The EU in the Horn of Africa: Building Resilience as a distant form of Governance

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A visit to the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) website reveals the extent of the EU’s involvement in different global problems. A glance at the homepage also reveals how the Commission is highlighting an increasingly influential idea – that of resilience. Clicking the resilience box offers a choice between Sahel – AGIR – a programme for the hunger hit region of West Africa, and SHARE which stands for Supporting the Horn of Africa’s Resilience. This paper looks at EU responses to disaster events by focussing on policy statements and actions in relation to the Horn of Africa and tries to assess what lies behind the EU’s emphasis on building resilience in this region.

Focussed on Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia, the SHARE project was developed following the region’s 2011 food crisis. Among the cases that might have been chosen, the Horn of Africa is interesting insofar as it so clearly combines natural disaster in the form of drought and climate hazards with human-made crisis, notably the ongoing conflict in Somalia and the movement of refugees across the Horn of Africa region. The EU bills the SHARE programme as a joint humanitarian and development approach that goes from emergency response through to the improvement of public services. It is also talked of as a long-term approach that tries to find lasting solutions to long-term problems. It is for these reasons that the notion of resilience is developed as a way for international organisations, regional bodies and local communities to ‘do business differently’.

Looking at policies towards the Horn of Africa tells us something about how the EU sees itself as a global actor. But although the EU sees itself as somehow distinctive in its normative way of acting, I argue here that such policies as disaster prevention and reconstruction are consistent with other international organisations and government agencies like USAID. In the next section it is argued that such organisations share a particular vocabulary which is becoming increasingly prominent. In relation to the region of study, the case of Somalia remains a strong reminder to all Western governments and organisations of how 1990s-style humanitarian intervention might go wrong. A concern of this piece, therefore, is to show that the EU’s approach is consistent with a broader shift from direct forms of intervention to policies of disaster prevention and preparedness where the aim is to encourage local responsibility so that direct foreign intervention is unnecessary.

However, while these ideas appear to be aimed at disaster prevention and recovery, the broader discourse has more to do with promoting new forms of governance. The increasingly prevalent use of the notion of resilience, a term that is now part of a wide literature from local government to financial organisation to infrastructure protection to disaster prevention, plays an important role in this new discourse. The type of governance being promoted by the EU is one that operates from a distance through monitoring, benchmarking and peer-review. This paper uses the governmentality approach in order to address these shifts in discourse and techniques. This is not to say that there are not problems and limitations to such an approach (see Joseph 2010a, 2012), but a limited deployment helps understand how resilience works as a technique of governance from a distance by helping to responsibilise institutions and populations.
From intervention to governance: governmentality and international organisations

The EU approach to resilience in the Horn of Africa should first be seen in the context of its wider strategy for supporting disaster reduction in developing countries. A Commission Communication on this topic sets out a number of key themes that will be focused on in this paper. It notes how the EU has emerged as the world’s largest aid donor, but expresses concern at the lack of any clear strategy for both development cooperation and humanitarian aid. In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the EU code of conduct on division of labour, a new EU strategy, it is argued, will improve EU policy dialogue on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) ‘while supporting national and local ownership striving to bridge institutional gaps that exist between DRR as a development, a humanitarian and a climate change issue; actively promoting strong in-country and regional coordination between donors and governments with particular emphasis on EU coordination and harmonising methodologies’ (European Commission 2009: 11).

This passage neatly summarises two key goals – building coherence between policies of development and humanitarian aid, and building coherence between different actors at different levels. Indeed, the EU sees itself as a facilitator in the process of linking local, national and international organisations. The new approach emphasises ‘coherence and complimentarily’ both between the humanitarian and development spheres, and among the different levels of disaster management activities (European Commission 2009: 9). An Implementation Plan will help clarify the actions, responsibilities, instruments and means of implementation for the agreed measures, in particular, to:

- Promote the setting up of DRR networks in disaster-prone countries and regions to exchange information and experience and promote opportunities for collaboration and enhanced implementation of the Strategy.
- Establish a forum for regular consultation and exchange with civil society, NGOs and national and regional representatives.
- Establish an appropriate framework to monitor progress and financing, and evaluate the implementation of the strategy. (European Commission 2009: 11)

I will now outline how these key themes of monitoring, review, consultation and exchange, engagement with civil society, NGOs and governments, and the establishment of networks can usefully be seen through the notion of governmentality.

Michel Foucault’s work on governmentality is concerned with the intersection of rationalities and practices of governance. He traces the emergence, alongside established forms of sovereignty and discipline, of new forms of government that take population as their main target, political economy as their means of knowledge and apparatuses of security as their main technical instrument (Foucault 2007: 108). As a strategy toward populations, governmentality works from a distance and in an indirect way as a means of influencing the actions of others. As a liberal form of rule, it places emphasis on governing through an appeal to the freedom of the governed. This works through the ideas of free conduct, self-awareness and self-regulation, something that distinguishes modern governmentality from other types of power and biopolitics. Liberal governmentality works through a continual assessment of government’s need to impose limitations on itself, by respecting the
We can suggest, therefore, that the effectiveness of governmentality depends on how well it is able to govern through others. As can be seen above in the Commission’s approach, this can involve appeals to governments and political institutions, NGOs and civil society organisations as well as smaller groups and individuals. Foucault also talks of governing through the market as a means of intervention into social relations. Such an approach fits particularly well with those accounts wishing to emphasise the neoliberal element of governmentality. It takes the view that neoliberalism is best understood as a form of regulation where conduct is ‘subject to the dynamic of competition’ and ‘regulated by reference to the market’ (Foucault 2008: 147). Neoliberalism is understood here, not as the retreat or ‘hollowing out’ of the state, but the governmentalisation of the state according to the mechanisms of the market. This also fits well with an institutional approach that emphasises governance through devolved responsibility. In the historical context of the unravelling of the postwar institutional settlement, the features of a neoliberal form of governmentality emerge as a rationality intent on devolving power away from centralised state power in favour of working through a network of private and quasi-private bodies that is based on belief in the superiority of market forces and the need to introduce what are often artificially constructed forms of competition into ever more spheres of social life.

Applying such arguments to the EU is not a straightforward process because this in an ongoing area of contestation between more Anglo-Saxon, neoliberal models and more traditional social Europe approaches. Indeed, a study of recent EU documents is interesting precisely because it reflects this struggle. We will see in the documents examined below, that the Commission is pushing a particular view that is more neoliberal in nature. In particular, it is committed to an agenda to bring ‘competitiveness’ and market rules to European institutions and economic relations through such things as the Lisbon Agenda and Europe 2020. The lack of success of Lisbon reflects the difficulties, not of agreeing on what to promote, but in getting Member States to implement the relevant policies. The EU’s networked form of governance with its institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics (Foucault 2007: 108) might reflect a particular form of governmentality, but not necessarily a successful one. Nevertheless, a study of the discourse itself fits well with our understanding of neoliberal governmentality, promoting such things as limited government, public-private partnerships, stakeholding, networks, active agency and a focus on civil society and local community.

Governmentality has been introduced into studies of the way the EU operates. It has mainly been used to look at measures inside the EU, in particular the operation of such things as the Lisbon Agenda and the Open Method of Coordination (e.g. Walters and Haahr (2005), Merlingen (2011), Joseph (2012), Parker (2012). These are good examples of how the Commission exercises network power in pushing good practice, standardisation and peer-review. This paper tries to widen the focus by looking at how the governmentality approach also helps explain some foreign policy initiatives. This is consistent with how the EU sees itself as an actor exercising normative power, but it is also consistent with the partnership approach of other major international organisations and development bodies. Elsewhere (Joseph 2010b, 2012) I have argued that a governmentality approach can help us understand this wider turn in international development. Reflecting the changing institutional focus of international policy, we have witnessed a shift from the roll-back phase of the structural adjustment era to a roll-out phase that seeks to ‘build institutions for markets’ (World Bank 2008). This post-Washington Consensus works through persuasion, appearing
to give power back to local governments and civil society while promoting the use of social networks,
information flows and knowledge and expertise. In particular, the new agenda works through the
ideas of ownership and partnership. Country ownership places emphasis on each country being able
to direct its own development agenda while properly encouraging the participation of its citizens
and local groups. This is seen, for example, in the requirement that individual countries draw up
their own Poverty Reduction Strategies in consultation with the appropriate partners. The idea of
partnership, along with that of stakeholding means an emphasis on coordination between
governments, donors, civil society, and the private sector. We will find exactly these themes in the
Horn of Africa resilience literature.

Why, then, is this governmentality? In the field of development and poverty reduction, international
organisations now work through appealing to consensus and agreement rather than imposing
structural adjustment reforms. The kinds of techniques employed are also consistent with those
used internally within the EU, in particular, the Open Method of Coordination. As we shall see in
relation to Horn of Africa, these involve continual monitoring and evaluation, peer review,
benchmarking and the sharing of information and good practice. The latter aspects, in particular, are
enhanced by the use of networks, information flows, and the provision of technical expertise. This is
a politics that presents itself in terms of persuasion rather than coercion, enablement rather than
constraint, partnership rather than command. This is a governmentality that works from a distance
through policy suggestion backed up with a complex array of techniques of monitoring and
assessment. It works through the idea that partners are free to take the lead, but also gently
persuades them to ‘do the right thing’. This means responsible ownership that engages with the
right partners and implements the right policies.

For reasons that I have gone into elsewhere (Joseph 2012), this is a governmentality that while
taking populations as its target (for poverty reduction, disaster relief, donor support, etc.) has as its
main aim, the regulation of governments and the embedding of a neoliberal rationality within state
institutions and across civil society. This governmentality toward states, or what Michael Merlingen
neatly describes as ‘the international conduct of the conduct of countries’ (Merlingen 2003: 367)
regulates the behaviour of states from a distance through encouraging the responsible behaviour of
free actors. This explains the emphasis on ownership, partnership and peer review. Countries
willingly enter into agreements with a range of partners and open up their institutions and political
practices to external scrutiny and review focussed, in particular, on such things as good governance
and transparency.

While Foucault’s work on governmentality can be applied to a very wide range of cases, I have
concentrated here on developing an account of a more specific form of governmentality appropriate
to the analysis of resilience in the Horn of Africa. This understanding of governmentality can be
summarised as the regulation of states from a distance through the responsibilisation of their action
using, in particular, the promotion of partnership, ownership, stakeholding, appeal to civil society,
calls for good governance and an engagement in networks, peer reviews and external monitoring.
The concept of governmentality highlights the rationalities that underlie forms of governance,
combining this aspect with a focus on the actual practices of governance that shape the conduct of
conduct. I will now look at how this finds particular expression in the idea of resilience.
Resilience as a form of governmentality

The EU’s resilience projects in Africa were launched in response to recurrent food crises affecting some 31 million people. Two failed harvests have led to widespread famine and high mortality rates. In addition to drought – the lowest rainfall in 60 years – the region suffers severely from conflict. In particular, the conflict in Somalia has spread into neighbouring countries due to the large numbers of refugees. Endemic insecurity is said to arise from warlords, militias and the failure of clan-based coping mechanisms (European Commission 2012a: 3). This has left the region suffering from the world’s largest refugee crisis alongside high mortality for both people and livestock, rising food and water prices and around 13 million people needing emergency assistance (European Commission 2012b: ). While in the short term priority is to offer direct humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable, the EU wishes to develop a longer-term policy of enhancing the resilience, preparedness and coping-mechanisms of those affected. This focus on resilience is said to save more lives and is more cost-effective in the longer-term. Moving away from reliance on emergency aid, the strategy is to promote sustainable development by combining humanitarian assistance with a development approach that targets the most vulnerable people. This is seen as a major adaptation of EU policy and the SHARE and AGIR projects are seen as test cases in coordinating humanitarian and development assistance through focussing on resilience (European Commission 2012c: 1).

The EU has a fairly standard definition of resilience as ‘the ability of an individual, a household, a community, a country or a region to withstand, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks such as drought, violence, conflict or natural disaster’ (European Commission 2012c: 1). This understanding comes from work on ecological systems. This literature is concerned with the impact of global environmental change, but this could also include economic crisis, war and other social threats. Resilience, therefore, relates to how societies can absorb shocks and adapt to externally imposed change. These crises can even play a constructive role in resource management, forcing us to consider issues of learning, adapting and renewal (Berkes, Colding and Folke 2003: 20). Indeed, it is this emphasis on knowing how to adapt that renders resilience an idea tool of governance strategies.

The humanitarian and development approach that the EU and other international actors are keen to promote is thus one that emphasises the need to know how to adapt. Implicit in this view is the idea that there are external conditions over which we have little control – such things as environmental change, globalisation, economic crisis, and various forms of global risk. The power of such things, as I have suggested elsewhere (Joseph 2012), is taken as given, so our main options relate to how we govern ourselves. This means learning how to make the right decisions, how to make the right connections and how to enhance our capacities. This is why resilience is emerging as an important tool or technique of governmentality. Through resilience, these problems are understood less as problems created by external conditions or the wider international environment, and more as internal matters of governance and self-reliance. The discourse around resilience frames these problems in a particular way and turns these external threats into problems of institutions, capacity and governance. It also shifts responsibility away from the international community and on to local actors who are now held accountable for failures of governance. By offering advice and technical support, international agencies are employing the same logic as might be found in neoliberal welfare policy – not so much a case of directly helping others, but helping others to help themselves. Resilience embraces this notion though its emphasis on empowerment, local ownership and self-
awareness. International organisations are still setting the agenda, but the governance occurs from a
distance through ideas of ownership, partnership and, above all, responsibility.

This explains why EU statements on Horn of Africa are so concerned to link humanitarian assistance
with a longer-term resilience programme. Of course, the EU approach recognises that the short term
priority is giving direct humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable. Those living in drought-
prone areas have already developed certain coping mechanisms. In the medium term, these should
be enhanced through emergency preparedness and resilience training. Building resilience seen as a
way of avoiding the back and forth between ‘relief’ and ‘developmental’ modes. It is seen as an
alternative to the ‘linear model of “pure” emergency relief followed by ‘recovery’ programming’ and
is instead a means of ‘adjusting the scale and priorities of existing programmes to reflect the
prevailing realities’(European Commission 2012b: 4).

Examples of the EU’s resilience building are detailed in ECHO’s factsheets. These state the EU’s aims
as building experience to help communities not only survive disasters but cope and recover
successfully afterwards. The budget is spent on a range of resilience measures including land
resource management for pastoralist communities, helping those dependent on livestock to
enhance their income opportunities, looking at long-term solutions for the refugee crisis and finding
lasting solutions for malnutrition. The EU promotes the design of national resilience strategies,
disaster management plans and efficient early-warning systems and encourages innovation in risk
management (European Commission 2012c: 2). More specifically, the strategy includes building
safety nets for the most vulnerable based on work, training and cash transfers, community-based
disaster preparation projects, the development of early warning systems and building collaboration
with the insurance industry (European Commission 2012c: 2).

To be even more specific, the EU has supported a Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia
which provides income for vulnerable people in return for their work with infrastructure
programmes. In Somalia, the EU has also been helping rebuild infrastructure with a canal building
programme. In order to improve food security, it has help with irrigation, livestock vaccination, and
seed and fertiliser distribution. In Kenya the EU resilience programme has contributed to a new
early warning system, while offering institutional support to bodies like the National Drought
Management Authority, the Disaster and Drought Contingency Fund, and various community level
livelihoods projects (European Commission 2012c).

All this is laudable, but hardly a groundbreaking new strategy. Resilience appears as a new label on
fairly standard practices. The EU’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan for the Horn of Africa makes
matters slightly clearer by dividing between different strategic objectives. The rather less
exceptional Strategic Objective 1 might be said to cover the above examples of humanitarian
assistance including such things as food aid, voucher systems, help with nutrition, health, water,
sanitation and shelter. It also includes enhancing emergency preparedness mechanisms and
ensuring rapid response. Strategic Objective 1 also talks of strengthening community resilience,
livelihood enhancement, improving food security and livestock protection. Despite use of the term,
none of the above are really better explained by adding resilience (European Commission 2012a: 9).
Strategic Objective 2, however, does start to give a bigger picture. Described as strengthening local
resilience, this includes:

- Increasing community preparedness to natural disasters
- Piloting DRR innovative approaches
- Dissemination and replication of DRR best practices and lessons learnt
- Advocacy for stronger engagement of development stakeholders in disaster risk reduction
- Provision of technical support to implementing partners of DRR pilot actions (European Commission 2012a: 10)

It then goes on to list longer-term strategic objectives to help the preparedness of at-risk communities. These include ‘technical backstopping’ for replication of community-managed disaster risk reduction operations and good practices and ‘lessons learnt’ from community-based DRR operations ‘feeding an evidence-based advocacy’ (European Commission 2012a: 11).

Behind the technocratic jargon we see a number of themes emerging which relate more to governance strategies. In particular, there is an emphasis on preparedness strategies, dissemination of good practice, engaging stakeholders and building partnerships. We can develop these points by turning to the EU’s ‘Consensus on Humanitarian Aid’ which offers more detailed guidelines. All the above points are brought together in a statement which emphasises partnership:

Partnership is at the core of implementation of humanitarian aid and the EU therefore would welcome a broader international partnership approach, which brings together donors, implementing partners and other stakeholders, to ensure effective humanitarian action, building on the existing body of standards and best practice. (European Council 2008: 3)

Practically, the EU will focus on sharing of information, making assessments and deciding responses, policy –level exchange on aid and intervention strategies, sharing sectoral experience and developing best practice (European Council 2008: 3). To ensure the best possible response to disaster emergencies, a rigorous approach to needs assessments must be applied at all levels. The EU will promote a common understanding of needs-assessments in order to improve current practices and their application. It commits the EU to working closely with international partners on needs-assessment. Analysis of global needs requires agreement on methodology and programming principles. Informed assessment requires appropriate field presence and experience and clear priority setting. (European Council 2008: 4).

The document goes on to emphasise the importance of accountability measures including financial control, adequate reporting on operations, and the need for detailed evaluation by measuring results and effectiveness, considering the cost and impact of different response options, ensuring transparency, quality assurance, good communication and participative approaches to assistance (European Council 2008: 5). The EU sees itself playing a facilitative role by helping partners to share information and experience, offering specific guidance and encouraging the participation of civil society. Other partners include the UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent and humanitarian NGOs.

Alongside these groups the EU will help ensure better needs analysis while identifying continuing response gaps. To return some of these to the technocratic jargon, this includes strategies to:

- promote sharing of strategies, needs-assessment and context analysis more systematically to improve collective performance to delivering aid better,
- promote value-added sectoral policies based on international best practice in specific policy areas (e.g. children in emergencies, food aid, health),
- reinforce coordination with other policies and instruments (LRRD, stability and civil protection instruments),
- improve further its ability to respond rapidly and flexibly in case of sudden-onset disaster
— continue work with partners to ensure quality and accountability in humanitarian aid, while facilitating flexible and rapid response where necessary,
— continue to streamline and simplify its administrative requirements so as to strengthen collaboration with partners and improve field effectiveness, ensure consistent understanding and application of internationally agreed standards and guidelines in the delivery of aid, supplementing those guidelines with a tailor-made approach if gaps are identified,
— systemise lessons learning on crisis response, in addition to maintaining the regular programme of external evaluation and audit, thereby contributing to increasing the effectiveness of Community funded aid operations,
— communicate the impact and importance of Community humanitarian aid to the European public to ensure continued high-levels of support from citizens. (European Council 2008: 11)

The governmentality approach emphasises the obsession with techniques, standards, practices and measurement. All these should be obvious from the above. Indeed such is the fixation that it is easy to forget that the ultimate aim is to help in the event of an emergency, rather than ensuring that every mechanism is standardised, peer-reviewed, monitored and measured. Cynics might see this as perhaps a triumph of techniques over purported goals, something I will return to in drawing my conclusions.

The document also helps us understand a bit more about how resilience approaches might fit with the wider aims of ownership and partnership. Emphasis is placed on the vital need for a local response to humanitarian crisis as well as disaster risk reduction. This is essential if communities are going to increase their resilience. To this end, the EU pledges to support capacity-building activities to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters. The EU ‘will examine how best it can offer support to capacity-building activities for sustainable strengthening of local disaster response, and encourage implementing partners in fostering partnership with local organisations in affected communities’ (European Council 2008: 6). The EU will seek ‘value added’ by ‘putting good donorship and strong partnership into practice’, doing this itself and encouraging others to do likewise. (European Council 2008: 11)

While this appears as if the EU is taking the lead, we have suggested that something different is going on which reflects a rationality of governing from a distance while responsibilising local actors according to an established set of principles. The above discussions fit very much into this framework. Building resilience is best understood in the wider context of shifting responsibility away from actors like the EU by ‘empowering’ local actors or ‘stakeholders’ and teaching them about good practice and local preparedness. Multilateralism through ‘partnership’is in fact a means of responsibilisation from a distance. It is not so much the case of letting local actors truly do their own thing, but of ensuring that they do the right thing, as defined by international organisations, donors and other ‘partners’. Hence the mechanisms outlined above are the means of placing local actors, intuitions and practices under scrutiny. The shift in focus is away from the initial ‘external’ element of exposure to shocks, and on to ‘internal’ matters like resilience. Such ideas are used as means to assess institutional capacity and performance. These are monitored by international organisations,
governments and donors using resilience indicators such as fiscal capacity, institutional strength, and level of social development.¹

We can clearly see these as essential features of governmentality, albeit a form of governmentality that works slightly differently in comparison to what happens inside the advanced liberal societies where individuals and populations are the targets. Instead, the idea of improving the health welfare and well-being of populations is a means of achieving a different strategic goal, the regulation of the conduct of states and governments. The tools are the same – governance from a distance works through demands for good governance, best practice, peer review, and by setting targets and benchmarks. It still works by targeting populations as is clear from the literature, but it does so in order to govern governments.

While the state ‘steps back’ and encourages the free conduct of actors, this is achieved through active intervention into civil society and the opening up of new areas to the logic of private enterprise and individual initiative. This is the logic behind the rise of resilience. Neoliberalism works through the social production of freedom and the ‘management and organization of the conditions in which one can be free’ (Foucault 2008: 63-4). Resilience contributes to this through its stress on heightened self-awareness, reflexivity and responsibility. It encourages the idea of active citizenship whereby people, rather than relying on the state, take responsibility for their own social and economic well-being. In particular, it focuses on the risk and security aspects of this by encouraging preparedness and awareness.

The wider picture

As seen from the above, the EU can claim to be playing a key role in disaster prevention and resilience-building while keeping a distance and not taking direct responsibility. Instead the EU encourages the view that responsibility is now locally owned and managed, albeit this is achieved with international, national and regional partners and through engagement with civil society. This might be seen as consistent with a number of views of the EU as a global actor. A whole new article might be written on this aspect alone, showing how building resilience in Africa reflects something unique about the EU as a ‘soft power’, a ‘civilian power’ or a ‘normative actor. My advice to EU strategists would be to grab these labels while they are still available. While they fit very well with the typical EU narrative about its CFSP, the reality is far less exceptional. In fact, the EU approach studied here is entirely consistent with that of other international organisations. This section will show this in relation to USAID before looking at how its techniques of governmentality in the field of humanitarian and development assistance are also consistent with the EU’s own internal processes.

To start with other international organisations, there is nothing unique about the EU approach to resilience. We can find exactly the same discussions going on within USAID. Indeed, we find an identical approach being outlined for the Horn of Africa. The starting point is exactly the same – that resilience ‘can bridge the two traditionally distinct domains of humanitarian assistance and development support programs’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 1). In terms of defining the concept there is a better understanding of how the term fits with socio-economic regulation: ‘Development and DRM specialists emphasize many dimensions of resilience, including social and collective action

¹Ibid., 5.
(reciprocity, trust, and social norms), economic capital (income and savings), human capital (education, health, and skills), and political capital (long-term investments, government capacity, DRM structures and plans, preparedness, and responsiveness)’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 4).

The USAID approach is more forward about the need to force through the above changes. Longstanding coping mechanisms that rely on the pastoral system and traditional family and clan support are considered no longer up to the task. A complex combination of population growth and fragmentation of grazing lands has caused a vicious cycle of insecurity. Much of the responsibility lies with local people – conflict, poor governance, and the breakdown in traditional coping mechanisms. Indeed, vulnerability ‘is by no means caused solely by climate-related influences’ and ‘inadequate governance is just as problematic to building resilience as conflict’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 2). Governance issues are considered a major cause of many of the problems in the region and enhancing resilience requires sustained intervention and substantial commitments from various stakeholders (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 3). In short, local people are incapable of sorting out these problems and need to be ‘advised’ on developing new systems of governance.

The USAID focus also mentions the Productive Safety Net Programme, the need to plan and manage public works, to develop early warning systems and prevent land erosion. It also talks of something more than this – the need to build resilience into government structures and strengthen capacity for better governance (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 4). So the problem is clearly identified as an internal one based on traditional practices: ‘Disintegrating social networks have resulted in an erosion of traditional coping mechanisms, rising ethnic strife, and a concurrent breakdown in the structure of acknowledged means of resolving conflicts and deriving sustainable resolutions’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 7). And the solution is to move people and resources ‘out of traditional agriculture and herding, but also a modernization of those traditional sectors and their accompanying technologies, physical capital formation, and increased human capital’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 5). USAID and other international ‘partners’ will facilitate this transformation through ‘training in problem solving, community health and nutrition programs, strengthening social networks, peacemaking, value chain development, and natural resource management to boost social resilience’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 7). And yet despite effectively telling local people that their problems have been caused by their traditional way of life and stressing the need for market-led modernisation, the USAID approach still talks of this as‘ a country-led approach that can also be matched with the regional development agenda’ (Heady and Kennedy 2012: 8).

I could pursue this argument further to the point of suggesting that the interventions of USAID, the EU, UNDP, the World Bank and other international actors represent a new form of exploitation where local crises are used as a pretext for forcing through market-friendly governance reforms. A number of critics, while not using the concept of governmentality, have discussed these issues in similar ways. Mark Duffield, for example, looks at such processes where the wider aim is ‘to change indigenous values and modes of organisation and replace them with liberal ones’ so that ‘[i]deas of empowerment and sustainability are largely refracted through a lens of behavioural and attitudinal change’ (Duffield 2001: 42). Certainly such intentions are reflected in the texts just examined. As is the view of David Chandler that this approach simultaneously seeks depoliticisation of activities on the ground by presenting them in technical and managerial terms while also denying any Western responsibility for these interventions through claiming the processes to be ‘owned’ by local and regional actors. By presenting this as a devolution of power, ‘Western States and international institutions appear less as external or coercive forces and more as facilitators, empowerers and...
capacity builders’ (Chandler 2006: 77). Once sovereignty is redefined in terms of capacity for good governance, it becomes legitimate for external actors to implement long-term programmes of engagement since this is done to ‘empower’ local actors (Chandler 2006: 36). These actors are locked into networks of external regulation, while those ‘facilitating’ the process deny ultimate responsibility for the relationship.

However, this is not all about North-South power inequalities. There is also a rationality behind these interventions that matches that of the organisations in their own local domain. The rest of this section is therefore concerned to show how this rationality of crisis governance also exists inside the EU. It must hastily be added that the objectives are different insofar as EU-wide disaster response and resilience-building measures are not intended to persuade Member States to adopt a particular development model as might be the case in the Horn of Africa. However, the techniques used are similar in terms of the micro practices of governmentality and these will be briefly examined here in order to show that what is going on in relation to Horn of Africa is driven by a dominant rationality.

The more mundane techniques of governmentality are driven by the belief that one could always govern better. Two of the Commission’s reports on Europe-wide prevention strategies take this as their starting point. They point to a lack of co-ordination among Member States and no integration of the four components of risk management, identified as prevention, crisis management, rehabilitation and monitoring. Where there is effective organisation of crisis management and coordination, this is limited to the crisis management phase. While this might be considered the most important thing, for governmentality, the failings of monitoring, inspection and sanctions are often of greater concern. And in keeping with the resilience approach, the reports are concerned with the lack of coherent prevention strategies (European Commission 2008a: 28). In particular, the Commission reports are concerned that there is a lack of strategic guidance on priority setting and risk preventive measures. Behind the obfuscating jargon, one gets the sense that the greater concern is not the disasters themselves, but the meeting of various targets and objectives.

It is thus not clear how the Commission effectively will manage the EU funds in favour of the risk prevention objective, when a cross-cutting risk prevention framework as well as strategic guidance are lacking at EU level as well as at national level. It is likely that implementation problems within concrete projects and programmes may occur, or even that the objectives of the Regulations and the EU funding programmes will not be met. (European Commission 2008b: 9)

The main challenge, therefore is to ‘strengthen existing EU measures’, ‘integrate risk prevention as a crosscutting approach’ and create a framework ‘which sets a strategic approach for vulnerability assessment and reduction’, so that the EU not only helps improve our ability to predict and prepare for extreme events but can also reduce vulnerability ‘through appropriate assessment, planning and risk reduction measures at EU level’ (European Commission 2008b: 10). The existing policies and legislative and funding instruments in these areas are characterised as piecemeal and ad hoc. From these perceived failings and gaps in governance mechanisms, the reports move to a justification for more indicators and standards.

It is argued that the EU, in collaboration with Member States, ‘provide norms for protecting the populations in terms of setting up minimal acceptance levels for risk and protection by means of a set of indicators or indexes’ (European Commission 2008a: 71). The EU should also carry out audits of its policies and instruments to ensure that instruments that they have the required impact and do not carry adverse effects. As with most approaches that emphasise indicators and standards, the reports note with concern the lack of common methodologies in order to properly conduct assessment, analysis and presentation. This presents serious problems when it comes to sharing
data, information, experience and knowledge. Therefore the EU should be given the role of facilitator in the establishment of common methodology and assessments (European Commission 2008a: 71). This returns us to the idea of the EU, or the Commission, governing (facilitating) from a distance through a network of actors. As the documents suggest, the EU should play the role of a ‘catalyst of focus’ or watchdog that supports a stable political focus on disaster prevention. It also suggests that the EU play this facilitating role in relation to capacity building for disaster prevention (European Commission 2008a: 13).

The capacity-building approach, as we have already seen, involves the identification of key national actors and stakeholders. This is said to include all administrative levels of the public sector, private sector, citizens and their organisations. Risk mapping should identify key risks and translate these into different scenarios with variations relevant to the different national, regional and local actors and settings (European Commission 2008a: 61). Of particular importance is engagement with the private sector. The reports note with concern that there is a lack of a clear understanding of the role the private sector can play and that this is a particular problem given the increasingly prominent role the private sector plays in building and operating critical infrastructure. Prevention, mitigation, preparedness and protection require a clear formulation of the role the private sector can play (European Commission 2008a: 64). However, despite being put in neutral terms, the EU agenda is decidedly more proactive in pushing private sector involvement in resilience and preparedness. Indeed, the EU is actively pursuing the British idea of public-private partnerships as evident in the European Public-Private Partnership for Resilience (EP3R) project which aims to provide a platform for ‘information sharing and stock taking of good policy and industrial practices in order to foster a common understanding on the economic and market dimensions of security and resilience... as well as on the roles and responsibilities of public and private stakeholders’ (European Commission 2010: 6). While purporting to be about critical infrastructure protection, the project must be seen in the context of the EU trying to bring competitiveness and market rules to European institutions and to restructure social and economic relations within the Member States. The discourse fits perfectly with neoliberal governmentality as might be seen in the following extract:

there is a need for more coordination and cooperation between the public and the private sector to achieve an appropriate level of governance. To address this governance challenge, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have emerged... The success of EP3R would depend on the active participation and strong commitment of all relevant stakeholders. A bottom-up approach is proposed, seeking the active contribution of relevant public and private stakeholders to ensure that EP3R would address their actual needs and priorities. (European Commission 2010: 3-4)

Hence this fits with many of the above mentioned themes of governmentality – the self-consciously limited role of government, promoting partnerships through the private sector, stakeholding, active agency and bottom-up approaches that engage civil society. The public-private partnership approach is seen as a ‘soft’ alternative to hard regulation that might hinder competitiveness and innovation (European Commission 2010: 4). However, the discourse is controversial and contested. Across Europe the approach is widely perceived as an Anglo-Saxon attack on the European Social Model and despite its promotion by the EU, such practices are far from successful when it comes to their implementation across Member States. Clearly, therefore, there will be ongoing debate about such approaches to resilience-building, both across the EU and in relation to our previous examples of global interventions.

Conclusion: Preventing disaster or governing states?
Looking at resilience through the lens of governmentality raises three issues. The first is concerned with the rationality underpinning the resilience approach. It has been suggested that the underpinning rationality takes populations as its target, political economy as its means of intervention and security as its apparatus. Secondly we need to look at resilience as a set of practices. We have suggested that taking resilience projects at face value, that is to say, as projects aimed at improving the health, welfare and well-being of populations as well as strengthening apparatuses of security, then resilience might not be considered a successful practice. We have not given the reasons for this, but they might be found in the contested nature of the social relations within which resilience must try to operate. Even if the rationality is coherent, the practice may be undermined by real-world situations. However, the rationality finds expression in the third matter to investigate – the particular techniques and tactics that resilience deploys.

The rationality underpinning resilience should now be clear. We have suggested the governmentality approach is useful in highlighting this. In particular, we emphasised resilience in relation to a liberal rationality of governance that operates from a distance by encouraging responsible conduct. This form of governance is reflexively aware of its own limits and is concerned not to govern too much. It seeks to operate indirectly through the market and private sphere, through partnerships and through civil society. As part of the development literature, this works through the idea of local ownership, while emphasising the need for good governance, capacity building and reforming institutions.

The practice of resilience should be to ensure the ability to withstand shocks, adapt and bounce back. In the development literature, this relates to how communities might learn new strategies for preparing, coping, adapting and recovering from externally imposed change. This may require widespread institutional and even attitudinal reform. Crises can play an important role in forcing people and governments to consider issues of preparedness, learning and renewal. We saw from the literature, however, that the ‘new’ practices of resilience are often not much more than new labels for existing practices and programmes. Judged at face value – i.e. at protecting communities from external shocks – resilience in practices would appear to be no big deal.

This leads to the third point which is that perhaps this was not really the aim in the first place. My concluding suggestion is therefore that resilience has more to do with promoting a particular form of governance than it does with helping populations withstand and recover from shocks. And the best way to understand this is practice is to look not at the grandly stated aims, but the micropractices. Hence resilience works as governmentality through its promotion of micro techniques of governance. This can be seen in the way the literature promotes processes of monitoring, risk assessment, audits, benchmarking, peer review and other forms of external scrutiny. In this respect, or in relation to our first and third features, resilience as a development strategy is similar to resilience inside the EU as we saw in the last section. The difference between relations inside the EU and relations without is a matter beyond the scope of governmentality. As I have argued elsewhere (Joseph 2012), it relates to the place governmentality has within a wider field of social relations. This might explain why resilience has slightly more resonance within Europe than it might in the Horn of Africa. But it functions differently in the latter case because the primary aim is to regulate the conduct of states.

**Bibliography**


