Article | Monitoring Mogadishu

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Abstract

Technology-based surveillance practices have changed the modes of policing found in the global North but have yet to influence police–citizen engagement in Southern cities such as Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Based on the role played by monitoring in Mogadishu’s formal security plan and in an informal neighbourhood watch scheme in Waberi district, this article uses a policy-oriented approach to generate insight into surveillance and policing in a fragile and seemingly dysfunctional environment. It shows that while watching is an integral aspect of everyday life, sophisticated technologies capable of digitally capturing real-time events play no part in crime reporting or in the monitoring of terrorist threats, and information is delivered by using basic and inclusive methods such as word of mouth, rather than by mobile telephones or social media. Indeed, the availability of technologies such as CCTV has actually resulted in the reproduction and reinforcement of older models of policing; even when the need to monitor security threats encourages residents to engage with the task of policing, their responses reflect local preferences and legacy issues dating from the 1970s and 2000s. In other words, policing practice has not been reconfigured. In Mogadishu, as in most of the world, the policing task is shaped as much by residents’ expectations as by the technologies available.

Introduction

It is often assumed that the use of technologies capable of monitoring or capturing real-time events enables people to become more engaged in surveillance and policing. In fact, this belief reflects the experience and aspirations of countries in the Americas, Europe, and the Arab world, rather than in, for example, the forty-six countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where the state is often absent and informal or community-based groups provide the bulk of everyday policing (Kyed 2013). The assumption that technology’s capacity to enhance surveillance can change established modes of networked or plural policing is equally misleading. This is notably so in Somalia’s capital, Mogadishu.

Mogadishu’s experience is extreme, so using it to explore the relationship between surveillance and policing runs the risk of making it a straw man, yet it helps to rebalance a picture that is otherwise weighted towards research in and on industrialised liberal democracies such as the USA and UK. The untidiness and volatility of Mogadishu’s security environment also acts as a reminder that, in much of the world, peoples’ engagement with the task of policing owes little to technology—or to state-based structures and clearly defined formal actors—and everything to legacy issues, contingencies, power politics, and local preferences. Indeed, the results of billions of Euros, sterling, and US dollars—and Turkish lira and Japanese yen—spent on international aid projects have had significantly less influence on Mogadishu’s police–community relations than its legacy of civil war and insurgency, memories of the Soviet-influenced surveillance methods used during the 1970s and 1980s, widespread acceptance of coercion in everyday life, a blend of formal and informal policing initiatives, and, importantly, legal pluralism. For, Somali expectations are underpinned by customary, traditional, and Islamic law rather than state-based law.

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As a result, Mogadishu provides generic and contextual insights that help to illustrate the layered complexity of surveillance while allowing us to observe the practicalities of monitoring and policing both as sophisticated technology projects and as everyday experience. The results do not necessarily overlap, but together they reflect surveillance's realities and help to put contemporary surveillance studies into analytical and empirical perspective. Thus, Mogadishu's experience affirms surveillance as a balance between control and care (Lyon 2006) and as watching (Lyon 2018), but also challenges the tendency of international analysts to treat it as essentially a security measure relating to data interception for sophisticated policing and intelligence purposes (RUSI 2015) or as an opportunity to exploit big data, drones, and wearables (Surveillance Studies Centre 2018). And it questions the centrality of a scholarly agenda focusing on liberal concerns such as privacy, discrimination, and racial diversity (Koskela 2012; Rule 2012; Browne 2012) and the reconfiguration of institutional norms that this is thought to require (Ferguson 2017). Specifically, Mogadishu's neighbourhood watch schemes show how residents embrace basic and inclusive modes of physical surveillance and informal policing while rejecting the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) to digitally capture real-time events, hold security providers to account, reconfigure policing, engage with marginalised groups, or prevent crime. The schemes illustrate the particular role played by monitoring and watching in Mogadishu's social fabric and policing provision while confirming that surveillance is "produced, constructed, or perceived through actions, objects, and narrations" (Green and Zurawski 2015: 39).

This suggests two observations which may help to rebalance the focus of surveillance studies. First, in fragile but strategically significant Southern cities such as Mogadishu, the legacy of conflict and the business of power (de Waal 2015) combine with minimal technical and institutional resources to ensure that surveillance is best understood in a basic and descriptive sense: it is about people watching and monitoring behaviour or incidents for the purpose of influencing others, rather than for exploiting digital technology, valued though this may be. Similar dynamics are found in Kano, the biggest city in Nigeria's Islamic north (Hills 2014a: 14). Second, and more importantly, it demonstrates that technology-based surveillance practices rarely change the modes of networked policing found across Africa.

Based on research conducted in Mogadishu in August 2016, this article explores the role of surveillance and policing in the city's security provision. Its policy-oriented analysis is framed by the counterterrorism at the heart of Mogadishu's formal security plan, but its investigation focuses on the neighbourhood watch scheme found in Waberi district and the use it makes of monitoring and ICT. The article does not seek to conceptualise surveillance in Somali society so much as to use Waberi's neighbourhood watch scheme as a concrete expression of problems and problem-solving that helps to generate insight into the nature of surveillance and policing in an otherwise inaccessible environment.

The discussion develops in five parts. First, the context in which Somali surveillance and policing operate is outlined and, second, the actors and realities involved are introduced. Third, the use of technology for surveillance is assessed. Fourth, monitoring is discussed in the light of Waberi's experience and, fifth, the article concludes that, rather than supporting the belief that digitally enabled surveillance can capture criminal acts or reposition policing practices, Mogadishu's experience acts as a salutary reminder that in many parts of the world the most successful and sustainable forms of monitoring rely on word of mouth and reinforce existing modes of policing.

Context Is Key

The significance of context is recognised in both surveillance and police studies yet many academics, policy-makers, and practitioners universalise the applicability of liberal norms such as accountability, diversity, privacy, and professionalism, which are then applied to security practices in conservative and patriarchal countries such as Somalia, where the state is essentially a charade. To its credit, in 2017 *Surveillance & Society* explored the relationship between political forms and surveillance in a special issue on the authoritarian models of state surveillance found in, amongst others, Angola, Ethiopia, and Uganda (Murakami Wood 2017). But, in practice, most scholarly and policy-oriented publications address the

concerns and practices of the global North rather than the South. Thus Part III of 2012's 472-page *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies* (Ball, Haggerty, and Lyon 2012) emphasises the importance of context even as it focuses on developments in North America and the European Union; one chapter addresses surveillance in Latin America but sub-Saharan Africa's record is dismissed in a few brief references to the atypical case of South Africa.

This trend also links into Green and Zurawski's (2015: 40) observation that surveillance studies uses strategies based on "the identification of research fields or sites defined as surveillance in an a priori way (via the identification of . . . specific technical systems or organizational boundaries)" when it should be founded on "the emergent properties of field relations as they are enacted and practiced in everyday life." For surveillance is, they argue, "produced, constructed, or perceived through actions, objects, and narrations—it is through the mundane activities of policing provision and everyday life that all of these become visible and researchable" (2015: 39). It is based as much in everyday narratives and practices, such as watching, as in technological systems and expert practices (compare Lyon 2018; Webster et al. 2013).

This is notably so in Mogadishu, the capital of both Somalia and the Benadir Regional Administration that covers the same area as the city. Mogadishu is a city where surveillance, suspicion, and distrust are part of everyday life, even as the international community provides its dysfunctional security forces with the technical resources needed to counter terrorism. It is also a violent city in which the deeply situated ethnography advocated by Green and Zurawski (2015) is for now impossible. Nevertheless, this article's reliance on a combination of field and desk-based research supports their approach while providing sufficient material to assess the contribution of digital technology to Mogadishu's surveillance and policing practices.

Unanswered Questions

Somalia is no longer categorised as the world's "most utterly failed state" (*Economist* 2008), but it topped the *Failed States Index* from 2008 until 2014 when it was replaced by South Sudan (Fund for Peace 2017). The legacy of twenty-eight years of violence means that the security threats confronting Mogadishu are overlapping, mutually reinforcing, and indicative of broader political and social tensions. Terrorism adds drama to this picture, as does the presence of more AK-47s, machine guns, mines, mortars, and rocket launchers than during the 2000s (Africa Intelligence 2016), but neither alter the overall picture of chronic insecurity.

The effects of this on surveillance and policing provision are both negative and positive; terrorism, clan-based conflict, violent crime, and corruption are major features of everyday life but so too are entrepreneurialism, creativity, adaptability, and social cohesion. Little is known about the techniques residents use to minimise exposure to harm in the face of the city's high rates of theft, forced detention, sexual violence, and gun-related murders, which many see as components of broader dynamics rather than as individual events (OCVP 2014: 21), but it is clear that they must fend for themselves. The police are absent, ineffective, or distrusted; politicians do not care about the problems of ordinary people; and access to security and justice depends on clan-based commitments and obligations filtered through clan affiliation and the social monitoring associated with it (Luling 2006; Gundel 2009).

Somalia's international backers assume that residents would prefer to replace this approach with functioning and accountable intelligence and police forces capable of monitoring threats effectively, whereas this may not be the case. Little is known about the beneficiaries of today's approach and basic questions remain unanswered: How does a non-functioning government monitor residents? What forms of surveillance work best? If Mogadishu's administration is as ineffectual as it seems, who has a city-wide overview of its monitoring and policing networks? How does it facilitate the community mobilisation needed to manage terrorism and crime in the absence of an effective police? How do the city's two and a half million residents relate to the task of policing (World Population Review 2016)? Does ICT have the potential to improve public engagement?

Role of Surveillance

The most significant feature of Mogadishu's policing environment is that provision operates across a number of levels which, despite a marked lack of coordination, comprise a coherent field, empirically and analytically (Hills 2018). Although formal and informal actors and practices interact, individuals move between security forces (Africa Intelligence 2016: 1,432) and surveillance responsibilities are fragmented (Hourelid and Sheikh 2017), politicians and residents accommodate the situation, tolerating ambiguities and choosing their reporting channels and policing providers according to the circumstances they find themselves in. Many residents say they would prefer to report crime to the police, but that this is not practical because the police release suspects as soon as their relatives pay a suitable bribe (OCVP 2014: 18). Similarly, most residents have access to a mobile phone or SIM card, but no one uses mobiles to record or report crime or suspicious incidents—they are too easily monitored by the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA); al-Shabaab, the largest and most successful militant organisation operating in Somalia (Hansen 2016); or the powerful businessmen owning the telecommunications sector.

Residents' choices are also affected by the various security forces being undisciplined, uncoordinated, and infiltrated by al-Shabaab sympathisers (OCVP 2014: vii, viii; Hourelid and Sheikh 2017). Confusion over their respective roles is increased by police being called soldier-policemen, NISA troops described as detectives, taxmen referred to as policemen, and by militia and criminals wearing police uniforms. Indeed, many regard the Somali Police Force (SPF) as being little better than clan militia in uniform (OCVP 2014: 16). In practice, residents manage this situation by watching their neighbours and looking to militia groups for policing. Indeed, militia are the most reliable source of protection and are used by everyone, including politicians (Menkhaus 2016).

Just as the city's environment is shaped by crime, under-development, and extremism (and its problems are exacerbated by legacy issues and social preferences), so too its preferred forms of surveillance and policing accommodate a variety of formal and informal initiatives that intersect rather than run in parallel. But anecdotally most security officers agree that the critical issue affecting high-level provision is terrorism and the need to develop surveillance skills to counter it. This is not to suggest that the current level of insecurity is best seen as a struggle between the government and al-Shabaab. Rather, it represents a threat that potentially affects everyone, from politicians in the presidential compound of Villa Somalia to boys working in the fish market. Additionally, there are innumerable instances of al-Shabaab targeting members of parliament, judges, and state representatives such as tax collectors, police, soldiers, and NISA agents, as well as elders and NGO activists, and there is anecdotal evidence of al-Shabaab gunmen being hired by residents to kill their business or political competitors. In other words, terrorism reinforces, and is reinforced by, clan-based politics, societal insecurity, and crime. Effective surveillance is needed if the city's security providers are to respond to the threat this represents.

The role of surveillance is, however, difficult to assess when the threat has more to do with the attempt by key actors to access desirable resources than a power struggle between the government and al-Shabaab (de Waal 2015). Further, substantial anecdotal evidence exists of Somali authorities exploiting, accommodating, undermining, ignoring, or mimicking the processes and values promoted by their international sponsors in order to gain specific goals (Bhabha 1994: 121–22; Hills 2014b). Nevertheless, insight is offered by two initiatives: Mogadishu's formal city security plan and the informal neighbourhood watch scheme found in Waberi district, both of which are driven by fears about al-Shabaab's activities. The city security plan is a top-down surveillance and policing initiative influenced by Somalia's international backers, whereas neighbourhood watch is a bottom-up Somali-driven watching and reporting scheme, but together they address the time-urgent needs of counterterrorism and the community mobilisation, monitoring, and cohesion that helps to offset dysfunctional governance.

Mogadishu's Hybrid Security

Not until 2015 did Benadir's regional administration develop and implement a plan that acknowledged the federal government's inability to conduct surveillance or gather the intelligence needed to manage the threat

posed by al-Shabaab. Originally Somali-driven, the plan was supported by the UK, which encouraged the adoption of an integrated and multi-agency approach based on British experience (Hills 2016). As a result, it offers insights into intelligence collection in Mogadishu while illustrating the ways in which international procedures and technologies are adapted to suit local priorities and preferences.

In theory the specialist skills found in the plan's operations and units should enhance the surveillance and monitoring required by, for example, its Joint Operations Coordination Centre (JOCC). This has a dedicated suite of facilities equipped with ICT, though its ability to fulfil its role depends on it receiving verifiable intelligence from NISA, the police, the army, the Immigration and Naturalisation Service, the Somali Correction Corps, and the African Union and specialist international organisations as well as the city's neighbourhood watch schemes. A Joint Intelligence Management Centre then collates the intelligence received in order to develop the common operating picture needed for targeting al-Shabaab's networks. But in practice, the sustainability of the plan's current structure is questionable; regular attendance and the fulfilment of work schedules depend on the presence of international advisers and trainers who will leave once their funding finishes. Nevertheless, this evidently does not affect surveillance adversely and for now the various parts of the plan form a relatively coherent approach. The joint centres use intelligence flows originating in the street, and while neighbourhood watch operates at the entry level it also acts as a conduit for information from the district security committees to the district information management centres that play a part in the overall plan. In turn, district security committees implement the national and city security plans at the district level and help to determine the operational priorities of the SPF and NISA.

Factors Influencing Surveillance

The challenges confronting Mogadishu's security plan act as a reminder of surveillance realities in the global South. Just as the absence of reliable electricity and internet connectivity complicates the use of technology for intelligence purposes so the transfer of technical knowledge and skills is obstructed by local conditions. This is evident in the case of the SPF's approach to policing and monitoring, which diverges from that promoted by donors because it reflects the differences between policing delivered by the state (as in the UK) and policing delivered through social processes in a legally plural society. It reflects local practices and priorities as well, many of which concern money or property, and this must affect surveillance and policing. The overall picture is further complicated by three factors: the widespread use of coercion, population demographics, and tactical flexibility.

First, while it is widely accepted that a monopoly on the legitimate use of coercion is a defining element of the police role (Bittner 1970), socially sanctioned coercion has long played a significant role in Mogadishu's daily life; the Somali preference for negotiation, informal arrangements, and tactical manoeuvre is underpinned by the threat of physical or political violence (Hoehne and Luling 2010). Additionally, Mogadishu is the site of multiple conflicts over territory, trade monopolies, and political power fought by people without an interest in institutions or security forces they cannot control, and policing reflects this: it is part of the same political dynamics as clannism, conflict, entrepreneurialism, and fragmentation. Indeed, clan-based commitments and obligations are the only guarantees that Somalis can use to deal with the consequences of insecurity.

Second, although Mogadishu's population is overwhelmingly young (according to IndexMundi 2017, 43.42 per cent are under the age of 14), memories of the effective surveillance introduced by former president Siad Barre during the 1970s and '80s are strong amongst older Somalis (Barre fled Mogadishu in 1991 but had been in power since 1969). Indeed, many of today's senior police officers were trained in the Soviet Union, China, and Egypt and acknowledge the technical attractions of Barre's approach even as they disown its brutality (there is no financial or social incentive for officers to retire).¹ This trend is even stronger amongst intelligence organisations. Barre's domestic intelligence agency was by far that era's strongest

¹ Comment based on private conversations with the author in Somaliland and Puntland in 2011, and in Mogadishu in 2016.

institution (RBC Radio 2013), and the last seven years have seen powerful clans from across Somalia create agencies modelled on his force.

A third factor—tactical flexibility—probably influences attitudes too, particularly for senior officers who are aware of international policing practices but must navigate between the contradictory demands of the government’s need for counterterrorism, clan-based calculations and imperatives, donors’ insistence on democratic standards (see OECD DAC 2007) and legal pluralism. Policing is affected by Somalis prioritising reconciliation and reparation over retribution and punishment, and preferring informal alternatives to formal sentencing and detention, and surveillance may also be similarly affected. Additionally, monitoring and policing is provided by militia and clan groups loyal to factional leaders and district commissioners as well as by businessmen and Shari’a courts; officers must accommodate the views and priorities of local elders and district security committees, because they are the ones dealing with everyday land or water disputes and goat theft, not police. And everyone is potentially affected by al-Shabaab’s presence, which makes policing—and surveillance in particular—a dangerous business.

In truth, little is known about the nature of everyday police business (Hills 2014c). Most officers spend their days in their station or post and rarely display initiative, yet cooperative monitoring and information collection arrangements exist: militias loyal to Mogadishu’s district commissioners ensure that people returning to their neighbourhoods register at a police station. Also, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) provide investigative courses, while the UK and USA use contractors such as Aktis and Bancroft to deliver training for criminal intelligence and forensic purposes, which easily slide into surveillance (anecdotally, the most valued forms of training are those aligned to NISA’s surveillance requirements). But regardless of the SPF’s role or the role of NISA and its rapid-reaction counterterrorism force, Gaashaan or “Shield” is more powerful.

Coercive Operations Dominate

NISA, which reverted to “plain clothes” duties in late 2017 (*Horn Observer* 2017), is, with the exception of al-Shabaab, the most effective provider of surveillance. Donors regard it as constitutionally illegitimate, but the federal government justifies its role in terms of the 1970 Decree 14 establishing Barre’s National Security Service (NSS), Article 6 of which stated that members of the NSS could conduct arrests without a warrant (it was enough that they had been informed or suspected that a crime against state security had been committed). NISA’s position is further strengthened by its role as the intelligence agency of the ambitious Benadir Regional Administration (BRA), which, headed by the mayor of Mogadishu, covers the city’s seventeen districts and plays a significant role in its politics and policing, receiving fifteen per cent of the federal budget (Shabelle Media Network 2018; UN OCHA 2012). NISA also receives information from residents. Following tip-offs in January 2017, NISA “detectives” stormed a house in Waberi district suspected of producing counterfeit US dollars (Shabelle 2017a). That thousands of fake dollars were impounded is unimportant—Somalia is a leading producer of counterfeit dollars. What matters is that the operation took place in the home of Mogadishu’s most successful neighbourhood watch scheme, the tip was given to NISA, rather than the police, and NISA then acted.

Overall, the government’s tolerance of NISA’s robust methods is suggestive of its understanding of the current policing environment, as is the award of money to “police members” who arrest or kill al-Shabaab “assassins” (AMISOM 2016). In practice, NISA agents routinely carry out mass sweeps and hold and mistreat detainees for long periods without following due process (US Department of State 2016: 4; Waagacusub 2016). A typical series of incidents occurred in September 2016 when, in the course of a house-to-house search in Wadajir district, heavily armed “security forces” arrested twenty young men suspected of belonging to al-Shabaab. Several days later, an al-Shabaab assassin who had killed a senior security official in Hodan district was shot dead, while two suspected assassins (they had killed an elderly man) were injured in a separate gun fight. Sweeps are also conducted by Somali forces and AMISOM; on one day in the run-up to 2017’s presidential election, dozens of youths in Wadajir and Waberi were arrested in an attempt to prevent al-Shabaab attacks (Shabelle 2017b).

In these circumstances, technology-based surveillance and democratic modes of accountability mean little, but even if this were not so, most NISA agents and police officers lack the technical skills and discipline required for systematic surveillance. Few follow chains of evidence in the way that a European officer might, and many have no understanding of why evidence should be collected.² Indeed, with the exception of NISA's Gaashaan units, which are trained in urban operations by US and international advisers, and the SPF's specialised bomb disposal units, Somali forces lack the motivation, training, skills, and resources needed to conduct systematic and time-consuming operations requiring surveillance, and those that are effective do not necessarily operate in a manner acceptable to donors (Scahill 2014). Further, the Somali preference for clan-based selection, informal decision-making, tactical flexibility, and settling slights and disputes with guns exacerbates the fragmented, reactive, and coercive nature of surveillance and policing provision. Thus May 2017 saw Somali National Army (SNA) troops exchange fire with NISA guards when a NISA convoy was stopped at a security checkpoint outside the Benadir administration's headquarters, while July saw four soldiers killed by NISA in a clash near Villa Somalia (AMISOM 2017; Shabelle 2017c). Nine died in September when police mistook soldiers for clan militia (Sheikh and Omar 2017).

Regardless of NISA operations, countering terrorism depends ultimately on the willingness of residents to inform the authorities of suspicious strangers or incidents. This is difficult when al-Shabaab punishes informers and demographic changes undermine community cohesion and mobilisation. Government representatives and local elders may encourage people to report the whereabouts of al-Shabaab's leaders, financiers, and hidden explosives, but the results are meagre; cash-for-tips schemes fail and no one uses AMISOM's 888 emergency response number (Pelton, Nuxurkey, and Osman 2012; Askar 2013). Donors have suggested that tips would increase if residents use mobiles to contact the police and report their concerns from a distance, but to date there is no evidence of new technologies enhancing community-based monitoring.

The Limits of New Technology

This is not to suggest that technology plays no part in Mogadishu's security plans. Computer-based resources contribute to the Joint Operations Coordination Centre's work while the city's central districts have seen the introduction of a range of ICT-based tools for monitoring and enhancing visibility—most notably, mobiles and CCTV. However, none have resulted in the development of new models of surveillance or policing, and word of mouth remains the preferred method for communications. Further, residents continue to rely on elders, militia, and customary law for their everyday policing needs, rather than the police. If anything, the use of ICT appears to have revitalised or reinforced the engagement practices found during the transitional period of the early 2000s.

Mobiles

At first glance, Mogadishu's combination of cheap call tariffs, easy access to SIM cards, and the use of affordable and widely-available Chinese-made mobiles as a tool for sharing information about family news, stock prices, and animal health (Onyulo 2016) suggests that ICT can be used for monitoring and policing. Donors argue that ICT—and mobile telephones in particular—play “a key and integrated role in accelerating progress” (DFID 2007) while improving “service” delivery and accountability as part of a broader reform agenda (World Bank 2016). The expectation is that ICT-based solutions can improve access to police and mobilise residents to fight crime while helping to improve trust, accountability, and the community's willingness to contribute to policing (compare Bruce and Tait 2015 for the use of open source body cameras in Cape Town). Such beliefs are heavily dependent on the experience of Kenya where social media is used for community policing (Omanga 2015) and open-source tracking systems such as Ushahidi, which allows users to send crisis information via mobiles, and Usalama, a smartphone emergency application, have been successful. However, Kenya's experience has not transferred.

² Comments based on the author's personal observations and private conversations in police stations, training colleges, and the offices of international organisations in Somaliland, Puntland, and Mogadishu in 2011, 2015, and 2016.

There is no evidence to suggest that mobiles are used to support everyday monitoring or policing in Mogadishu or facilitate new models of policing. Admittedly, many international commentators believe that connecting to social media changes people's expectations for real-time information, especially in relation to security (Centre of African Studies 2016). But while this may be true in Egypt or the USA, there is little support for it in Mogadishu. With the exception of a few individuals, police have not altered their ways of interacting with the public, while most residents continue to avoid the police. Personal observation suggests that few police in Mogadishu—or in the neighbouring entities of Somaliland and Puntland—see any need to engage with the populace and, when they do, contact is made in person at the police station (compare Hills 2017).³

CCTV

Close circuit television (CCTV), a form of ICT much favoured for monitoring in the global North, is now present in Mogadishu but has yet to facilitate new modes of policing. In early March 2016, the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) sought expressions of interest for the installation of CCTV cameras in the city, and by July 2016 there were approximately forty cameras monitoring traffic and security at high-profile buildings such as regional police headquarters and the Bank of Somalia, though there was no monitoring room. In January 2017 when the UNDP's Rule of Law project for CCTV was formally inaugurated, cameras were installed in key locations and fifteen officers were trained in their use. This would, it was claimed, mean that the SPF "are able to monitor high risk areas, and investigate and solve crime by using CCTV as evidence" as well as respond rapidly to security threats (UN MPTF 2017).

CCTV's primary target is terrorism and its associated forms of crime, and there is good reason for this: in February 2016, footage from Aden Adde International Airport showed a man in a security jacket handing a laptop containing a bomb to a suicide bomber who detonated the device on a Daallo Airlines flight as it left for Djibouti (Mezzofiore 2016). Further, CCTV is potentially especially useful during Ramadan when insecurity increases. In June 2016, for example, Waberi's district police commissioner used crime prevention to justify a pilot CCTV project. He said that the first batch of cameras, which had been installed around the district police station area along Makka Al-Mukarrama road, would "enable the law enforcement agencies to verify identities of those involved in latent criminal activities, while closely monitoring the city" (MCRS 2016). He asked the public to help the police protect the city by reporting suspicious sightings. But whether CCTV provides more than graphic images is open to question, because it did not prevent a car bomb destroying the police station on 23 July 2017. Contrast the situation during Ramadan in 2018 when roadblocks and street closures dramatically reduced the number of explosions (AMISOM 2018a).

CCTV cameras are too vulnerable to be more than a gesture, and their value is further limited by the challenges of coordinating, consolidating, and implementing their operational results (Hourelid and Sheikh 2017). Meanwhile the use of ICT (and mobiles in particular) for surveillance is offset by Somalia's weak central government, tight links between businessmen and politicians, corruption, low literacy rates, poverty, high rates of theft, and a strong private telecommunications sector that in the absence of regulation has been able to develop influential political and commercial networks (CGCS 2014). Unsurprisingly, even literate residents prefer to use basic and inclusive forms of ICT.

Images, Cartoons, and Theatre

Voice telephony and SMS are rarely used for monitoring or policing purposes in chronically insecure cities with low literacy rates, because information is collected most safely in person or by word of mouth. As a result, the most appropriate ways to do this in Mogadishu's districts are taught using blackboards, megaphones, cartoons, painted murals, and theatrical performances. Understood in this sense, ICT can provide the training, guidance, and encouragement necessary for improving community engagement and

³ Comment based on personal observations and conversations with low, mid, and senior Somalia police officers in Nairobi and Mogadishu (September 2011, July 2016), Garowe (September 2011), and Hargeisa (December 2015). The most explicit statements to this effect came from low-ranking officers attending Somaliland's Mandera training academy in 2011.

reporting, though not police response rates or new policing models. Rather than standing for information and communications technology, ICT is better understood as “images, cartoons, and theatre.”

Watching from Below

Given the limitations of technology-based surveillance, successful monitoring and intelligence collection depends on residents’ responses. It is not accidental that recent years have seen the introduction of AMISOM-led community policing projects designed to persuade people that community safety is a shared responsibility (AMISOM 2018b). Everything depends on people’s willingness to report suspicions to the SPF or district authorities, with information usually delivered in person or by word of mouth. But it is dangerous to be seen with the police, while some district commissioners prevent the police from operating in their district, preferring to run their own protection and extortion rackets (Menkhaus 2016: 34). In practice, Mogadishu’s most successful scheme for increasing the community intelligence needed for counterterrorism while facilitating the social mobilisation that enhances monitoring is best seen in the neighbourhood watch scheme found in Waberi district. Two features of the scheme are notable: it looks back to previous practices and it owes nothing to ICT.

Before 2015, Mogadishu’s formal security plans were top-down products that failed to deliver their promises, while its neighbourhood watch groups were little more than vigilantes, clan-based militia, or protection groups designed to respond to criminal violence rather than to ordinary crime. But the new Mogadishu city security plan explicitly acknowledged the role played by residents in intelligence collection and street-level security. It not only included a recommendation to base the city’s response on the reporting structure used by the then mayor’s neighbourhood watch scheme but also it adopted neighbourhood watch as a primary pillar for Mogadishu’s security strategy and policing development.

Significantly, the mayor’s scheme drew on practices used in the 1970s when Barre introduced a form of community policing called *hamuunta* or “directing the people,” which used military reporting mechanisms and control methods to connect people to the state. It also drew on developments in 2002–03, when civil society organisations developed a coordinated and structured community security system based on neighbourhoods. Known as neighbourhood watch and funded by monthly contributions from each household, the scheme used security committees and armed community police officers to monitor crime. Selection and training followed agreed rules while real time security developments were monitored using a popular radio programme called *Hodi Hodi?* (“May I come in?”). The initiative was successful, but it faded after the formation of the Transitional Federal Government in 2004 encouraged the expectation that it would provide security, and it was not until 2013 that Benadir’s regional administration launched the programme that is the precursor of today’s neighbourhood watch. Called the “Fostering Neighbourhood and Social Integration Programme,” it enlisted local people to prevent terrorist attacks and crime. By 2015, it represented the first example of a government-led system for systematically collecting and collating security information and intelligence.

Neighbourhood watch is one of a number of policing projects designed to rally residents. The mayor’s scheme (the most successful) was promoted at the same time as the Ministry of Internal Security introduced a “Know your neighbour” campaign and AMISOM rolled out a version designed to build policing and monitoring partnerships. AMISOM’s system is based on units of households, each of which requires one resident to take charge of ten houses and report on their activities every morning. Waberi’s scheme also consists of a structured approach to gathering intelligence from neighbourhoods—and it shows how monitoring really works. Designed to mobilise the community, it is a Somali-driven initiative that builds on the appointment of community representatives responsible for recording sightings of suspicious individuals, vehicles, and weapons. The results are fed to a neighbourhood team that collates and analyses the information to create a picture of security-relevant activities before passing it to the police, the Ministry of Internal Security, and NISA, with the SPF acting as a filter between neighbourhood watch and the joint intelligence management centre.

Monitoring Waberi

Located to the north-east of Mogadishu's international airport and with the main road from the airport to the presidential palace running through it, Waberi is a densely populated district of some 19,250 inhabitants from non-Somali ethnic minorities (the Benaadiri) living in approximately 3,850 houses laid out on a grid system. The district includes ten informal camps housing 15,000 internally displaced persons.

Its neighbourhood watch scheme is Somali-driven even if for much of 2014–17 it was supported by the British Embassy as a means to increase terrorism-relevant reporting to the regional administration and the police. In practice, this meant that the UK supported neighbourhood watch in order to enhance the police role in counterterrorism and offset NISA's influence while improving communication between the federal government, district commissioners, and local people. For Waberi's residents, the scheme is about improving local safety and minimising al-Shabaab's influence.

Best imagined as a pyramid, neighbourhood watch builds up from "street committee" volunteers representing groups of ten houses to "neighbourhood committee" volunteers representing five street committees (fifty households); sector committees representing four neighbourhood committees (two hundred households); ward committees representing four sectors (eight hundred households); suburb committees representing four ward committees (eighteen hundred households); and a district committee representing four suburbs (seven thousand households). All posts are filled by volunteers, the majority of whom are women (polygamy means that men may have four wives, each of whom has a separate house). Waberi's seven hundred volunteers are organised by six "fieldworkers," each of whom receives a monthly stipend of US\$75. The groups meet every morning and paper records of their observations are passed to the neighbourhood watch office. The information is photocopied before being transferred to Excel spreadsheets (in English) by seventeen inputters, each of whom has a desktop computer supplied by the UK; one networked computer connects to a cloud server. Once a week, a district security committee consisting of the district commissioner and the SPF and NISA district commanders meets.

The scheme sounds complicated and labour intensive, the longevity of the equipment used is unknown, and the production of daily reports in English requires hours of work, yet equipment needs are modest, and labour is not an issue. By the end of 2015, seven hundred people had been trained in the SPF's responsibilities, the scheme's role, and—critically—how to record relevant observations. Literacy levels are low, so training was delivered by using song, theatre, and small-group explanations involving residents, police, and district officials. The success of such methods in improving street-level security, morale, and social cohesion was confirmed by a rise in the district's rents and house prices.

Sustainable Surveillance

A key feature of Waberi's scheme is that it integrates counterterrorism and everyday safety in a way that is politically sanctioned, locally acceptable, and affordable. Every morning representatives meet to identify health, welfare, and safety concerns as well as suspicious vehicles or individuals, and information is then collected, sifted, and fed to Mogadishu's joint intelligence and operations centres. In other words, the scheme provides the control and care elements of surveillance identified by Lyon (2006).

The scheme has few unintended consequences. Admittedly, monitoring and collecting intelligence lays it open to censure by, for example, the EU and UNSOM, which argue that residents reporting incidents may be subject to intimidation or mistaken for spies (one such case resulted in a woman's death in 2015). But the risk of endangering local people is relatively low because the scheme's everyday business is divided between people reporting the presence of suspicious visitors and incidents arising from poverty and unemployment, such as robbery or youths advocating extremism. Its work also involves an element of welfare support, as when women are given a bowl of dhal (their only meal of the day) in return for the street cleaning that helps to prevent explosives being hidden. This matters because neighbourhood watch's acceptability requires it to offer practical value to residents even as it collects and disseminates intelligence to the authorities. Understood in this sense, monitoring plays a role in the city's social fabric as well as in its policing.

The Limits of Digital Technology

Insights reflecting Mogadishu's approach to surveillance, policing, and ICT do not necessarily transfer to Kenya, let alone to surveillance studies in Canada. Nevertheless, Mogadishu's experience adds contextual richness to our understanding of the coercive commonalities at the heart of surveillance and policing, while acting as a salutary reminder of the extent to which mainstream research universalises issues favoured by liberal democracies. It also helps to offset the tendency of theorists addressing abstract entities such as participatory surveillance and surveillant assemblages to downplay the "specificities of surveillance technologies and practices" (Galič, Timan, and Koops 2016: 34). It does not, however, suggest how best to theorise Somali-style surveillance. Bentham and Foucault's architectural theories of surveillance may have been displaced in mainstream studies by the power play and networked surveillance developed by Deleuze, Haggerty and Ericson, and Zuboff (for an overview see Galič, Timan, and Koops 2016) but surveillance continues to be theorised in terms of centralised processes and infrastructural mechanisms that rely on bureaucratic resources or digital technologies, neither of which play a significant role in cities such as Mogadishu.

Similar trends are observable in police studies, with African forces assessed in the light of democratic models of accountability and of classic texts written in mid-twentieth-century America used to frame contemporary analyses (for example, Steinberg 2012). There is, however, a move amongst young European scholars to use anthropological, political, and historical approaches to gain insight into the occupational culture and state building associated with police in Africa (Beek et al. 2017), whereas this is not the case in surveillance studies. There are no known analyses of NISA's role and no accounts of what surveillance studies might look like if it had developed in Mogadishu or Addis Ababa rather than Kingston, Ontario.

Mogadishu's security provision prompts two further observations. First, despite the dysfunctional nature of current provision, aspects of the surveillance and policing employed during the 1970s and '80s remain influential. This means that legacy issues influence contemporary Somali understanding more than donors might wish. More positively, it means that, while individual Somalis have had different experiences of life during Barre's presidency, there is a consensus on what intelligence agencies and police should look like that is reinforced by many officers having received international training during the Cold War. For example, Barre's advocacy of Marxism after 1969 embedded certain Soviet and Chinese approaches, and personal conversations suggest that this influences the attitudes of some senior officers and officials; they look back to a time of relative stability when the SPF was internationally respected.

Second, despite the efforts of donors over the last decade, policing—and therefore police–community engagement—has yet to be reformed. Anecdotally, many Waberi residents are satisfied with the police and wish to support officers in their job, arranging their lives to accommodate the police's limited resources and reactive role. With the exception of low-key collaborative efforts such as neighbourhood watch, neither residents nor police seek to change current patterns of engagement, and neither regards ICT as necessary or especially desirable. In other words, the ways in which residents respond to police helps to reproduce the current relationship.

A more fundamental and generic explanation for the lack of change concerns the resilience of security systems. Resilience alludes to the capability of a system or individual to absorb shocks without shifting to another path, and intelligence and police forces are nothing if not resilient. As the emergence of the SPF and NISA after twenty years of war shows, security systems can absorb dramatic change and structural destruction even when the institution on which they are thought to depend is non-existent and their core purpose is to act as a clan-oriented militia (Hills 2014b). To paraphrase Bayley's (1975: 372) observation about police, security systems are characterised by persistence and impermeability, filtering back "like water rising through sand."

The possibility of digital technology transforming this situation is low. In Mogadishu, as in most of Africa, digital capture plays no part in the monitoring of suspicious incidents by either security forces or residents,

let alone in responding to crime; elite units may value sophisticated technologies but officers in the city's police stations find ballpoint pens, paper, and light bulbs more useful. Nevertheless, watching is a fundamental feature of Somalia's clan-based social processes, and monitoring and recording play an integral part in everyday life. Contrary to Galič, Timan, and Koops' (2017: 34) advice to avoid treating surveillance as an all-encompassing feature of society, Mogadishu's record emphasises the continuing significance of rudimentary and comprehensive forms of monitoring and information collection.

In conclusion, Mogadishu's experience suggests that the availability of technologies such as CCTV is as likely to revitalise or reinforce older approaches to monitoring and policing as to introduce new modes of engagement. Digital technology's potential to capture real-time events in support of policing means little when people distrust politicians, cannot afford to use mobiles, expect little from their reactive and ineffective police, and want an immediate—and coercive—response from their informal security providers. In Mogadishu, as in most of the world, the policing task is shaped as much by residents' expectations as by the technologies available.

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