



IPPIA



bicc Bonn
International Centre
for Conflict Studies



JSPS



Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IPPIA) warmly invites you to the seminar:

Socioecological Changes and Conflicting Visions at Frontiers of Development in East Africa

9:00 am - 4:00pm, Thursday 18th November 2021

Venue: School of Humanities, United States International University (virtual and in-person attendance)



Africa is currently witnessing an unprecedented boom in large-scale investments which have come to be known as mega-projects. These include transport networks, energy projects (including wind and solar as well as conventional sources), mineral and petroleum extraction and agricultural intensification often accompanied by irrigation schemes. As one writer puts it “Megaproject development, as it seems, is implemented with the force

of bulldozers, cutting corridors of economic growth into rural hinterlands and pushing the frontiers of modernization towards the margins” (Muller-Mahn et al 2020). The agenda is often pushed by African states in collaboration with resource-hungry foreign states (Carmody 2011) and in particular China under its Belt and Road Initiative announced in 2013 (Chen 2016).

The context for this wave of development is largely rural, often marginalized areas. These may be characterised as “frontier areas” set for transformation, even “civilisation” where planners may be ignorant of existing social orders and land-use practices (Moseley and Watson, 2016). In such areas, the vision of planners is the most powerful, but not the only vision of the future. There may be various expectations, plans and orientations towards the future which may collide or converge (Cross 2014).

In Kenya, the planned LAPSET corridor is to traverse six counties in the arid/semi-arid pastoral rangelands of the north. Roads have already undergone extensive renovations connecting Kenya's interior with South Sudan and Ethiopia, while the Isiolo-Mandera road connecting to Somalia is in the final planning stages. The 500km Standard Gauge railway from Mombasa through Nairobi passes through around 500km of rural rangeland and national parks, currently terminating in Suswa, a small, water scarce town in a predominantly Maasai area. An important site of oil extraction is located in Turkana, one of the most remote and marginalized corners of the country where the state penetration has been historically low.



What are the ecological and social implications of such projects? Do they herald a new era of inclusion and prosperity for rural communities, or displacement, exclusion and environmental scarcity? What are the various visions of different actors and how do these collide or converge? How do the visions of the powerful affect access to common-pool rangeland resources such as land, pasture, water, flora and fauna? How do the existing legal frameworks and institutions protect or expose rural communities? And how do conflicting visions impact upon conflict dynamics where resource-based and ethno-political conflicts are already frequent?

If you wish to present a paper kindly correspond with one of the organizers listed below, providing an abstract before Friday 29th October.

Dr Klerkson Lugusa klugusa@usiu.ac.ke

Evelyne Owino mcowino.evelyne@gmail.com

Nobu Inazumi nobu.inazumi@gmail.com

