by Cormack (2016) there is a tension between initiatives to protect pastoralists' interests in land, and the simultaneous exclusive territorialisation that those initiatives produce.

Conclusions: Emerging conflicts

- Conflicts are increasingly about who belongs? and who has the right to benefit from the compensation and opportunities of development?
- Contestation and conflict are being used in an anticipatory and pre-emptive manner in order to secure hoped-for benefits.
- In Isiolo and Turkana, some conflicts have taken a territorial dimension with attempts at removing the opposing ethnic group with the aim of limiting access to the benefits of LAPSSET
- Communities in Turkana prevent oil transport to agitate for job opportunities, encouraged by politicians. (Mkutu and Boru 2019).
- In Samburu, community militarisation is planned in the guise of conservation for securing LAPSSET
- Conflict is not only the result of differing visions or grievances but is a strategic anticipatory behaviour of its own.

For full text and list of references please see:

Mkutu, Kennedy (2022) "Anticipation and Contestation Along the LAPSSET Infrastructure Corridor in Kenya." *Nomadic Peoples*, 26 (2): 190-218.