

11. Coping with State and Non-state Actors: Lessons from Local Peace Building Practices in Kenya

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Social anthropologists in the 1960s focused on traditional political systems such as 'gerontocracy' (Spencer, 1965) or 'pastoral democracy' (Lewis, 1961). These systems may be treated as a form of "African potentials". However, when we consider the collapse of Somalia's government, traditional political systems, such as the clan system, do not consistently work as a "potential" for peace. Therefore, Naito argues, the effort to find promising traditions and articulate them with public political powers sometimes creates another form of oppression, i.e., decentralized despotism in the colonial era.

Naito focuses on the daily practices of local people who have been coping with these kinds of power. He describes how pastoral peoples, the Ariaal and Somali, living in marginalized areas in Kenya, cope with state and non-state actors and how they have developed their own methods for co-existence with cultural others. He highlights the importance of examining the processes by which people create autonomous space in contexts of state or international intervention.