The Nation State
A Wrong Model for the Horn of Africa

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The Nation State
A Wrong Model for the Horn of Africa

John Markakis, Günther Schlee, and John Young

Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge
Studies 14

Cover Image:
The wrong model: Nation states as islands. By Kristin Magnucki and Günther Schlee.

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Preface

The authors of this study are social scientists who have spent their professional lifetimes studying the process of development in sub-Saharan Africa since it emerged from colonial rule and interpreting the subject for the general public. African studies involve several disciplines, including social anthropology, history, and political science, represented in this volume by Günther Schlee, John Markakis and John Young, respectively. The three authors do not comprise a particularly diverse group; they are three old white men. But their combined experience in the field spans 135 years, and the Horn of Africa is the regional focus for all three. As it happens, this region also represents a striking paradigm of the enduring crisis of the Western nation-state model adopted in Africa, which is the theme of this collaborative volume. There is broad agreement between the three of us on this issue and the problem of Eurocentrism in African studies generally, although we do not have a unified position on other matters, and this will become apparent from our individual contributions.

Scholars on the subject of imported nation-state models in Africa concur that crisis resulted from a failure to consider material, social, cultural, and political contexts on a local level. The outcomes of these efforts, however, should not be considered a dead end, rather a stage in the ongoing process of development that is gradually transforming this setting. The field is further enriched with studies on state fragility and state failure, as well as proposed policies to prevent such scenarios. (Among the latter is a program designed "to build good leadership capacity among young African politicians" (Rotberg 2003)).

The mosaic of nation-states that exists today is often called the Westphalian order after the Peace of Westphalia treaties ended ongoing wars in Western Europe in the mid-seventeenth century, in part through the creation of sovereign states. Around this period, Europe experienced great leaps in technology and had an abundance of natural resources, and the sovereign state model was considered easily modifiable to meet local requirements for effective governance. In the mid-twentieth century, this same model was imposed across sub-Saharan Africa without preparation or adaptation to the continent that colonizers considered to be technologically underdeveloped and lacking in raw materials. The consequences of these actions are well known, yet poorly understood. In this volume, the authors seek to clearly define the causes and consequences of the imported nation-state crisis.

Although this model has been in place in Africa for over three quarters of a century, its suitability to the locations and eras in which it was imposed has seldom been raised in African studies. A notable exception in the Anglophone world is Basil Davidson (1992) who called the nation-state model the "Black man's burden" in a book of the same title. Francophone Africanists were pioneers in economic anthropology, and prolific critics of orthodox development theory. Steeped in the Marxist worldview, however, they had little to say about the state, which they regarded as a dependent variable. The fact that the concept of the nation-state has not been more thoroughly addressed challenges the epistemological integrity of African studies. Where is the science on which this discipline claims to be based?

Founded in the West and dominated by Western scholars, the discipline thrives on modes of analysis that privilege European categories or ascribe greater rationality and agency to Western actors above all others. It is impossible to question the universal validity of the Western model within the limits of this discipline for there is no room for an alternative within its analytical spectrum. Because this methodology is part of the standard curriculum, scholars of African studies, including Africans, tend to be unprepared to challenge it. Any attempt to raise the topic elicits the stock response: what is the alternative?

The authors of this study do not intend to answer this question. Their intention is to provoke a debate on the crisis of the nation-state that will focus on the alien model itself, not on the African setting. They aim to do this by presenting the manifold impact of the crisis on two levels of society in the Horn: national and local. The challenges posed to the state as a result of the popular uprising in Sudan in 2019 and the outbreak of civil war in Ethiopia in November 2020 give further significance to this study.

John Markakis, Günther Schlee, John Young
Halle (Saale), December 2020

List of Acronyms

ALF Afar Liberation Front

ANDM Amhara National Democratic Movement

ANDP Afar National Democratic Party

ANLM Afar National Liberation Movement

APDO Afar People's Democratic Organisation

ARCSS Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan

ARDUF Afar Revolutionary Democratic United Front

AU African Union

AVA Awash Valley Authority

CPA Comprehensive Peace Agreement

CPSU Communist Party of the Soviet Union

CVE Countering Violent Extremism

DDR Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

DIU Dams Implementation Unit

DUP Democratic Unionist Party

EIJM Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement

ELF Eritrean Liberation Front

EPDM Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement

EPLF Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPRP Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party

ESC Ethiopian Sugar Corporation

ESM Ethiopian Student Movement

FLCS Front de la Libération de la Côte Somalie

FRUD Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy

GNU Government of National Unity

GoSS Government of South Sudan

GTP Growth and Transformation Plan

GWOT Global War on Terror

IDPs internally displaced persons

IGAD Inter-Governmental Authority for Development

IMF International Monetary Fund

ISEN Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities

JIC Joint Islamic Courts

MLLT Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray

MOARD Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

NCP National Congress Party

NDA National Democratic Alliance

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

NIF National Islamic Front

OLF Oromo Liberation Front

OPDO Oromo People's Democratic Organisation

OTI Office of Transitional Initiatives

PDRE People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

SAF Sudanese Armed Forces

SAPs Structural Adjustment Programs

SCP Sudanese Communist Party

SEPDF Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Front

SNL Somali National League

SNM Somali National Movement

SNNP Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

SPLA Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLA-N Sudan People's Liberation Army-North

SPLM Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM/A Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

SPLM-IO Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition

SPLM-N Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North

SPRP Somali People's Revolutionary Party

SRC Somali Revolutionary Council

SSDF South Sudan Defense Forces

SSLA South Sudan Liberation Army

SSR Soviet Socialist Republic

SSU Sudanese Socialist Union

SYL Somali Youth League

TFG Transitional Federal Government

TPLF Tigray People's Liberation Front

UN United Nations

UPDF Ugandan People's Defense Force

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WPE Workers Party of Ethiopia

WPPE Working People's Party of Ethiopia

WSLF Western Somalia Liberation Front

WTO World Trade Organization

Chapter 1
Introduction
John Markakis, Günther Schlee, and John Young

The modern states in the Horn of Africa are the product of historical developments beyond their control. Having shifted from the bipolar pattern of the Cold War to the unipolar pattern dominated by the US, the international geopolitical system now appears to be shifting toward a multipolar pattern, in which the US retains military superiority but is no longer able to maintain a global hegemonic status. Ideals of state sovereignty bequeathed by the Treaties of Westphalia and later by the Treaty of Versailles are now challenged by globalization, a process that entrenches a hierarchical order among states, increasingly based on economic criteria. At the same time, the supranational influence of global corporations, international trade agreements, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the European Union further undermine state sovereignty.

As a result of these conflicting forces, states throughout the world are facing a multi-faceted crisis of legitimacy, sovereignty, and democracy, a crisis that began with the adoption of neoliberal precepts in the economy and governance in the West. These guiding principles then spread to, or were imposed on, the rest of the world; the consequences are still seen today. Local and national economies are undermined, and the traditional responsibility of states to protect their citizens' welfare is overridden by foreign commitments. These decisions particularly impact many states in the Middle East and Africa, where their governments were destabilized and their peoples suffered.

The Horn of Africa is distinguished from the rest of the continent by the exceptionally high incidence of political conflict experienced since decolonization at both the inter-state and intra-state levels. Distinct from the rest of Africa, the region has seen the appearance of two new *de jure* independent states (Eritrea and South Sudan), one new *de facto* independent state (Somaliland), several regions under the control of insurgent movements, and large areas that are only nominally under the control of central governments. The outbreak of civil war between the Ethiopian government and the regional government of Tigray in November 2020, which has also involved forces from Eritrea, not only speaks to the inherent political instability in the region, but also suggests that the process of state formation may not be complete.

The Horn has experienced several inter-state wars, the engagement of outside armies in conflicts in Somalia and South Sudan, and Western-dominated peace processes that serve to reorder and reconstruct the regional state pattern and bring favored elites to power. The Cold War waged hotly in this region by states acting as proxies of foreign powers. More recently, the same states have become entangled in the US-sponsored Global War on Terror (GWOT). Currently, the Horn has become a point of conflict between China and the US and countries in the Middle East are establishing military bases along the Red Sea and all of

them view the region as a linchpin for resources, markets, influence in Africa, and a focal point for competition among themselves.

The study presented here seeks to address the root causes of the Horn's troubled modern political history. Many of these causes are endogenous and testify to the agency of the people in the region. Others are extraneous, such as many-sided, continuous, and forceful interventions from abroad by foreign powers seeking to promote and protect their interests in the region, often by striking alliances with local ruling elites. Conflicts that arise thereof invariably focus on the state, because that is where power is concentrated and access to power ensures access to resources. State power is both the goal of conflict and the means whereby it is waged, making the state both the object of conflict and a party to it.

Given the record of state failure to manage conflict in the region, the question raised in this study is whether the Western nation-state model adopted, or claimed to have been adopted, in the Horn and generally in Africa is suitable for the region today. During the Cold War, the heady promise of modernization-cum-Westernization dogma was forcefully challenged from the neo-Marxist perspective, with particular emphasis on the nature of the postcolonial state. Theories such as dependency (Frank 1966), development of underdevelopment (Rodney 1972), and world systems (Wallerstein 1974) were at the center of the debate. With the subsequent triumph of neoliberalism and the enthronement of the free market ideology, the debate ran out of steam. The study presented here aims to revive the debate by questioning whether the Western nation-state is the right model for Africa, and to encourage Africans to consider alternative methods of governance for the continent.

The introductory chapter begins with a brief examination of how the present international system developed and then reviews the critiques of the state that began soon after the promises of African independence were not met. It then considers how the state in Africa has developed and repeatedly been reconstructed in response to decolonization and neoliberalist pressure to meet the needs of the West. It also considers the role of internationally led peacemaking efforts, another means by which the West projects its influence to reconstruct and even create states in the post-Cold War era.

1.1   Contextual Overview

The international state system is often called the Westphalian system. This term may be a shorthand used by political scientists[1]. But arguably, the Treaties of Westphalia first formulated the principles of sovereign statehood, non-interference in the affairs of other states, and a balance of power between states (Kissinger 2014). However, these principles were only meant to be applied in Europe, where they were conceived. President Woodrow Wilson is credited with the idea of national self-determination, which figured as a guiding principle in the Treaty of Versailles. But when Ho Chi Minh appeared at Versailles to plead for the right of his people to independence, Wilson refused to see him. It became clear that the right to self-determination did not apply to the colonized peoples.

It was only after World War II that the right to national self-determination was recognized for colonized peoples. From this point onwards, each state was granted one vote at the

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[1] Rüdiger Wolfrum, an international lawyer, insightfully commented that the concept of nation-state may have originated elsewhere. For the present purpose, and because of our focus on Africa, it is sufficient to use the shorthand term. What we mean by Westphalian order is the present global order of nation-states, whose essential features developed in Europe. How precisely they developed there is beyond the scope of this book.

UN General Assembly, regardless of size. At the same time, however, the principle of equality was rejected in the organization of the newly formed UN Security Council, which revived the principle of hierarchy among states by limiting membership to the so-called Great Powers. This became obvious to Africans after decolonization, when they realized their newly independent states stood at the bottom rung of the international hierarchy of states, and their independence was seriously constrained by the former colonial states and recently emerged world superpowers at the apex of the hierarchy.

The disparity between the so-called First and Third Worlds was clearly manifested during the Cold War between the superpowers and was denounced by Kwame Nkrumah who coined the term *neocolonialism*. "The essence of neo-colonialism," he wrote, "is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty, but its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside."[2] Nkrumah's insight updated Lenin's (Lenin 1917a) analysis, which contended that capitalism requires colonies for investment and a market for the metropole's manufactured goods.

Frantz Fanon (Lenin 1913) advanced this theory to conclude that the rulers of neocolonial states do not derive their authority from the will of the people, but from the support of their former colonial masters and the international community. Just as that support is bequeathed to local rulers, so can it also be taken away. Fanon drew particular attention to the Westernized, educated African elite who had gained the most from the colonial system and he held them responsible for undermining African state sovereignty after independence.

Contributing to the artificiality of the African state is the context in which decolonization took place. In most cases, decolonization was not the result of mass popular struggles by colonized peoples for independence. The background for the so-called liberation struggle was the enfeeblement of the European colonial states in the wake of World War II and their subsequent involvement in the Cold War that opened the door for Soviet Union involvement in support of African nationalists. It also raised the fear of communism spreading in Africa. With notable exceptions that involved European settler regimes fighting to stay in power—Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea (modern day Guinea Bissau), Zimbabwe, and South Africa—decolonization was essentially a process of negotiation whereby Africans passed from colonialism to neocolonialism.

The Cold War was intensely waged on an ideological plane, where the specter of socialism that haunted the West proved a powerful stimulus for the formulation of a counter theory of development grounded on the experience of the West. This concept was made clear in the title of the most influential statement of this theory, Walter Rostow's book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960). The belief that radically different societies would follow the same path to development as that trodden by the West has guided Western engagement in Africa to this day. Adherence to this ideology is a condition for Western economic assistance and political support in the developing world, imposing severe constraints on state sovereignty.

The attempt to economically, culturally, and politically tie African states to the West did not end with neocolonialism and a self-serving modernization theory. Western solutions to Western problems continued to be exported to the African continent. In response to falling profits, growing trade union militancy, and the loss of large parts of the world to socialism in

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[2] Kwame Nkrumah, as quoted in A. Webster (Webster 1990, 7).

the 1970s, the Western elites fought back with a new ideological construct—neoliberalism—that the peripheral states were pressed to adopt. Having practiced post-World War II Keynesian precepts with notable successes, including the critical role of the state in development and the commitment to full employment, the Anglo-West now held that free markets alone were the route to development. With this mindset, the existing state was seen as an obstacle to development and must be reconstructed.

Neoliberalism objectives center on the strengthening and reform of capitalism to make it a global system, which by definition means reaching beyond the Western metropoles. Africa, in particular, was targeted, where many were not integrated into the international economy and the majority of people had not been separated from their primary means of production—land. Considered obstacles to development occurred where the developmental process was equated with market dominance. In these cases, traditional economies were deliberately undermined and the limited social programs in existence were reduced or eliminated. Indeed, the dependency and Marxist contention that relationships between the center and the periphery produced underdevelopment was rejected by neoliberal economists who instead insisted that underdevelopment was due to Africa's lack of integration into the global economic and state system.

Furthermore, once neoliberalism passed from a theory to established Truth, accepted by all the capitalist states and even their social democratic parties (witness the Labour Party under Tony Blair), it was forced on the peripheral states through the West's control of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank and a series of international trade agreements. The capitalist West, together with these organizations, imposed structural adjustment programs (SAPs) and used the World Trade Organization (WTO) and bilateral trade agreements to closely integrate peripheral states and economies into the Western-dominated global system. The implementation of neoliberal policy involved reducing the role of the state in the economy by privatizing state assets, rolling back social, health, and education programs, eliminating the kind of trade barriers that the leading Western states had themselves employed to industrialize, floating their currencies, removing obstacles to the repatriation of profits, and generally ensuring multinational corporations would have unhindered access to their economies. As in the West, these policies lowered living standards for most people, increased inequality and social tensions, and undermined the authority (and hence the capacity) of the state.

A critical point of pressure for the West in its dealings with troublesome Third World countries is the practice of withholding economic assistance and, crucially, debt relief. Both are only forthcoming if countries meet the requirements of the World Bank and IMF, which demand adherence to the precepts of neoliberalism. Again, acceptance of these conditions means relinquishing the authority of the state and granting it to these institutions and international trade agreements. Refusal to abide by these requirements can expose rebellious countries to Western campaigns of economic and political subversion and even military intervention.

Pressure increased on peripheral states with the end of the Cold War when the Eastern Bloc could no longer provide support for alternative roads to development. The Cold War victors now held that a free market economy was integral to democracy while policies that gave too much room to regulation interfered with free markets and were deemed antithetical to democracy. The growing inequalities within and between states were held to be a necessary product of development. Neoliberal notions of democracy involved governments

following the dictates of the IMF and turning their backs on their people protesting against changes that lowered their standard of living. Instead of governments of peripheral states being accountable to their citizens, governments were made subjects to the West and the global economic institutions it created. The parochialism and authoritarianism of modernization theory had returned with a vengeance.

1.2 Nation and State in Africa

The state and the nation are concepts that have evolved along separate lines but converged (with different levels of success) to form what we now call the nation-state. The state has evolved through different forms in various parts of the globe; from city states at one end to vast empires at the other. *Nation* is a Latin concept that evolved in Europe and acquired its present meaning and prominence in modern times; it is a product of Western modernity. The marriage of the two spawned the ideology of nationalism with its ideal of a culturally homogeneous society, underpinning the state with legitimacy and loyalty. This fusion took place in the unique conditions of Europe, as feudalism was superseded by capitalism within states dominated by the bourgeoisie that wanted national markets and states to protect and administer them. This model was transposed to Africa, a vastly different world, without the slightest concession to its uniqueness and the results have been tragic.

Even as they were compelled to accept the colonial model, the more thoughtful among Africa's first generation of leaders were sensitive to the incongruity involved and fought for some form of wider unity to underpin the African state. At the end of the twentieth century, Julius Nyerere lamented "the glorification of the nation-state [that] we inherited from colonialism, and the artificial nations we are trying to forge from that inheritance. Fortunately, we were not completely successful."[3] Nevertheless, succeeding generations of African political elites have considered the nation-state as the holy grail of modernization, and made national integration the highest political value. Since most newly independent African states did not comprise homogeneous nations, homogeneity needed to be achieved by nation building, even by force if necessary. The forceful pursuit of nation building has been the cause of unending conflict in Africa, especially in the Horn, with ethnic cleansing, massive population displacement, successive waves of refugees, political instability and enormous human suffering. In the emotive words of Basil Davidson (1992), it has been a "curse" and the "Black man's burden."

The political dynamics that reflect an African reality still in the preindustrial stage— a social fabric defined by ethnicity and a flamboyant multiculturalism that defies homogeneity—are fundamentally different from those that prevailed in the West and molded the nation-state model imposed on Africa. Ethnoculturalism (derided as tribalism) is invariably cited as the source of political instability that has undermined modern government in Africa. However, ethnoculturalism is a reality, a fact of life. Like the nation, it is a social construct, neither timeless nor universal. While there has always been cultural and linguistic variation in Africa, the features that define these variations often shifted gradually and formed cultural continua, rather than delineating discrete groups. In many cases, strictly defined ethnic groups were created in the colonial period, solely for administrative purposes. Nevertheless, the concept of ethnic groups has a remarkable appeal for political identification and is much

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[3] Excerpt from a speech delivered by Julius Nyerere, in Accra on March 6, 1997 (Rasta Live Wire, January 5, 2014).

more of a reality on the ground than the concept of a nation. African states comprise dozens or hundreds of ethnic groups, some of them representing millions of people and larger than many nations.

The difference between an ethnic group and a nation is the relationship to statehood. When one calls an ethnic group a nation, it implies statehood or a claim to statehood. In some places, ethnoculturalism defines a nation. But when ethnic and cultural criteria are not coterminous with the "nation," ethnoculturalism becomes the antithesis of nationhood, which tends to be the case in Africa. Here, ethnoculturalism is the matrix of identity and solidarity as well as the framework of political mobilization, mostly on a smaller scale than that of the postcolonial "nation"-states, that is at the subnational level. In Africa, ethnoculturalism has proved incompatible with the alien nation-state model. The persistent effort over decades to confine ethnic groups to the dictates of nations has undermined effective government in Africa.

Many states in Africa and other parts of the world boast of a national culture of unity in diversity. The use of the word "national" here amounts to little more than rules of conduct and procedures for interaction between different ethnic groups and is limited to the meta-ethnic level. Such forms of multiculturalism or ethnic federalism can be seen as a balance between centripetal forces (shared nationhood) and centrifugal ones (ethnic particularism). In the Horn of Africa, there are many examples of ethnicity that have proved too resilient to be brushed aside in the name of nationalism. Ethnicity is accommodated by letting administrative boundaries run along ethnic or cultural dividing lines. So far, this has not achieved lasting peace. For example, marginality in Ethiopia's southern and western marches is not overcome by giving people the right to develop their own languages and folkloric versions of culture. More needs to be done to achieve peace, such as fairness in resource use and budget allocations. Otherwise, ethnic pluralism does not lead to a plurality of equals, but to ethnic hierarchies.

Our wildest fantasies cannot beat the richness and variety of forms and functions of statehood provided by the historical and ethnographic record. That is why we always have to ask what the functions of a given state are before we can say that it is not functional, or that it has failed. Those who rule states judged to have failed often have no reason to feel they have *failed*. For instance, ruling elite representing minority interests may focus on parts of the economy where wealth can be easily extracted and syphon off enormous riches that are then sent abroad. Statehood and the measure of success and failure have to take these criteria into account. Who is the state, who identifies with the state, with whom does the state identify, and whom are state policies and development meant to benefit? It cannot even be taken for granted that the state has a plan for development, something that is not a traditional state responsibility. As happened in the Horn, vast areas may drop out of state control for long periods of time; others may never have been effectively penetrated by it. This raises the diagnostic question: what allows us to say that there is a state? What are the functions of statehood? Do people need to know that they live in a state in order to qualify as citizens of that state, or for the state to qualify as real?

States like Somalia before its collapse and South Sudan since its independence functioned mainly as recipients and distributors of foreign aid and, in the case of the latter, of petrodollars as well. In South Sudan, "rent" in the form of foreign aid was the main asset

associated with statehood. There was little else in terms of statehood.[4] Policies that were formulated to benefit South Sudan usually had an ulterior goal. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) is part of every standard international peacemaking agenda, because it aims to reduce the number of combatants. But in South Sudan it worked as a kind of pension scheme for noncombatants (such as cooks) and for aged or incapacitated soldiers (Sureau 2017). In anticipation of things to come, no political faction dreamt of actually reducing its fighting force.

State failure to manage the political forces that arise from ethnocultural, regional, and socioeconomic differences and the disparities they represent is most obvious in the Horn of Africa. Unlike the rest of the continent, where the colonial geopolitical legacy was accepted as the lesser evil, it was widely rejected in the Horn, unleashing manifold struggles over territory, boundaries, identity, and power that remain unresolved to this day. The many-sided conflict is fought under the banner of nationalism, involving several rival nation-state building projects—Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, and Djibouti—working at cross purposes in a zero-sum game. In the process thus far, the map of the region has been revised several times; two states were truncated and one collapsed, ending with a faithful restoration of the colonial map. At present, all the states face challenges to their sovereignty, identity, and territory.

During the entire postcolonial period none of the states in the region have at any time fulfilled the role attributed to the Western prototype. None has exercised effective control over its entire territory, secured its borders, possessed a monopoly over the use and instruments of force, enjoyed legitimacy and loyalty from a majority of its subjects, enforced law and maintained order throughout its domain, or protected the lives and liberty of its subjects. In fact, the state posed the greatest threat to human and political rights.

Palpable failure has not shaken faith in the nation-state model itself among social scientists who have always perceived modernization in Africa as the mirror image of the West. The failure of non-Western societies to adopt the alien model successfully is accounted as proof of persisting backwardness (Rotberg 2003). The fitness of the model itself and the logic of its imposition globally are not in question. Failure is not seen as terminal. First introduced by Gunnar Myrdal (1968) in a comparison of South Asian countries to European countries, state *fragility* is now the operative concept—a condition that can be overcome by adopting policies devised by social scientists who are energetically producing manuals on "how to fix failed states" (Ashraf Ghani and Lockhart 2008). Even total collapse is not terminal: witness the persistent effort to resurrect the defunct Somali Republic, to prevent South Sudan from falling apart, the refusal to recognize breakaway Somaliland, and the sequestration of Eritrea.

Conflict between and within states on the Horn of Africa has provided a substantial opportunity for Western-led peacemaking interventions that have enabled foreign actors to mediate relations among states, to intervene in their internal affairs, to impose economic and political policies of their choosing, and generally to wield regional hegemony. This interference was sanctioned by the concept of the "responsibility to protect" citizens against abuse by the state, endorsed by UN resolution R2P (Responsibility to Protect) in 2006 that entertains the possibility of withdrawal of sovereignty for transgressors. The then President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann (2009),[5] said, "a more accurate name

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[4] Sureau (2017) cites drawing lists of foreign NGOs as a state function.
[5] Brockmann (2009), "Thematic Dialogue," lecture delivered to UN General Assembly, July 28.

for R2P would be the 'right to intervene,'" and the targets for intervention are invariably enemies of the West.

By holding local actors responsible for conflict, the West absolved itself of responsibility, while at the same time claiming that Africans had no agency, and this justified outside intervention in their internal affairs. These post-Cold War notions were first played out in former Yugoslavia and the First Gulf War, where human rights abuses served to justify US military intervention. Under the guise of a commitment to protect human rights, the US also invaded Somalia. After eighteen of its soldiers were killed, the US withdrew, and it was clear that Africans were not without agency. In Libya, the West used the cover of a Security Council resolution to protect civilians in order to remove the Muammar Gadhafi regime.

State failure is widely considered to pose a security threat to the Western-dominated international state system. External Western powers judge the condition of a particular state and this is sometimes endorsed by the UN. The intervention that follows aims at regime change, though it may not always be achieved. Efforts at a regime change failed in Libya, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, as well as in the US peacemaking efforts in Sudan and South Sudan. The solution to state failure is always the adoption of Western institutions of governance and a market economy, as in modernization theory.

Since the onset of the Global War on Terror there has been an increasing effort to give peacemaking, conflict prevention, and development a security dimension under the concepts of stabilization and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). These measures serve to emphasize the security role of African states and to link them closely to the security interests of the West. Stabilization and CVE increasingly blur the line between humanitarian operations, including peacemaking on the one hand, and military operations on the other. They are designed to mobilize Third World states in the latest international crusade undertaken by the West. Military assistance provided for ramshackle states and embattled regimes enables unpopular regimes to cling to power and, more importantly, to shore up crumbling states and salvage the Western model.

Whether it is colonialism, neocolonialism, neoliberalism, the GWOT, or Western-led peacemaking, the West finds new and innovative ways to undermine the sovereignty of African states, create and co-opt local elites, open their economies to Western corporations, gain control of their resources which are used to advance their own interests. While Western countries enjoy the benefits and legitimacy of self-proclaimed democracy, Western policies in Africa over many years have been designed to separate the rulers from the people, make these rulers accountable to the West and not to their own people, and thus limit and shape development and preclude the emergence of indigenous systems of governance and accountability.

Material incentives are the key to understanding politics and conflict in this region, possibly in a clearer and less disguised form here than elsewhere. However, who allies with whom is not merely determined by the price of loyalty. Identifications and alliances are influenced by beliefs and ideologies. Evangelical Americans believed that South Sudan would become an English-speaking, Christian country in the heart of Africa, and Americans of all persuasions thought it would become a democracy following the US model. This notion has little to do with the actual collective identities, languages, and beliefs found in what was to become South Sudan. Slavery in Sudan was an important topic in the discourse of Western supporters of the independence of South Sudan, but it was also a manipulated notion perpetuated by American and European supporters of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army

(SPLA) to gain support for the movement and discredit the supposed Arab and Muslim slave owners. This discourse gained considerable support in the US because of its history of slavery and the white guilt associated with slavery. Elsewhere, *terrorist* served as a convenient label for everyone who opposed Western political or economic interests, appealing to fears provoked by events as distant as the 9/11 attacks on the US and the rise of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Ideas about racial inferiority and superiority along with accompanying practices of discrimination also exist among Africans. That is why the pervading factors of neocolonialism and integration into a globalized capitalism at the losing end do not lead to uniform results across the region. If they did, we could stop at this point, but they do not.

The study presented in this book seeks to address the root causes of the Horn of Africa's troubled modern political history. Given the record of state failure to manage conflict in the region as measured against the Western nation-state model, the question raised in this study is whether the Western nation-state model adopted, or claimed to be adopted, in the Horn and generally in Africa is suitable for the time and place. Is the Horn of Africa unique in sub-Saharan Africa with regard to the applicability of the nation-state model? It can be argued that the region's modern history is exceptional, overshadowed in the case of Ethiopia by the dominating presence of an African state with ancient roots that not only avoided the colonial experience, but itself went on to create a genuine empire in the region.

Furthermore, the Ethiopian empire was not dismantled as its European counterparts were, instead its rulers launched a determined, longstanding campaign of national integration intended to turn the multi-ethnic empire into a homogeneous nation-state. This provoked a many-sided conflict with several rival nation building projects in the region that crashed head-on with Ethiopia's, and the result was war across state boundaries, that is over territory—a rarity in the rest of the continent. The policies of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed including the military action against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) at the end of 2020 appear designed to again construct a homogeneous nation-state, a project this study suggests is doomed to failure. It should be noted, however, that the longest conflicts occurred within state boundaries when entire regions—Eritrea, South Sudan, and Somaliland—rebelled against the suffocating embrace of an autocratic state pursuing national integration through cultural assimilation.

Is the experience of this region unique for the continent, or is it an aggravated instance of the pursuit of nation building at all costs? The pursuit of the nation in the embrace of a tightly centralized, autocratic state is the hallmark of Africa's postcolonial history, the dominant force in the politics of the independent states, and the root cause of many evils. Certainly, the Horn is not the only example of the destabilizing impact the attempt to graft a singular national consciousness and identity onto the flourishing ethnic plurality of sub-Saharan Africa has on the fragile postcolonial state. In fact, it can be argued that the refusal to accept social reality and accord it political recognition is the root cause of the prevailing instability. Uganda and Kenya, not to mention Rwanda and Burundi, are cases in point.

1.3   Where to Go from Here

The question that is never raised by social scientists and politicians alike is whether the failure of states in Africa to manage their countries and resolve their peoples' problems might be due, at least to a degree, to the incompatible match of an alien form of governance with African reality. The thought of a mismatch is not entertained because the reigning dogma of

modernization does not recognize the possibility of an alternative form of state. The study presented here aims to revive the debate by questioning whether the Western nation-state is the right model for Africa, and to encourage Africans to consider alternative methods of governance for the continent. *What is alternative?* is the familiar retort that rules out a debate on this issue. Our view is that the answer is for Africans to discover.

Chapter 2
The Crisis of the State in the Horn of Africa
John Markakis

> A manifold, violent political struggle has taken many lives throughout the Horn of Africa, and displaced millions of people reducing them to beggary. The conflict consumes a large share of the region's sparse resources, making a mockery of plans for development and condemning future generations to enduring misery[…]. Everywhere the target […] is the state: the custodian of wealth and protector of privilege. The state is both the goal of the contest and the principal means through which the contest is waged. (Markakis 1987, xvii)

The lines above were written in the mid-1980s, when the crisis of the state in this corner of the continent was already a quarter of a century old. At present, a quarter of a century later, the situation described has not changed significantly. State sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regime legitimacy are challenged widely in the Horn (but examples can be found throughout Africa) by political actors representing ethno-national groups who all face unequal access to power and material resources, as well as social and cultural discrimination; these common denominators are the key ingredients in the chemistry of the conflict, whether it is fought in the name of nation, region, clan, or religion. The perennial crisis of the state in the Horn of Africa is variously attributed to ethnic strife, resource competition, weak political institutions, inappropriate policies, corrupt and authoritarian rulers. It is assumed that these familiar features of the political landscape in the region could be eliminated with time, socioeconomic development, institution building, civic education, democratization, and other equally familiar nostrums of orthodox development theory. On the contrary, all of these supposed solutions are undoubtably ingredients in the chemistry of the unending crisis that has afflicted the postcolonial state in Africa. They are real obstacles in the path of modernization that hinder the Western model of nation-state building from taking root in African soil, and social scientists have formulated new paradigms—"state weakness," "state fragility," "state failure," "state collapse"—to accommodate them, and a host of concepts to account for the causes (John 2008).

The issue that is seldom raised is whether the model that originated during the Peace of Westphalia in the mid-seventeenth century is appropriate for the place and time period in which it has been imposed, and if it itself might not be the root cause of instability and conflict. Given the record of state failure, it is reasonable to question the compatibility of state and society and to consider whether political dynamics that reflect African social reality are fundamentally different from those that prevail in the West, consequently rendering them unmanageable in the Western nation-state model. To break the taboo and question whether the pursuit of nation building at this place and time is not itself the root cause of the crisis is the purpose of this work.

The Horn of Africa is chosen primarily because it has been the focus of long-term professional interest for the authors. As it happens, it also provides striking examples of the crisis that has rendered the postcolonial state dysfunctional. No state in this region has been able to adequately perform the functions generally assumed of it: control its borders, exercise a monopoly on the means of force within its borders, enforce the law equitably throughout its domain, protect the life and property of its subjects, and administer justice impartially. The region holds several continental records for political unrest: five wars between states, two of the longest wars, two secessions from existing states, and one state collapse. Furthermore, almost every self-identifying ethno-regional group has started at least one "national liberation movement."

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The issue at the heart of this work was raised a quarter of a century ago by Basil Davidson (1992). A notable exception to the reigning consensus in the Africanist academic community, Davidson's theory came at the end of two "lost decades" in Africa (the 1970s and 1980s), a period marked by political and economic deterioration. Davidson not only raised the issue, he also answered it categorically. The causes of the deterioration are not those that preoccupy the development experts, he declared; these are the effects, not the cause. The root cause is the headlong pursuit of the nation-state, which Davidson vividly calls a "curse" and the "Black man's burden." The holy grail of modernization, he maintained, obliged Africans to deny their history, cultures, and traditions—a deracination that left the continent hostage to manifold alienation and estranged a majority of the population from the Westernized elite. The elite, who promote the process of modernization qua Westernization, rely on the state to advance their vision of the future, thus making the state a participant in conflicts that reveal the tensions within the diverse African society. Yet, the state itself is incapable of managing the political dimensions that arise from these social conflicts.

Social conflicts include the competition for resources between social classes, ethnic groups, clans, and regions. Given the rapid growth of population, urbanization, environmental degradation, and the failure of economic transformation to counterbalance their impact, competition intensifies and is increasingly politicized. When the private sector of the economy atrophies, the state comes to control the production and distribution of resources. Inevitably, access to state power secures access to resources, and the reverse is also true. Thus, state power becomes the object of social conflict as well as the means whereby it is waged. It is inevitable in this context that ethnicity will serve as the reference point of identity, solidarity, loyalty, and collective security.

Africa's experience is not unique. Davidson draws parallels with the consequences of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union, as well as the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the recent history of the Middle East. In each instance, a host of former colonies and dependent territories emerged, and were driven by nationalism to become nation-states. Initially regarded positively as a progressive and liberating force, nationalism soon revealed a Janus nature, and the drive for a purified national identity resulted in the unending series of conflicts that made twentieth century Europe the "dark continent" (Mazower 1998). Many of these conflicts endure, unresolved, in the present century. The historical parallels with Africa are clear. There is, however, one difference, and it is a fundamental one. The core of nationalism as an ideology

is the distinct identity that differentiates one nation from others, an identity whose pillar is the history and culture of the people it claims to represent. Nationalism turns culture into fetish and enhances it with myth. This is not the case with African nationalism which saw Africa's tradition and culture as the antithesis of progress and turned its back on it.

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In the nomenclature of the time, the first generation of Africa's political leaders referred to themselves as "nationalists." This identity alluded to their quest for independence from colonial rule and the aspiration of nation-state building they shared with their comrades throughout the Southern hemisphere. They were politicians committed to modernization above all, the kind of modernization described by Davidson, which was (and remains) the primary goal of the continent. "The work of African politicians is to a large extent of keeping their countries going as nation-states in a world that recognizes no other formula of political evolution" (Leys 1966, 55). With few exceptions (like Kwame Nkrumah who envisioned African political unity on a higher and wider plane) they accepted the colonial carve-up of ramshackle states, described by Wole Soyinka as "a patchwork quilt sewn by a drunken tailor" because redrawing the colonial map risked opening Pandora's Box of "tribalism." The colonial boundaries were declared inviolable, a principle enshrined in the charter of the Organization of African Unity, and credited with keeping African inter-state relations generally free of territorial disputes and conflicts over sovereignty.

State builders have always feared that "the failure to homogenize increased the likelihood that a state […] would fragment into its cultural subdivisions" (Tilly 1975, 44). Cultural homogeneity and a shared national identity presumably endow the state with legitimacy and reduce the need to use force as the instrument of rule. National integration, therefore, became a political imperative. Former colonies were to be turned into functioning states and multi-ethnic populations molded into nations. This required the dissolution of traditional systems of socio-political organization and of ethnic identities, as well as the effacement of ethnic languages. In effect, the approach eclipsed Africa's flamboyant multiculturalism and designated a singular national culture for each of the more than fifty former colonies.

Western theorists who took it upon themselves to guide Africans on the path to development perceived national integration as an exercise in social engineering. "The people in a new state must come to recognize their national territory as being their true homeland," proclaimed a prominent member of the profession, "and they must feel as individuals that their own personal identities are in part defined by their identification with their territorially delimited country" (Pye 1963, 63).

The universal appeal of nationalism as an ideology stems from its perceived capacity to transcend social divisions—ethnic, regional, religious, class, clan—that undermine the state and threaten the position of the ruling elite. Nation-state building is expected to replace ethno-cultural diversity with a singular identity, a consciousness of national unity and undiluted loyalty to the state. Historically, the replacement comprises the identity, culture, tradition, and language of the nation-state builders, and national integration involves its diffusion throughout the state via a process of acculturation, assimilation, and if need be, forced conversion.

In many cases it was clear that ethnic or religious sub-identities would not simply fade away, so attempts were made to define a level of integration with shared convictions, prac-

tices, norms, and values at the state and national level. Particular identities that were compatible with this "national" identity would be integrated. There are dozens of states in the postcolonial world that have "unity in diversity" as their motto. In precolonial Africa, ethnic differences often were along the lines of professional specialization, a circumstance which often led to reduced competition and forms of peaceful exchange. In other cases, social distance and restricted interaction made peaceful coexistence possible. Premodern empires made systematic use of ethnic differences to organize heterogeneous societies, which do not conform to modern ideas of equality and universal citizenship. In this scenario, however, everyone could find a community, a process that can be described as "integration through difference" (Schlee and Horstmann 2018).

Cultural differences become more of a problem when they occur in the context of modern nation-states, based on ideas of homogeneity and equality (Schlee and Horstmann 2018). That was the case with the decolonization of Africa. The products of that decolonization were to be modelled along the lines of the modern, Westphalian nation-state. Unlike the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, which was celebrated as a liberation of nations (which existed or were believed to exist before the event), there were no nations that fitted the Western model after African decolonization. The ideal of the nation-state is the congruence of a collective, a nation with its own territory. In newly decolonized states of Africa, the territory was there, but the nation needed to be built in order to achieve this congruence.

Accordingly, *nation building* became the goal, and acculturation was required at the *national* level. The process of nation building stemmed from the colonial experience as the operating responsible political units were products of colonialism. In sub-Saharan Africa, this kind of acculturation began long before the rise of African nationalism; it was not a local initiative and did no draw on indigenous history, culture, and tradition as its sources. On the contrary, it aimed to eradicate them. The arrival of nationalism could not halt the process but actually reinforced its colonial background, beginning with the introduction of Western education tout court in conjunction with a crude form of Christian evangelism. The intention was to produce a cadre of locals to help administer the colonial empire; proper assimilation to Western culture would distinguish them from the rest of the population. Its members were appropriately called *assimilados*, *evolues* or *emancipados*, in the languages of the colonial masters. The qualifications needed to achieve the status of assimilado, for example, were succinctly prescribed in the Portuguese Colonial Statute of 1954: a Catholic baptismal certificate, a civil marriage license, and a civilized job. An assimilado furthermore needed to practice a Portuguese lifestyle.

Assimilation is most effective with tabula rasa but is an impossible condition in this case. As an alternative approach, colonial organizers eradicated indigenous history and culture, and quelled any beliefs and values that could obstruct the assimilation process. In Walter Rodney's (Rodney 1972, 380) words: "to be colonized is to be removed from history, except in the most passive sense." The assimilado was taught to disdain the past. Tradition was "primitive," "savage," "primordial," and "uncivilized." Local religions were called "idolatry" and "animist"; its practitioners were "wizards," "sorcerers," and "witch doctors." Universal creeds like Islam and Christianity that had already taken root in the continent were the exception, and became integral components of national identity in places like Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia. Colonial education "was not an education system designed to grow out of the African environment [...] [and] designed to give young people pride as being members of African societies, but one that sought to install deference towards all that was

European and capitalist" (Rodney 1972, 380). No concession was made to the past, and no attempt was made to recognize, interact, or integrate with anything the African tradition might have to offer. This was not a process of cultural diffusion familiar in world history, but of cultural deracination.

Acculturation had momentous political consequences that outlived colonialism. Association with the colonial power endowed the indigenous cadre with administrative power and relative economic privilege, turning it into the elite class. And independence turned the elite into a ruling class. African nationalism rejected Western political and economic domination, but it did not reject cultural domination. In fact, it embraced it and reinforced it through the rapid expansion of Western education, one area of development in which African states made great progress.

Nation building required the transcendence of ethnicity, the living cell of society, and replacement with a nation that did not yet exist. Nation building was launched with a frontal attack on African tradition and its defenders. "Tribalism" became a social defamation and a handy weapon in political contests; in some instances, reference to one's "tribe" was outlawed. The accusation of tribalism was successfully used to preempt claims to a share of political power by traditional authorities, who could have served as intermediaries with the masses, but were sidelined instead.

The result was the perfection of Western hegemony over the subcontinent. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, can be achieved by coercive or consensual mechanisms of social control. Consensus is far more preferable because it requires less effort from the hegemon to enforce, given the cooperation of the local ruling elite. "A Gramscian hegemony involves the internalization on the part of subordinate classes of the moral and cultural values, the codes of practical conduct, and the worldview of the dominant classes or groups—in sum, the internalization of the *social logic* of the system of dominance itself" (Robinson 1996, 21). Hegemony is ultimately achieved when the hegemon's ideology is internalized by the target society itself. While Gramsci's reference is a class divided capitalist society, his concept perfectly fits the postcolonial world system. Instead of being locked into the neoliberal paradigm, the neo-Gramscian approach focuses on the inter-relationship between states, social forces, ideals, and world orders. In this paradigm, it is the African ruling elite that is the pillar of the hegemonic system. The success of the hegemonic project drove a wedge between the urban, Westernized elite—a small minority—and Africa's rural population—a vast majority—whose life still follows a traditional rhythm. The two are separated by a cultural gap that alienates the masses from their rulers; it is a disjunction that is the source of many of Africa's problems.

The internalization of the Western worldview by the African elite deprived Africa of its own organic intellectuals, born from its own womb to represent and convey the values, norms, and logic of its own history, culture, and tradition to future generations. The African elite proved unable to negotiate and mediate the process of breakneck acculturation that threatened to overwhelm their societies; in other words, they could not "resist, appropriate, interpret, and transform" as Asian and Arab nations have done to mitigate impact and protect their own cultures and identities (Mishra 2015). As a result, sub-Saharan Africa does not produce knowledge relevant to its own reality and remains as dependent on imported knowledge as it does for capital and technology. Africa does not produce solutions for its own problems, but depends on foreign "specialists" whose expertise does not derive from

their knowledge of Africa. In the bitter words of one of their own, African intellectuals function as "paid native informants for foreign donors" (Zeleza 2003, 157).

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Like all ideologies, nationalism feeds on myth, and African nationalism is no exception. A staple feature of it is the alleged unity of purpose and structure of the nationalist movement in each colony, a forerunner of the anticipated unity of the future nation. In truth, a former colony rarely saw fewer than two rival nationalist organizations form and compete for power of the future state. Moreover, factionalism derived from ethno-cultural and regional differences within each colony and signified concern over access to power and resources in the independent state. Protracted negotiations on power sharing along ethnic and regional lines delayed independence in many instances. In several cases, including Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia in the Horn, smaller and less advanced groups asked for independence to be postponed until they were ready to compete for power. Elsewhere, they asked for a federal system of government to protect them from superior group domination. This was an early sign of the cracks in the body politic and an ill omen for the future.

Nowhere was this power dilemma more evident than in the Horn of Africa. The consensus over colonial boundaries did not apply in this corner of the continent, where decolonization unleashed bloody struggles over territory, sovereignty, and identity in several fronts. "Almost all the states of the Horn of Africa have, at one time or another, staked claim on parts or the whole of a neighbouring country," writes a veteran politician from the region (Latta 2009, 4). The many-sided conflict involved rival nation-state building projects working at cross purposes in a zero-sum game, where one's gain is another's loss. The state, actual or imagined, was the prize in the manifold conflict, with some actors seeking to preserve and expand existing states, others trying to secede and create their own states, others yet fighting to secede from one state in order to join another, and others still to capture power within their own state. Focusing on Ethiopia's leading role in this volatile process, Christopher Clapham points to the "non-colonial" roots of state building in this region and the strength of "home grown forces" involved (Clapham 2017).

To date the struggle to revise the map in this region has gone through two sharply contrasting phases. The first brought the consolidation of state units created by imperialism, and the second saw the negation of the consolidation. The first phase was launched by the three largest states—Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia—and concluded when they had annexed the small neighbor abandoned by the receding imperialist tide. Ethiopia annexed Eritrea, Sudan incorporated southern Sudan, a region the British had administered separately from northern Sudan while mulling over its future, and Somaliland joined Somalia in a union the former had cause to regret, while the Djibouti enclave survived by remaining a French colony for two more decades. The first phase reduced the number of states in the Horn from seven to four.

The second saw the fragmentation of Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia with the secession of the three annexed units, which emerged as independent states; Eritrea and southern Sudan *de jure*, Somaliland *de facto*. This marked the full restoration of the colonial map after decades of violent conflict took the lives of millions, dislocated the region's economy, and undermined its prospects for development. It also condemned its people to live under authoritarian rulers addicted to the use of force as the main instrument of government.

The prize of the contest, the state, was to be the agency in the building of the imagined nation. Unsurprisingly, since it was chosen by the ruling elite, the future nation's identity was to be the same as their own ethnic identity. In Ethiopia they represented the Abyssinians who had built the Ethiopian Empire over a century earlier. Assimilation over the course of a century reinforced the descendants of the empire builders; even so, they are a minority in the country they rule to this day. In the imperial state, national integration was predicated on Christianity and the Amharic language, and was aptly known as *Amharization*. In the Sudan, the ruling elite represented the Arabic-speaking Muslim population of the central riverain region. Ethnic groups in eastern and western Sudan are Muslims but not Arabic-speaking, and together with the inhabitants of southern Sudan, they far outnumbered the Arab elite who ruled over them. Predicated on Islam and the Arab culture and language, the process here was known as *Arabization*. The ruling elite in Somalia are represented by the Darod family of clans who are the largest group by member and are thought to exemplify the pastoralist ethos of the Somali people. While the pastoralists of northern and central Somalia speak dialects that are similar to each other and have been the basis of the standardized national language, in the south of the country there are many dialects, distinct both from the standard and from each other. The speakers of these dialects comprise large numbers of sedentary agriculturalists. Often, they are classified as Saab as distinct from Samaale (the eponymous ancestor of the Somali proper). In the south many people of slave origin are found, comprising the Bantu speakers of the Juba region.

The method chosen to promote national integration in Ethiopia and Sudan was the assimilation of ethnically diverse groups. Since both states are ethnic mosaics, homogeneity spelled the cultural deracination of subordinate groups. As it turned out, however, the promotion of dominant group nationalism was to be checkmated and confounded by the countervailing force of its opposite number, which is the emerging nationalism among subordinate groups. Many resisted assimilation forcefully, ultimately making the task of the nation-state builders well-nigh impossible.

It was not solely cultural suppression that inspired resistance. Elite monopoly of power and its consequences was a more direct provocation. As mentioned earlier, given the atrophy of the private economy in Africa, access to state power translates into access to material and social resources. The exclusion of subordinate groups from power means a lack of access to resources commanded by the state, which range from land and water to employment, education, and health care. Powerlessness, economic discrimination, and cultural oppression add up to marginalization, the defining feature of subordination and the catalyst for conflict over state power.

Ethnically and socially circumscribed, the political base of the ruling elite is narrow, and its claim to legitimacy feeble. Consequently, it is compelled to rely on force to maintain itself in power while continuing to pursue the nation-state building project, ruling out any form of representative government. Democratization had a brief life in the Horn. It lasted the longest—nine years—in Somalia in the 1960s, where it managed a unique—for the region—peaceful transfer of power. It made fleeting appearances, marking the transition between military regimes in Sudan, which took a combined total of six years since independence in 1956. It has served as a façade for authoritarian rule in Ethiopia and Djibouti but has not appeared in Eritrea even for this purpose. To defend their monopoly, the elite depended entirely on the state whose institutions they strive to strengthen. As a result, the state's repressive apparatus, especially security and the military, grew inordinately in the

postcolonial period, inevitably leading to military rule that serves as a prop for elite rule when it falters.

Nationalism proved a weak ideological foundation for the postcolonial state and provided inadequate support for legitimacy deficient regimes. The latter have sought to reinforce it with transplants from contemporary ideologies that enjoyed ephemeral popular appeal. Socialism was the ideology of liberation struggles fought in the non-Western world during the second half of the twentieth century. Africans nationalists were naturally drawn to it and made their preference clear in a meeting held in Dakar in 1962 to discuss the relative merits of socialism and capitalism. Leopold Senghor, the host, vowed: "We shall not be won over to a regime of liberal capitalism and free enterprise" (quoted in Mohan 1966, 22). Seydou Kouyate, Mali's Minister of Planning and Rural Economy put the economic argument tersely: "You cannot be a capitalist when you have no capital" (Mohan 1966, 22). Furthermore, capitalism was considered incompatible with African social and cultural values. "The presuppositions and purposes of capitalism are contrary to those of African society," Nkrumah wrote, adding that "capitalism would be a betrayal of the personality and conscience of Africa" (Nkrumah 1964, 74). "There are few African states whose leaders have resisted the temptation of insinuating 'Socialism' into their political rhetoric," concluded a contemporary observer (Mohan 1966, 22).

The Africans' preference for socialism came as a surprise to Westerners. The handing of state power by the departing colonial powers to their assimilated protégés had been explained in the West with the logic of the Cold War. One scholar noted the identity of interests of the African elite, a small minority of the population, and the metropolitan power, an identity he believed "made them safe hands in which to trust foreign assets. Given the fairly strong adherence of Africa's elites to legitimate metropolitan socioeconomic norms and institutions, there is no reason to expect them to forge strong ties with the communist world" (Kilson 1963, 434). Another concluded "the fundamental sense of values of the African states will keep them, at least for the near future, immune to the proselytizing zeal of the communists" (Brzezinski 1963, 135). Though the popularity of socialism made capitalist Westerners anxious, they were unduly worried, since socialism proved to be another Western doctrine that failed to take root in Africa. African politicians "use the rhetoric of 'Socialism,' not as a guide to their actual policies and objectives, but as an ideological scaffold, among other devices, for their monopoly of political power" (Mohan 1966, 222).

Socialism sanctions a dominant role for the state in economic development, ranging from the nationalization of the means of production to centralized planning. This provided the African elite, which lacked capital assets of its own, with control and exploitation of national resources. Thus, three states in the Horn—Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia—featured military regimes implausibly committed to *scientific socialism* in the last two decades of the past century.

Socialism also underpins the case for the one-party state. As the argument went, subSaharan Africa is a classless society and doesn't need multiple political parties to represent them. "One party rule is the most appropriate political instrument for ending ethnic conflict and for planning," Nkrumah declared in (1964) as he changed Ghana's constitution, citing two reasons why authoritarian rule became political fashion early on and why it remains the enduring favorite to this day. Nowadays, however, political correctness requires that it operate behind a democratic façade. Modernization-cum-Westernization is a package that includes democratization and the free market as intrinsically linked features of the modern

nation-state. Neither was an option for the first generation of African leaders, who displayed a definite preference for an authoritarian style of governance. It was the single party system, not a liberal democracy that became the model for government throughout the subcontinent during the first decade of independence. Succeeded by military rule, the archetype of authoritarianism for the following two decades made a comeback at the end of the last century as a façade in a "wave of democratization."

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The sixteenth-century Muslim invasion of Ethiopia nearly extinguished Christianity in the kingdom of Prester John, yet Orthodox Christianity is the foundation of Ethiopian nationalism today. This example demonstrates how religion is another ideology long used for political purposes in the Horn. The first independent state in modern day Sudan was the work of a messianic Islamic figure known as the Mahdi (1844–1885), and the two main political parties in postcolonial Sudan were created by two Islamic *turuq* (singular: *tariqa*), Mahdiya and Khatmiya. The Dervish movement in Somalia at the beginning of the twentieth century is another historical precursor.

At the close of the twentieth century, Islam made a spectacular comeback as the ideology of choice for political mobilization in the Horn. Having discarded scientific socialism in the early 1980s in Sudan, Jaafar Nimeiri turned to Islam in search of solid political ground. The introduction of Sharia was bruited about, the Sudan was named an Islamic Republic, and thousands of bottles of alcohol were poured into the Nile in a sort of libation. Although this maneuver did not save Nimeiri, Islamism was taken up with a zealot's fervor by the military regime that directly followed in Khartoum in 1989. Guided by the National Islamic Front at the extreme right end of the political spectrum, the regime headed by Colonel Omar Al Al-Bashir that would later be called the National Congress Party wasted little time imposing Sharia with all the trimmings on the country. It also proclaimed itself the champion of this creed in the Horn, upsetting both Ethiopia and Eritrea and mightily irritating Washington.

Islam has always been popular in Somalia despite having to overcome the divisive appeal of the clan, the bedrock of their society. The recent shift in Somali nationalism toward Islam was signaled by the appearance of Al Itihad Al Islami (Islamic Union), a religious movement committed to the unification of all Somali lands. It provoked an Ethiopian army invasion of southern Somalia that forced Al Itihad to abandon both the region and its goal. Following a chaotic period dominated by clan-based warlords, another movement called the Joint Islamic Courts (JIC) emerged to claim power at the center, and was in turn smashed by a second Ethiopian military incursion. The defense of Islam-cum-Somali nationalism then passed to a far more radical movement called Shabaab (youth), that has been fighting the regime installed in Mogadishu by the West over the past few years.

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The following survey of the history of nation-state building in the Horn highlights the commonality of features attributed to nationalism universally, as well as differences that endow each case with specific attributes. The concept of the center-periphery state design provides a common framework for analysis. It presents a duality of power and privilege within a center that has a monopoly of decision-making power and a periphery is excluded from power.

Power is instrumental in gaining privilege in material wealth and social status, and wealth is transferred from the periphery to the center; this dynamic creates tension between the two poles and inevitably leads to conflict that characterizes the region's recent past.

Ethiopia inherited this model from its imperial past and retains its politico-administrative structure to this day. Unlike its neighbors in the region, this state has a history that links it to antiquity. This is the history of Abyssinia, known in Christendom as the mythical kingdom of Prester John, encircled and isolated on its mountainous stronghold by Islam since the seventh century. It is the only place on the continent where Christianity managed to survive as an indigenous religion to become the dominant feature of Abyssinian culture and the reigning symbol of their national identity. After centuries of stagnation and provincial conflicts over the imperial throne, Abyssinia was united under Emperor Menelik (1889–1913) just as the shadow of European imperialism began to fall over the Horn. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 restored the Red Sea to world importance and turned the Horn into a major bone of contention among the imperialist powers. Thanks to the intense rivalry among the Europeans, Emperor Menelik was able to acquire a modern arsenal and the confidence to challenge them in the race for territory, launching a series of campaigns to expand his empire in the southern part of the country in the lands of the Oromo, Sidamo, and other groups, thereby setting a limit to British northward colonial expansion in modern-day Kenya.

In the north, the Italians seized a long stretch of the Red Sea coast and gained a foothold in the highlands where they established the colony they named Eritrea. Intent on seizing the rest of the plateau, they invaded Abyssinia in 1896 and were heavily defeated by the Abyssinians in the battle of Adwa, which proved to be a unique African victory over Europeans. Abyssinia and Britain then raced to seize what remained unclaimed in the region. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Menelik had obtained most of the territory he coveted and established the borders of the newly christened Ethiopian Empire, which have remained effectively unchanged.

The making of the Ethiopian empire is not a unique phenomenon, neither in time nor in place. The time was the era of Western imperialism, a phenomenon whose disturbing impact was felt early and directly in this corner of Africa and acted as a catalyst for Ethiopia's own imperial expansion. Nor was it the only instance of territory campaigns by Africans at this time. The Egyptians in the north, the Mahdiya in the Sudan, the Fulani in the west, and the Zulu in the south carried out similar contemporary efforts. The crucial difference is that Ethiopia succeeded while the others failed. The imperial regime retained and utilized indigenous authorities to help administer the multi-ethnic empire, and many local hierarchies survived until its collapse. The ultimate consequence of the Ethiopian expansion, however, was the dismantling of indigenous states that vanished from the face of the earth along with their history. In this respect, the impact of Ethiopian imperialism was the same as that of the European onslaught elsewhere in Africa, the obliteration of indigenous polities and the interruption of autonomous indigenous political development.

Land hunger was a compelling motive for the expansion. Precipitation in the highlands is normally plentiful. It is also the agent of catastrophic erosion when it falls with torrential force on the unprotected, tilled flanks of mountains and hills, and carries away the topsoil that is the Nile's gift to Egypt. Little water is retained on the northern plateau itself, where irrigation was not practiced. More agricultural potential was found further south. The southern region of the Ethiopian highlands was thinly populated and land was in pristine condition.

The conquered territories were used to host the excess population of the north, and in the wake of the conquest a steady stream of northerners flowed into the freshly seized territories to appropriate land and exploit the labor of the indigenous population.

The system of administration designed for the annexed regions conformed to the time-honored arrangement linking dominant elite in the center with subordinate elite in the periphery. In the Ethiopian Empire, the administrative structure in the periphery rested on the traditional leadership of local communities. Indigenous authority hierarchies were preserved, mostly in truncated form, to facilitate the administration of the new provinces under Ethiopian governors. The subordinate elite constituted a hierarchy of its own whose contribution to imperial rule was indispensable. The new provinces were compensated with a share of the land and the labor of its own people, as well as a share of the tax it collected on behalf of the state.

Founding the imperial edifice on a system of land tenure imposed and maintained by force proved to be a structural flaw because of the fateful conjunction of ethnic and class divisions in an iniquitous arrangement. The bulk of the landholding class were Christian, Amharic, and Tigray-speaking Abyssinians, a distinct ethnos in a region inhabited by many other groups who speak various languages and adhering to Islam or traditional faiths. The distinctiveness of the Abyssinian identity was accentuated by a monopoly of political power, economic privilege, and superior social status. All Abyssinians who settled in the highland periphery became landlords on expropriated land and exploited the labor of the indigenous peasantry. The relationship between them was that of master and servant, landlord and tenant, tax collector and taxpayer. This conjunction made for a potentially explosive relationship, a potential that took only a few decades to mature.

The expansion had a momentous consequence for the conquering nation. It incorporated regions inhabited by some eighty ethnic groups with different cultures and languages, among which Islam had made great inroads. While Abyssinia had a largely culturally homogeneous population with a strong national identity and identification with the state, Ethiopia has a highly diverse population within which the descendants of the Abyssinians are a minority. Moreover, their experience under Abyssinian rule for most of the conquered groups was negative and not calculated to inspire loyalty to the imperial state.

Striving for legitimacy, "empires construct themselves around a specific culture that they intend to defend, promote, or possibly expand" (Badie 2000, 48). It was taken for granted that integration meant Ethiopia would become Abyssinia writ large and would require the assimilation of the non-Abyssinian population, a huge majority of the whole. This assumption was succinctly stated by a member of the first generation of Ethiopians educated abroad: "It is for the Galla (Oromo) to become Amhara (not the other way round); for the latter possess a written language, a superior religion and superior customs and mores" (cited in Bahru Zewde 1991, 132–133). Language, the emblem of culture, is the cutting edge in the process of assimilation. "Cultural and linguistic unification is accompanied by the imposition of the dominant language and culture as legitimate, and by the rejection of all other languages into indignity" (Bourdieu 1994, 74). Traditionally known as *lesane negus* (the king's language), Amharic was the main tool in the assimilation process, inevitably dubbed Amharization. A Ministry of Education report in 1955 declared: "the promotion of Amharic at the various levels […] is an important task that is fundamental to national integration" (cited in Milkias 2006, 54). The pursuit of homogeneity reached a peak when

the regime began to change place names in the periphery; for example, the Oromo town of Adama became Nazaret.

To smooth the path of the official medium, the regime sought to eradicate all other indigenous languages, including the second Abyssinian tongue Tigray. Amharic was the official language and no vernacular was allowed to be printed, broadcast, taught, or spoken on public occasions. Proficiency in the official language was required for entry to the university, although the language of instruction was English. Needless to say, Amharic speakers represented a large majority of the students at every level of education.

On the subject of religion, the imperial regime's policy was ostensibly based on a statement attributed to the Emperor, to wit: "religion is personal, the state is for all." The irony of this statement is reflected in the glaring fact that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the official state church, and therefore the owner of immense landed wealth and the beneficiary of state largesse. Muslims had only token representation in the state structure.

The fact that ruling the Empire required the largest army in the subcontinent, which Ethiopia funded with ample support from the United States, is proof of the growing crisis the state faced after WWII. This crisis was partly the result of the region's instability with decolonization, which affected Ethiopia directly with the rise of Somali irredentism in the southeast and Eritrean secessionism in the north. The two neighboring regions both turned into war zones where the Ethiopian army failed to eliminate direct challenges to the state's territorial integrity. Years of futile effort sapped the morale of the soldiers and made them susceptible to the radical message of the emerging opposition in the center. Modest urbanization and the beginning of modernization of the economy provoked unrest in the center in the form of opposition to the government of the aging Haile Sellasie. Spearheaded by the students of the country's sole university, the opposition was deeply concerned with the state's future, a concern that focused on the antiquated land tenure system seen as an obstacle to the country's socioeconomic development and a threat to the state's survival.

The imperial state collapsed in 1974 when soldiers and junior officers mutinied and the military hierarchy was decapitated, breaking the main pillar of the state. The soldiers shared the concerns of the opposition, which is evident in the official slogan adopted by the junta that replaced Haile Sellasie—"Ethiopia first." One of its first actions was to nationalize all land without compensation, outlaw private property of land, and divide agricultural land evenly among those who worked on it. It was a historic achievement, a veritable social revolution that shattered the material base of the imperial ruling class, followed by a sweeping nationalization of the economy that brought the country's resources under state ownership and management. A declaration of scientific socialism as the new regime's ideological guide followed.

The choice partly reflected the fact that the Soviet Union now replaced the United States as Ethiopia's patron. More to the point, socialism in its Soviet version claimed to offer a solution to the problem of ethno-pluralism in one state. The national contradiction, in Marxist parlance, was considered secondary to class contradiction and would be resolved automatically once the class conflict ended with workers and peasants coming to power. This philosophy provided a theoretical delinking of the ethnic and class conjunction that threatened the security of the state. The military regime also denounced the Amharization policy of its predecessors, encouraged cultural self-expression in the periphery, deprived the Orthodox Church of its vast landholdings and state financial support, granted official recognition to Islam, and recruited non-Abyssinians in the state administration and the military.

One thing the regime did not do was relax the center's monopoly of power and rigid control over the periphery, nor did it decentralize the state administration. In fact, the reverse occurred, as is to be expected in a military regime. It did however produce its own subordinate elite to help administer the periphery. This was a corps of cadre, recruited from all regions, ideologically indoctrinated in a special institution, superficially trained in administration, and sent to run local government.

The junta known as the Derg (committee) also did not divert from the policy of countering opposition with force; before long, it confronted militant opposition both in the center and in the periphery. The Derg inherited the nationalist revolution in Eritrea, which would increasingly absorb the country's energy and resources and contribute to its eventual collapse. Somali irredentism, revived with support from Mogadishu, led to an invasion of Ethiopia by the army of the Somali Republic that required Soviet Union and Cuban intervention to counter. Before long, national liberation movements multiplied in the periphery to harass the beleaguered regime. Among them, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) represented by far the largest ethnic group in the country.

Militant opposition arose within the center, too. It initially came from the radical groups who opposed the imperial regime and then turned against the soldiers, demanding a "people's government." The contest was unequal and the radicals were ruthlessly annihilated in a campaign dubbed the Red Terror. A more resilient opposition arose from Tigray province in the heartland of Abyssinia. The smaller branch of the Abyssinian family, Tigray preserved its own language and distinguished itself through an insular, conservative provincialism, a permanent grievance against Amhara political dominance with a history of rebellion against it. The latest rebellion led by the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF) concluded that there was "a national contradiction between the Amhara oppressor nation and the oppressed nations of Ethiopia, including Tigray," and launched a guerrilla war that would eventually carry them to power in Addis Ababa.

The regime's fate was sealed when the Soviet Union, caught in its own political turmoil, withdrew its support in the late 1980s. A desperate resort to federalism was made in order to avoid collapse. It was too little and too late. The Derg collapsed like a house of cards in 1991, leaving none of its creations standing.

The incumbent regime in Ethiopia is a coalition named Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), put together and largely controlled by the TPLF. Itself the product of the worsening crisis of the state, the TPLF had made meticulous preparations to deal with it. The first step was to form the EPRDF coalition on an ethnic basis by forming political factions from miscellaneous groups before coming to power. The immediate concern after coming to power was to secure peace throughout the country. The first step in that direction was to recognize Eritrea's right to independence without conditions or even negotiations. The second was to hold a national conference to which all but a few existing political organizations were invited. At the same time, all ethnic communities in Ethiopia were encouraged to choose and send representatives to the conference. The response was enthusiastic and more than one hundred political groups were hastily formed. The conference was asked to approve a transitional constitution and soon afterwards a multiparty government was formed. The arrangements received the blessing of the US, now restored as Ethiopia's patron, but Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Herman Cohen, allegedly warned the Tigray leaders: "no democracy, no aid."

The third step was to reorganize the structure of the state on an ethnic basis, a radical departure from the past. Ethiopia was divided into regional states more or less ethnically homogenous, which were autonomous and had all the powers not reserved for the federal government, including the power to secede from the state. They were granted the right to use their own ethnic languages in administration and education, and to elect their own representatives. The 1995 Constitution stretched federalism to its limits. On the face of it, the state was a pact of ethnic groups. It explicitly accepted cultural pluralism, and implicitly rejected the Western nation-state model that has become the aspired norm for Africa. It dissolved the intrinsic link between culture and nationality inherent in this model and allowed for a diversity of cultural identities to coexist with a common citizenship. Undoubtedly, the radical reforms introduced by the EPRDF went a long way toward calming the crisis and stabilizing the political system for a quarter of a century.

In theory, the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is a monument to liberalism and state decentralization. However, practice differs considerably. Federalism in Ethiopia was designed with political objectives, not least those of the TPLF, and was imposed from the top down, a revolution carried out from above. Like all revolutions, it happened because the old order had run its course and had to be replaced. The replacement was largely determined by the TPLF, hence the fate of the regime was tied up with the success or failure of the federal project. It is not surprising, therefore, that the regime has taken responsibility for its efficient management. This requires central planning and coordination of a high order, which in practice sometimes run contrary to the diversity and pluralism decentralization implies.

The acid test of federalism, of course, is fiscal, and depends on whether the regions are adequately resourced to exercise their constitutional prerogatives. Under previous regimes, Ethiopia's fiscal system was highly centralized with the central government appropriating the bulk of state revenue. Despite the fact that responsibility for the provision of many public services, including health and education, has shifted from the center to the regions, the center-periphery balance has not dramatically changed with the shift in regimes. The result is that with the exception of Addis Ababa the regions are able to finance less than half of their recurrent expenditure and none of their capital investment, and are heavily dependent on subsidies from the central government. This reliance on the federal government gives the latter leverage to dictate policy throughout the state and has used it to impose conformity over the administrative structure, policy making, and implementation throughout the periphery.

The distribution of political power also has a bearing on the functioning of a federal system. Ostensibly, this dynamic has changed significantly under the EPRDF, a multi-ethnic coalition of parties that administers the regions. Most of them were founded by the TPLF before coming to power—each bearing the ethnic name followed by the title "People's Democratic Organisation" (e.g. Oromo People's Democratic Organisation)—and represent the latest version of an auxiliary elite whose task is to administer the periphery on behalf of the center. After the initial period of spontaneous sprouting of new political organizations, and the revival of a few pre-existing ones, none of them survived to play a meaningful role later.

Thus, the promise of democratization trumpeted by the EPRDF upon coming to power that helped it win genuine public support and a series of elections in the early years faded, and subsequent elections held every five years became theatrical productions produced by the ruling coalition. Genuine political opposition represented by a few parties outside the EPRDF network was denied political space to develop and was easily outmaneuvered. The

elections in May 2005 proved a shocking exception when a renascent opposition swept the urban vote and rashly claimed victory over a temporarily complacent regime. The regime's reaction was violent, demonstrating opposition supporters were killed, and opposition leaders were dragged through the courts, convicted of treason, and sentenced to death. They escaped with their lives by humbly asking for pardon and then took refuge abroad. Thus, the democratization experiment came to an end in Ethiopia. A chastened regime took no chances in the future. In the May 2015 elections, it claimed no less than one hundred percent of the vote and admitted only one non-EPRDF representative to enter the parliament. On a visit to Ethiopia two months later, United States President Barack Obama praised the country for having "a democratically elected government."

After the 2005 post-election crisis, the regime went on an economic overdrive to spur growth, based on infrastructure development financed mostly by loans from abroad and facilitation of investment from the Ethiopian diaspora. Loans from China tied to the involvement of Chinese enterprises in project construction played a key role. Loans from domestic banks supported a huge construction surge in housing and luxury hotel accommodation that changed the face of Addis Ababa and some regional capitals. Foreign investment supported development in local industrial capacity including textiles, shoes, cement, and automobiles, all of which boosted urban employment. Ethiopia was heralded as Africa's economic miracle, and the regime credited the success to its decision to follow the "developmental state" model. This model assigns a leading role to the state in guiding the economy along a path of its own choosing.

The regime's expectations of political gain from economic growth however were frustrated. In fact, the opposite appears to have happened. Growth brought problems of its own, including inflation and a sharp devaluation of the currency, growing inequality between sectors of the population, disparity between rulers and the ruled and. The most vexing problem of all for the common people was the rampant corruption among the ruling elite. Its gains notwithstanding, the developmental state was stoking social and political tensions. When the regime appeared at a loss on how to manage them, it forfeited its political credit even among former supporters.

As in the two previous instances, the crisis that confronted the regime in 2016, as it rounded a quarter of a century in power, was caused by the classic syndrome of popular unrest in the center. These acts of civil disobedience included violent demonstrations in the Amhara region that ostensibly concerned two districts on the border between Amhara and Tigray regions that the federal map had included in Tigray in the mid-1990s. To raise this issue now indicated a general political malaise focused on the dominant role of the TPLF. The Abyssinian pillar of the center seemed in danger of cracking in two.

The challenge from the periphery came from the Oromo who represented more than one-third of country's population, and had long languished under Abyssinian domination. Unlike the Abyssinians, the Oromo had no experience of political unity in the past, and still find it difficult to produce a united front against the center. The Oromo Liberation Front that emerged during the reign of the military regime was the first organization that claimed to represent the Oromo, accepted the EPRDF Charter, and joined the first coalition government. While the EPRDF guerrilla army was declared the national army, all other groups that opposed the Derg were required to disarm and dismantle their own forces. Those who refused, including the OLF, were attacked, forcibly disarmed, and their leaders fled abroad. The OLF regrouped abroad and conducted a low intensity insurgency for some

years without success, following which it splintered in many factions and ceased to be a threat to the regime. Nevertheless, it remained hugely popular among the Oromo people who viewed the party as their champion. The regime chose to take this at face value and used it in a campaign of continuous harassment that saw many Oromo accused of OLF links and imprisoned for long spells without charge while many others sought refuge abroad.

The administration of the Oromia region was entrusted to the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation, a branch of the EPRDF. Its political task was thankless because it was clearly a puppet of the center, and it never acquired wide acceptance. This was made worse by arbitrary actions of the center that magnified the subservience of the OPDO. When the dust over the design of the federal structure had settled, it emerged that Addis Ababa became the capital of both the federation and the Oromo region. In 2000, the regime ordered the region to move its capital to Adama, a small town on the rail line, and removed the area surrounding Addis Ababa from Oromo region. The OPDO consented and subsequent clashes with demonstrators forced the authorities to reverse the order, only for it to reinstate the second capital in 2005. This issue crystallized the historical grievances of the Oromo and served as the focus of massive demonstrations with the participation of every sector of Oromo society. The disturbances turned increasingly violent with each year, as the regime responded with gunfire that took hundreds of lives.

The turning point came in 2016, when the challenge from the periphery and the division in the center coincided. A series of meetings of the top EPRDF councils over several months produced no decision, and the regime appeared to be losing control of the situation. As the year approached an end, it declared a state of emergency and asked the military to protect the security of the state. Unrest, particularly in the Oromo region continued and spread to the Abyssinian provinces of Tigray and Gojjam while, paralysed by internal disagreement, the EPRDF was unable to agree on a course of action. The impasse ended in April 2018, when a change of leadership brought to power an Oromo OPDO leader as prime minister. Ostensibly a historic shift from the imperial formula based on Abyssinian control of the state center, it was followed by a wave of political reforms, among them the making of peace with Eritrea.

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The crisis of the state in Sudan differs from the Ethiopian case only in detail. It is the story of state ruled by elite representing an ethnic minority entrenched in the center and struggling to control a vast periphery inhabited by more than two hundred ethnic groups. Continuous, widespread, and increasingly forceful resistance in many parts of the periphery has defeated the center's attempts to rule the country through conventional means, and turned Sudan into a garrison state, ruled by the military for all but six years of its existence as an independent state. As in Ethiopia, national integration in the cultural image of the ruling elite, i.e. Arabization, was tried, as was Marxism, federalism, and Islam. Like Eritrea and Ethiopia, a decades' old attempt to subjugate resistance in southern Sudan ended with the region's secession in 2011. As this conflict was being resolved, long simmering conflicts in the periphery of the truncated state—Nuba Mountains, Darfur, and the Red Sea region— flared up to challenge the center.

Sudan's future appeared bright when it became independent in 1956; it was the first colony in the subcontinent to reach this goal. Including southern Sudan, it had one of the

largest land masses in Africa, a sizeable urban sector in the riverain valley hosting a polit-ically sophisticated Western-educated class, a modernizing economy based on cotton that sustained a large trader class, and a British-trained professional army. These strata com-prised an elite defined by its Muslim faith, the Arab language, and the Arabized sedentary culture of the riverain region with the Khartoum Omdurman conurbation in the center. It was here that the nationalist movement the General Congress of Graduates appeared in the 1930s. Virtually "an organization of Sudanese civil servants" according to a historian (Holt 1961, 41), the Congress claimed to be the representative of what it called the "Sudanese nation." The appeal of nationalism outside the central region was muted. The majority of the population in the periphery was little involved, and the pastoralists had no role in it.

Religion made an early entry into nationalist politics, as the movement was soon caught in the rivalry between two major Islamic sects (*turuq*) and split into rival factions aligned with the Ansar and the Khatmiya. These evolved a few years later into the two dominant political parties of northern Sudan—the Umma and the Democratic Unionist Party. Sectari-anism was the sole difference between the two parties that were both conservative with rural constituencies and formally committed to creating an Islamic state. Their role subsequently was to fill the few brief gaps between successive military regimes, when they proved quite incapable of governing.

The infusion of religious sectarianism in the nationalist movement had serious conse-quences. First, it compromised the secular character of the movement and raised a basic issue concerning the relationship between Islam and the state that remains unresolved to this day. Second, it undermined the appeal of nationalism among non-Muslims, particularly in southern Sudan. Third, it involved the main political parties in sectarian conflicts that be-came major political divisions contributing to the crisis of the state. The emergence in the mid-1950s of the Muslim Brotherhood projected religion to the center of the political arena by raising the demand for an Islamic constitution in Sudan.

The state was a typical colonial creation with tenuous links to the history, tradition, and culture of the people that found themselves inside its boundaries. Nowhere was this most evident than in southern Sudan. The region, which had been used as a hunting ground for slavers and ivory hunters until the arrival of the British, remains one of the least exposed regions to the outside world even today. Southern Sudan was administered separately from the north, and was insulated from Arab contact and cultural influence, while exposed to missionary propagated Christianity and the English language. Under the so-called Southern Policy, northern Sudanese were kept out of the region as much as possible, the Equato-ria Corps recruited only in southern Sudan (where it was stationed), and even the northern Sudanese traders were displaced by Greek and Syrian merchants. Arabic and Islam were barred, and education was entrusted to Christian missionaries in which English was the lan-guage of instruction. Even so, both Arabic and Islam managed to establish a presence there. Unwilling to have southern Sudan join northern Sudan in an independent Sudanese state, and uncertain about its future, the departing colonial officialdom encouraged southern Su-danese hopes for special treatment with Britain's support. These hopes were betrayed under northern Sudanese nationalist pressure, and southern Sudan was abandoned to its fate. As with the Ethiopian struggle over Eritrea, southern Sudan was to become a fateful test for Sudanese nationalism.

Sudanese nationalism did not produce even a distant echo in southern Sudan. None of the nationalist organizations tried to set up branches there or rally support among the people.

Given its isolation and the undeveloped state of education of the region, a southern Sudanese intelligentsia had yet to make an appearance at the close of the colonial period. There was little sign of political consciousness emerging in the south and no political groups had formed when nationalists in northern Sudan guided Sudan towards independence in 1956.

The northern Sudanese had long opposed the separate status of southern Sudan and Britain was compelled to concede after World War II. The question then became how the two disparate regions were to be joined. Beginning in 1947, the issue was debated in meetings that included Egypt but no representatives from southern Sudan. Britain promised chiefs in southern Sudan with "special safeguards" that would protect their homeland in any eventuality, but with independence it was overturned by the northern Sudanese elite. This was to be the first of "many agreements dishonored," as Abel Alier, the doyen of southern Sudanese politicians, put it in the title of his book (1999). Experience during the years that preceded independence served to confirm southern Sudanese fears of northern Sudanese domination, and spurred political action among the nascent intelligentsia. A group in Juba issued a statement in 1952 opposing independence as precipitate, and asked for southern Sudan to first be given time to catch up with northern Sudan. Southern Sudanese who lived in Khartoum organized the Liberal Party in 1954 and resolved that the southern Sudan would remain in the Sudan only under a federal system. The nationalists promised the demand for federation would be given full consideration after independence. It was indeed considered but flatly rejected—another agreement dishonored.

Southern Sudanese fears of Arab domination were fully realized with the wholesale replacement of colonial officialdom in the approach to independence. "Following the best traditions of the British Civil Service" (Beshir 1968, 72), southern Sudanese qualified for only eight subordinate posts out of eight hundred. Thus, southern Sudan passed from British to northern Sudan rule. Southern Sudanese resentment boiled over among the soldiers of the Equatoria Corps, where the exclusively British officers were replaced by northern Sudanese. The result was a mutiny in provincial small towns and a pogrom of northern Sudanese officials, officers, and traders in August 1955, before Sudan was able to celebrate its independence. Although the insurrection was suppressed by northern Sudanese soldiers occupying the region, the events sparked a civil war that effectively lasted until the early 2000s.

Quite naturally, Islam and the Arab language became the double-edged campaign of national integration launched by the state as soon as it came under nationalist control. Arabic was introduced as a subject and later as the language of instruction in southern Sudan, and missionary schools were closed by 1959. During the civil war in the 1960s, secondary schools in southern Sudan were entirely moved to northern Sudan. The promotion of Islam proceeded simultaneously but to a lesser degree. Sadiq el Mahdi, the Umma Party leader and head of the Ansar sect once declared: "Islam has a holy mission in Africa and southern Sudan is the beginning of that mission" (quoted in Malwal 1981, 41). Friday was made the day of rest, state employees were coerced into taking Muslim names, and Christian missionaries were expelled from the region. In his inaugural speech as Prime Minister, Sadiq al Mahdi reiterated the basic tenets of Sudanese nationalism. "The dominant feature of our Nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab, and this nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival" (Malwal 1981, 41).

The possibility that other regions and ethnic groups in the periphery might emulate southern Sudan was a daunting prospect for the ruling elite for it would have reduced its

political base to a purely Arab constituency. Just such a movement emerged among the Beja in the east at this time. Muslim but not Arabic-speaking, the Beja were mostly pastoralists but were also found among the cultivators in Kassala province and held a monopoly of the stevedore trade in Port Sudan. With these minor exceptions, their homeland languished in total neglect. A pamphlet appearing in 1953 entitled the ''Beja Struggle'' called for Beja political unity to fight for development and warned that ''although the Beja will not ask for separation, it is probable that they will ask for something like separation'' (quoted in Mukhtar 1974, 79). In 1958, a meeting of Beja politicians and chiefs considered, inter alia, a demand for the decentralization of the state and regional autonomy.

Similar moves were afoot among other non-Arab groups in the neglected hinterland, where independence brought no change other than the replacement of British officials by Arabs. A social organization founded in 1954 in the Nuba Mountain region was converted into a political party during the restoration of parliamentary rule in 1964. Darfur in the west was another restive non-Arab region from where persistent demands for home rule came but were not answered. Intermittent attempts at negotiation and suppression in the following years failed to pacify these regions. Six decades later, having lost South Sudan, the Sudanese ruling elite still struggle to control these peripheral regions.

Pressure from the periphery was not the only reason for the disablement of the political process in the center that underlay the crisis of the state. Even greater pressure was exerted by rising class tensions. At independence, Sudan had a strongly organized trade union movement led by the railway workers, which included workers in the trade sector and tenant cultivators in cotton production. Frustrated that independence did not bring the economic benefits for which they had hoped, the unions were soon involved in clashes with the government and with management in the private sector. The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) was formed as a branch of the Egyptian communist movement in 1946 and gained a presence in the nationalist movement. It cultivated links with the trade unions and tenant associations, and it enjoyed considerable support among the intelligentsia. The SCP struck a radical note and warred against the sectarian parties, but refrained from engaging Islam in ideological debate. On the contrary, it endeavored to prove that Islam and socialism are compatible. It took a forthright stand on the issue of southern Sudan, advocating regional autonomy and a special development program for the region as the right solution.

The volatile history of the Sudanese state resembles that of its Ethiopian neighbor in following a trajectory of an increasingly deepening structural crisis that led to repeated breakdowns and regime changes, each followed by progressively rash schemes to halt the decline and stabilize the state. Such schemes were concocted in the center and imposed arbitrarily by military regimes. Both states resorted to ideology in order to transcend the divisions that underlay the crisis, without attempting to resolve the structural problems, namely the economic, social, and political hegemony of the center and power monopoly of the nationalist elite.

The incapacity of the political establishment in the center to govern provoked the first crisis only three years after independence, when the incumbent prime minister invited the military to take over. This action set an example for future politicians. Having exhausted themselves after only a brief spell in government, they would make way for soldiers to take over with a sigh of relief. The first military regime (1958–64) was a classic example of the conventional prop for a narrowly based, faltering postcolonial regime. Accordingly, the regime headed by General Ibrahim Abboud proceeded to suppress opposition stemming

from class and regional forces, unrestrained by the legal constraints and inhibitions of parliamentary rule. Sudan Communist Party leaders were thrown in prison, as were the organizers of the Beja Congress and tenant cultivator unions. The regime's policy of violent suppression of opposition in the periphery encouraged the blossoming of the rebellion in southern Sudan known as the Anya-nya and the commencement of a full-blown civil war in that region.

The militarization of the state strained the regime's resources and opened the door for external intervention. Aid was first provided by the United States, and when it stopped in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israel War, it came from the Soviet Union, Egypt, and other Arab states. Even so, poor cotton seasons in 1963 and 1964 caused a downturn in the economy, forcing the government to take stringent, unpopular measures, such as the introduction of a graduated income tax, at the same time as the civil war in southern Sudan was becoming a public issue. It was a rare coming together of the political forces—from the SCP to the Muslim Brothers—that turned into massive demonstrations and brought the regime down in August 1964.

The second parliamentary episode lasted less than five years, and accomplished little. Unable to form a government with a majority in parliament, the political factions produced four fractious coalition governments. A noteworthy development was the banning of the SCP on the grounds that it was necessary to protect Sudan from atheism and regionalism. The latter referred not only to the civil war in southern Sudan, but to the growth of political opposition in other parts of the periphery as well. The Beja Congress was reconstituted as a political party and entered parliament in the 1965 elections. A political organization from the Nuba Mountains, led by a Christian who advocated unity among southern Sudanese to wrest power from northern Sudan managed the same feat. The Darfur Development Front campaigned to have local inhabitants elected to parliament in Khartoum regardless of party affiliation and was successful.

How to deal with the periphery without conceding power was by now a key issue bedeviling the ruling elite at the center. The Communists accepted a form of decentralization plus development, based on the familiar Marxist notion that development would efface other contradictions. However, decentralization of the state was anathema to nationalists who also claimed that it is contrary to Islamic doctrine. Inability to agree had prevented Sudan from adopting a constitution, and it was still without one when this parliamentary period came to a close. The militarization of the state was one area where progress was made. Defense took up twenty per cent of the budget. When Sudan and other Arab states severed ties with Washington after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the Soviet Union took on the role of patron to the region and agreed to Khartoum's request for weaponry.

The Sudanese state seemed to be adrift. "Chaos, intrigue and lack of purpose" is how a historian described the situation that invited the second military intervention in May 1969 (Beshir 1974, 226). The junta of ten colonels and majors had no distinct ideological color, and early on its spokesman described it as "nationalist – whatever else is said about it" (Legum 1974, 58). Sudanese state nationalism had failed to bond the periphery to the center and needed ideological reinforcement. The soldiers turned to socialism, very much in fashion at the time. The appeal of socialism as an ideology able to transcend ethno-regional and sectarian divisions was strengthened in this case because it was associated with the Egyptian regime of Colonel Nasir, where it was referred to as Arab socialism. Naturally, the so-called May Revolution was strongly supported by the SCP, whose leading members served in the government formed by the junta. They were instrumental in steering the regime to proclaim

socialism as its policy on the first anniversary of the coup, when a series of nationalization decrees were issued that affected mostly foreign-owned assets and property owned by Sudanese living abroad. A little later, the regime declared its attachment to scientific socialism, but what this ideological label meant was never made clear. Colonel Mohammed Gaafar Nimeiri, the regime strongman, gave a garbled definition of "Sudanese socialism" in a speech while a National Charter that committed the regime to scientific socialism envisaged a mixed economy with state and private sectors.

The Marxist pretentions of the regime and the political prominence of the Communists disturbed the sectarian political parties, which made no secret of their opposition. When the Ansar rioted and made a show of open defiance, they suffered severe casualties and their leaders fled abroad. The alliance with the Communists was short lived. The SCP rejected the regime's demand for the dissolution of all parties and their allegiance to one movement under its aegis, and was brutally purged in turn. Its members were arrested, sympathizers were dismissed from state offices, and three of its leaders were hanged. The Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU), described as a "revolutionary vanguard," was formed to mobilize political support for the regime. These events spelled the end of the flirtation with socialism. Sudan's first constitution, promulgated in 1973, twenty-three years after independence, defined the state as a unitary, democratic, socialist republic. It reiterated the key features of northern Sudanese nationalism, made Islamic law and custom the main source of legislation, and made Arabic the official language. In order to facilitate a rapprochement with the rebellious southern Sudan, it granted Christianity official recognition and sanctioned customary law for non-Muslims.

The regime's outstanding, albeit ephemeral, achievement was the settlement of the conflict in southern Sudan on the basis of a political compromise that preserved the unitary form of the state while granting regional autonomy to the region. Compromise was forced on the regime when the futility of trying to suppress the Anya-nya became obvious. In the aftermath of the repression of the SCP, the relationship with the USSR had soured, Soviet aid ceased, and Sudan was left briefly without a patron to provide military hardware.

The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement provided a large measure of self-government. The three southern provinces formed a region with its own legislative and executive authority. The accord provided a workable arrangement within which the outstanding demands of the social groups that led the rebellion could be satisfied. More specifically it addressed the key grievances of the emerging southern intelligentsia to whom it offered political control of their region, in other words, a share of state power and all that comes with it.

The agreement highlights several features that are germane to the crisis of the state in the Horn. The first condition relates to the quintessence of the political factor that must be part of the solution to any conflict if it is to prove lasting. The second relates to the fact that ruling nationalist elite will consider the first condition only as a last resort, as demonstrated in Eritrea and Somaliland. The third relates to the crucial role of external actors in provoking, prolonging, or resolving conflicts in the region. In this case, Ethiopia played a positive role in bringing the Anya-nya to the negotiation table, hoping Khartoum would reciprocate by ceasing to support the Eritrean rebels; it did not.

Sudan had reoriented its foreign policy to match it radical stance. It tightened links to the Soviet Union and was rewarded with military support. It also strengthened ties with its Arab neighbors and contemplated a union with Egypt and Libya. However, it was no more able to invigorate the economy than its predecessors had been, and by the end of the decade

Sudan was hostage to the International Monetary Fund, kept afloat with loans. Popular unrest mounted, especially among workers, and the regime's response was to decree the death penalty for participation in strikes.

In search of political support, the regime traversed the ideological spectrum—from Marxism to Islamic fundamentalism and from an alliance with the communists to one with the Muslim Brothers. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East seemed to offer promising ideological support, and Nimeiry began to pander to the visions of Islamic theocracy. In 1983, it prohibited the use of alcohol, and the following year mutilation was introduced as punishment for various crimes. Later, a draft constitution was produced that was designed to turn Sudan into an Islamic republic.

It was a desperate move because it risked alienating southern Sudan, where the regime enjoyed considerable support, and undoing the regime's greatest achievement. That support indeed dissipated after the regime refused southern Sudanese demands to construct a refinery in the oil-rich southern Sudan, announced plans for a union with Egypt, drafted a constitution that made no accommodations for southern Sudan self-rule, and the final straw, decreed the breakup of the region into three separate autonomous units in a clear attempt to fragment southern Sudanese political unity. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) made its debut in mid-1983, and the second round of the civil war began.

Sudan had a brief respite from military rule when the Nimeiri regime collapsed despite US support as the result of a popular uprising in the capital in 1985, and the dictator himself was deposed by his military comrades. Following a one-year transition period under a military council, parliamentary rule returned for three years, when the same group of politicians displayed their utter uselessness once more. When the government endorsed negotiations with the SPLM, it precipitated a third military takeover in 1989. Like its predecessor, the regime headed by Brigadier Omar al Al-Bashir found ideological support in Islamic fundamentalism though an alliance with the National Islamic Front; the front's leader, Hassan el Turabi, became the junta's ideologue. Unlike Nimeiri, who paid only lip service to this creed, the new regime adopted Sharia law and imposed it systematically on Sudanese society. This destroyed all prospects of negotiating with the SPLM, and the civil war in southern Sudan intensified. Furthermore, the regime proclaimed itself the champion of Islam in the Horn, inevitably souring its relations with Ethiopia whose own radical military regime increased its support for the southern Sudanese rebels.

The discovery of petroleum in southern Sudan added another inflammable element to an already highly combustible mix and brought another external actor to the scene: the Chinese. When production reached significant levels in the mid-1990s, Sudan became an oil exporter, and Khartoum had enough funds to prosecute the war in southern Sudan. Although the rebels there had lost Ethiopian support with the change of regime in Addis Ababa in 1991, they were able to widen the scope of the conflict by linking with emerging insurgencies elsewhere in the periphery—Darfur, Nuba Mountains, and the Red Sea region—also challenging the center's hegemony. The SPLM also succeeded in making the oil producing region a war zone, forcing the regime to resort to ethnic cleansing in order to clear the area of its population. Sudan now became the target of a Western campaign to isolate the Islamist regime and sanctions imposed by the UN and the US soon followed. In 1995, the regime was accused of masterminding an attempt to assassinate Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak while on a visit to the Ethiopian capital, earning the hostility of its two most influential neighbors.

Initially defiant, the regime sought ways of breaking out of its isolation. Moreover, the civil war was now in its fourth decade and had reached a stalemate that was unlikely to be ended with a military solution in the foreseeable future. Regional and international actors intensified efforts to resolve the conflict. The Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) took the initiative, supported by a consortium of Western governments led by the United States. The peace process made agonizingly slow process. It was not until 2005 that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed, bringing Africa's longest peace process to a close. The agreement, inter alia, provided for a referendum in South Sudan to decide its future. By this time, federalism was not an option for southern Sudan—too many promises had been broken.

The ink had hardly dried on the CPA when the long simmering conflict in Darfur burst into flames, plunging the country into another civil war and Khartoum into a bitter controversy with the international community. A sedentary non-Arab group of cultivators who retain their own language and ethnic identity, the Fur have long suffered from incursions into their land by Arab pastoralist tribes and have been neglected by the center. Fully occupied in southern Sudan, Khartoum had few military resources to invest in this region and resorted to arming Arab pastoralists to wage war on the Fur. The same tactic was used against the Dinka people in Blue Nile province. The atrocities committed in this conflict, which included enslavement, inflamed world opinion, and Sudan's president was indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Nation building in Somalia presented the nationalist elite with a different problem. It was not the existence of the nation, which the Somali considered to already exist, but rather its dismemberment under colonialism and subsequent incorporation by its African neighbors in the region. The Somali Republic was born in 1960 with a deep-seated grievance and a readymade cause for conflict with all its neighbors. The republic reunited only two of the five regions that imperialism had dismembered in this nation of nomads, Somaliland and Somalia; the other three regions found in modern day Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya. Not surprisingly, *Soomaliyen* (Somali unification) became the categorical imperative of Somali nationalism, and the Somali Republic joined the Organisation of African Unity without signing the article endorsing the colonial borders. A five-pointed star signifying the five pieces of the dismembered nation graces Somalia's flag. The irredenta comprised some 600,000 square kilometers, only slightly less than the size of the Somali Republic itself (638,000 square kilometers). Understandably, as Adam Abdullah Osman, the country's first president, confessed: "no politician in Somalia can suspend his preoccupation with the problem of unification" (cited in Bayne 1965, 149). It is little wonder then that Somalia became a rogue state and sponsor of irredentist movements in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti in the 1960s, initiating the first round of postcolonial mayhem in the Horn.

The *bête noire* of Somali nationalism is Ethiopia. An area of some 200,000 square kilometers, "Western Somalia" in nationalist parlance but better known historically as the Ogaden, was seized by Ethiopia during the imperialist scramble. Today it has a population of some 4.5 million—nearly half as many as Somalia itself—and a history of fierce resistance to alien rule going back to the early twentieth century and the exploits of Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan, derided by his enemies as the "Mad Mullah." Decades later, Ethiopia and

Somalia fought a preliminary battle in 1964 that accomplished nothing more than to turn their 1,600-kilometer-long border into a perennial war zone. A second battle was fought in 1977–78, when Somalia foolhardily invaded Ethiopia, only to be thrown out within a year. The issue remained unresolved. Today, the flag of Somali nationalism in Ethiopia is held aloft by the Ogaden National Liberation Front, and the disputed area remains a battleground.

Kenya's former Northern Frontier District represents the fourth point of the star in the Somali flag. A Mogadishu-sponsored irredentist rebellion dubbed the Shifta War broke out there in 1963, just as it was preparing to celebrate Kenya's independence, obliging the government of Jomo Kenyatta to beg the departing colonial power for help. Britain obliged and this Somali fragment stayed in Kenya.

The democratic experiment in the Somali Republic lasted until 1969 when, here too, it was replaced by military rule. It was long enough to demonstrate how grossly irrelevant the Western model is to the reality of what was, at the time, a nomad society. Pastoralists accounted for some two-thirds of an estimated total population of three to four million. A small urban sector, concentrated in the central region with Mogadishu at its center, was the stronghold of the preeminent nationalist movement, the Somali Youth League (SYL), which represented the Westernized, urban minority that inherited power in 1960.

The nationalists secured a unitary state despite the objections of the Sab cultivators in the south who feared pastoralist domination. "There is a marked tendency for politically conscious Somali," noted an observer at the time, "to equate governmental centralization with nationalism" (Castagno 1959, 355). The Sab political organization, the Hizbia Dighil-Mirifle Somali, demanded a federal system and was supported by other minority groups in the southern region. Their limited political strength did not allow them to press this demand, and the parliament dominated by the SYL approved a unitary state constitution. The same reservations were manifested in the north, the former British Somaliland Protectorate, which was the homeland of the Ishaaq clan family and represented by its own nationalist organization, the Somali National League (SNL). The centralized state structure favored by the SYL-proposed constitution was rejected by the SNL. Soon after, it was approved with substantial support from the center, but a group of junior officers in the north staged an abortive coup to dissolve the union of the two Somali fragments. This was the beginning of a schism that would come to a head three decades later with the *de facto* secession of Somaliland.

Despite the peculiarities of the Somali economy, the economic strategy followed by the nationalists adhered to the colonial blueprint based on the intensification of commercial cultivation for export, in this case, bananas. The opening of a major market for live animals and animal products in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1960s was a boon for the livestock sector, and it soon overtook bananas as the leading export. It provided Somali traders with a lucrative source of capital, and they in turn invested in the domestic market. The intelligentsia was another social stratum to benefit in this period. It increased in size with state investment in education and secure employment in the state sector, to become what the novelist Nuruddin Farah (1986) dubbed the priviligentsia. In the middle of the decade there were nearly as many people employed by the state as there were in the private sector, and administration consumed 35 percent of the budget. Trade was the state's main source of tax revenue and foreign exchange. It was far from enough. The state was unable to balance its budget or the external balance of trade from 1963 onwards.

If the Somali economy could not adhere to the capitalist model, democratization proved intolerable for the political system after nine years of trial. During this time, it became obvi-

ous that the nationalist claim of Somali nationhood had no impact whatever on the political process, to the extent that the process determined the distribution of power and resources. The clan proved to be the reference point and defining principle for identity and loyalty in domestic politics; it was more powerful than any ethno-cultural alternative.

Competition along clan lines permeated the body politic turning the political process into a caricature of democracy, making a mockery of the nationalist vision of national unity. The extent to which clannishness segmented the political system was illustrated in the 1969 elections, when sixty-nine parties competed for 190 seats. Nearly half of these were single constituency parties representing one clan each and most of the other half represented two or three clans. Democratization had reached an impasse. The assassination of the state president later that year provided the soldiers with the pretext to intervene.

The military junta headed by General Mohammed Siad Barre, known as the Somali Revolutionary Council (SRC), ruled Somalia for more than two decades, in the course of which it went through similar policy twists and turns as the contemporary military regimes in Sudan and Ethiopia in its efforts to stabilize the state, promote development, and gain legitimacy. In the end, it was undermined by the two categorical imperatives of Somali politics, clannishness and the pursuit of pan-Somali unification.

Aware of the corrosive effect of clannishness in society, the regime declared war on "tribalism," an evil that the regime symbolically buried in an official ceremony in 1970. Clannish behavior was proscribed and became a handy accusation against political opponents (Lewis 1980). Nonetheless, clannism was not eliminated and was to rise to political prominence catching the regime in its net. The commitment to Somali nationalism remained a major preoccupation that the regime was not allowed to ignore. Mogadishu was the gathering place of refugees from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, and of political organizations representing the "unredeemed" territories, which exerted constant pressure on the regime that hosted them at considerable expense. Only months after coming to power the junta created a Ministry of Somali Affairs to organize them and take charge of their activities. They were regrouped in three units representing the refugees from Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, respectively, and were assigned separate camps where they were trained in guerrilla warfare by Somali officers while some were sent for training to North Korea. General Siad Barre exercised strict personal supervision over them, not wishing to allow them initiative that would interfere with the regime's plans or to allow the emergence of independent armed movements that could conceivably prove a political threat to his regime. Somalia under the SRC was the first state in the Horn to turn to socialism for support in the quest for development, state stability, and regime legitimacy.

Improbable as it may seem, the invocation of scientific socialism in this nation of nomads is not inexplicable. Somalia's closest foreign relationship was with Egypt, and Nassir's appeal here was greater than elsewhere in the region, especially among the country's budding intelligentsia. Somalia had established a friendly relationship with the Soviet Union early on, when it was offered generous military aid, something the West refused at the insistence of Ethiopia. This relationship became closer and was sealed with the offer of the port of Berbera in the north, where the Soviet Union secured its first base in Africa.

Aside from its general appeal as the ideology of liberation and development in the former colonial world, socialism also endorses state hegemony in all fields. According to Siad Barre himself, socialism "is a system in which the state takes primary responsibility for the political, social and economic development of the nation" (Castagno 1971, 24). Needless to

say, it also becomes the main employment source as well as the means of capital accumulation for the elite minority who administer the state. This process was accomplished by the nationalization of the main sectors of the economy outside the pastoral sector.

Somalia also shifted its foreign policy accordingly, espousing neutrality in the Cold War and condemning imperialism and neocolonialism. It established diplomatic relations with East Germany and North Korea, joined the Arab League, and expelled the American Peace Corps, which prompted Washington to cut off economic aid to Somalia.

The SRC launched a campaign of mass mobilization that reached impressive proportions and carried the regime through the first half of the 1970s on a high tide of popular excitement and expectations. There were successive campaigns against tribalism, corruption, laziness, and for cleanliness and gender equality. Self-help schemes and crash programs including sand dune stabilization and tree planting were undertaken. A lasting achievement was the choice of the Latin script for the national language, an issue that had been the bone of contention between conflicting factions and interests. The regime cut through this Gordian knot with speed and determination and then launched a national campaign to teach the nation to use the script. Many of its initiatives enjoyed popular support, at least initially. On the other hand, the soldiers had shown they would not tolerate opposition of any kind. Ten religious notables were executed in 1975, because they criticized Siad Barre's interpretation of the Quran when he introduced a law establishing gender equality and banning polygamy. The institutionalization of the regime went forward with the formation of the Somali People's Revolutionary Party (SPRP) in 1976 to serve as the junta's political front and to consolidate Siad Barre's personal power. The 1979 constitution gave the country's president—a post occupied by the regime strongman—unlimited power.

The regime's contribution to economic development was the nationalization of foreign trade, insurance, and finance; these sectors were mainly in foreign hands and the takeover did not incur political risk. Nationalization did not extend to production, even where, as in the case of bananas, it was foreign-owned. Trade in the pastoralist sector, where strong domestic interests were involved, was not touched. Investment in agriculture went mainly to expand irrigated cultivation in the Shebelle (in the Juba region in the south), yet food production fell below requirements and cereal imports more than doubled in the 1970s. Investment in industry was twice as large as that for agriculture and was concentrated mainly around Mogadishu, whose population expanded rapidly. The results in terms of employment were meager. Only a couple thousand more people were working in manufacturing by the end of the 1970s than had been in 1969.

The revolution that toppled the regime in Ethiopia in the mid-1970s had a fateful impact on Somalia. The unfolding drama in Ethiopia stirred great expectations in the restless refugee circles in Mogadishu, pressuring the Somali regime to take advantage of the political and military disarray across the border. Ogaden students demonstrated in Mogadishu, supported by men returning from training in North Korea and thirsting for action, while others defied a regime injunction and crossed the border to stir up unrest within Ethiopia. Initially the regime seemed reluctant to move and cautioned patience. When it was ignored, it threw hundreds of protesters into prison. They were released in the course of the following year, when the regime appeared to have decided on a course of eventual confrontation with Ethiopia. The power vacuum in Addis Ababa was pulling Mogadishu in the same direction as Somali nationalist agitation was pushing it, and the regime was unable to resist.

It was decided to probe Ethiopia's defense capabilities using the refugee groups, whose units were led by Somali junior army officers, and who infiltrated southern Ethiopia to commence guerrilla activities in the first month of 1976. Throughout that year, Mogadishu sought to keep the matter a secret, banning reporting about it and insisting that it was committed to a peaceful resolution of the issue. Ethiopia's initial reaction to the incursion was feeble. The ruling junta there was convulsed by an internal struggle for power that was resolved early in 1977 with a massacre of several leading members, raising the leader of the winning faction, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, to the top of the hierarchy. At the same time, the Eritrean nationalists were on the verge of a final victory, with only Asmara and the Red Sea ports remaining in government hands. An Afar uprising had blocked the road connecting Asab, the location of the country's oil refinery, resulting in fuel shortages everywhere. Furthermore, the United States had gradually limited military aid to the avowed Marxist regime, ending it altogether in the beginning of 1977.

Fighting for survival in the center, the Derg was forced to cede large sections of the Ogaden to the Somali insurgents, leaving the air force to harass them with bombing raids. Even so, they were not able to capture the main administrative centers in the disputed region, causing Mogadishu to contemplate committing its armed forces to a full invasion. Broader considerations also at play convinced Mogadishu to commit the Somali army to a full-scale invasion of Ethiopia. A key determinant was the shifting preferences of the Cold War rivals in this region. The Ethiopians were in the process of replacing lost American patronage with a Soviet support, a tricky operation for Moscow, as it was still funding Somalia. At first it seemed Moscow hoped it could reconcile the two regimes and retain influence over both. However, when Mogadishu reacted angrily, Moscow abandoned Somalia to its fate, and launched a massive airlift of arms and advisors to Ethiopia. The United States, on the other hand, warmed to Mogadishu and offered aid but not weaponry.

The Somali invasion of southeastern Ethiopia in the autumn of 1977 proved a foolhardy venture. The Somali regime had no long-term plans to secure the captured territory against the inevitable Ethiopian counterattack. It gambled on the disintegration of the Derg, and on diplomatic support from the West to balance the enemy's military superiority. In the event, neither calculation proved correct. The invasion was a boon for the Derg, which was able to capitalize on the peoples' patriotic fervor, and went on to eliminate its opponents in the center. Western support did not materialize because the United States and its allies were set against the break-up of the Ethiopian state that, regardless of regime, is bound to be at odds with its Arab neighbors and their dream of turning the Red Sea into an Arab lake.

Planned and directed by Soviet officers and spearheaded by Cuban combat units, the counterattack came in the early spring of 1978. It quickly routed the Somali forces, and within a month Mogadishu sued for peace to prevent an invasion of Somalia by the Ethiopian forces massed on the border. Defeat provoked widespread resentment and opposition to the military regime. One month later, an attempted coup by military officers ended with the execution of several of the officers and the flight of many others abroad. Together with the steady stream of defectors from the regime, they organized, from exile, the first armed opposition to Siad Barre's dictatorship, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF).

In a new twist of the hallowed principle, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," Somali nationalists found support in Ethiopia and were allowed to establish bases there, from where they carried out raids in Somalia. In the beginning of 1980, following the execution of several senior officers charged with collaboration with dissidents abroad, a serious mutiny

of soldiers in the north resulted in more executions and flights of dissidents abroad. The new wave of exiled dissidents formed another militant opposition group, the Somali National Movement (SNM) and were also welcomed in Ethiopia. The SSDF appealed mainly to the population in certain regions of the south and by the Mijertein further north; the SNM was primarily representative of the Ishaaq clan that was dominant in the former Somaliland protectorate.

By this time, the regime that had buried clannishness had become totally dependent on the support of three Darod clans with which Siad Barre had kinship ties—the Marehan, the Ogaden, and the Dulbahante, otherwise known as the MOD. In return, he divided the country's wealth among them, "the lion's share to the Marehan, the leopard's to the Ogaden, and the hyena's share to the Dhulbahante" Said (Samatar 1983, 6). Thus, true to Somali clan tradition, both the regime and its opponents ultimately found solid ground in the clan system, the bedrock of the Somali social system. In the years ahead, clan strife led to the overthrow of the junta in 1991, the *de facto* secession of Somaliland, and the total collapse of the Somali state once heralded as the only genuine nation-state in Africa.

Islam has always been popular with Somali who strive to overcome the divisive appeal of the deeply entrenched clan system. The tumultuous relationship with clans many Somali experienced was articulated early on by the rebel Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan who claimed: "I am not of this or that clan," although he himself was ultimately caught in the tenacious web of clannism. The recent turn of Somali nationalism to Islam was signaled by the appearance of Al Itihad Al Islami (Islamic Union), a branch of the international movement devoted to the dissemination of Wahabbism, the school of Islam promoted by Saudi Arabia. What distinguished Al Itihad from conventional Islamic organizations was its avowed goal to fight for political power and use it to unite all Somali people in an Islamic Republic. Its objectives posed a direct challenge to Ethiopia, which subsequently sent its soldiers into Somali territory in the mid-1990s to clear Al Itihad from the borderland. Al Itihad later renounced the armed struggle and faded from the scene, but the region remained dominated by clan-based warlords for years to come.

After the warlords fought each other to exhaustion, a new force the Joint Islamic Courts (JIC) emerged to claim power. By the turn of the century, they had wrested control over large areas of the country, tamed the brutal militia gangs, cleared the roads of self-appointed tax collectors, and established a degree of security unknown since 1991. They also imposed Sharia law and made plans to erect an Islamic state on the ruins of the failed republic. Overweening confidence led their leaders to make imprudent threats of *jihad* against Ethiopia, which the latter took all too seriously.

Ethiopians were not the only ones perturbed. Concern that under the JIC Somalia could become a bastion of Islamism led to a concerted international effort to dislodge them and replace them with a regime approved by the West. After several abortive efforts and great expense, a so-called Transitional Federal Government (TFG) led by a prominent former warlord and Addis Ababa protégé was installed in Mogadishu in 2006. The TFG was protected by a small contingent of Ugandan soldiers operating under African Union auspices, and a large, heavily armed Ethiopian force that went there at Washington's prompting, albeit uninvited. A foolhardy attempt by the JIC to fight the Ethiopians with untrained mobs of civilians and light weapons resulted in carnage.

The defense of Islam-cum-Somali nationalism now passed to a far more radical generation known as Shaabab (youth). For the next two and a half years they fought a murderous

urban guerrilla war against the well-armed Ethiopians, which resulted in substantial civilian casualties and effectively leveled the already devastated capital. The Ethiopians were compelled to pull out in the summer of 2009, leaving the hapless but well-paid Ugandans to defend a "government" in control of only a few city blocks.

At present, the green flag of Islam is raised by all factions in the Somali imbroglio, who are committed to resurrect the failed state and compete for the right to rule it. Given that purity of faith is the basis of the competition, it is natural that after two decades of internecine mayhem the most radical faction is leading. The finishing touch to this bizarre illustration of the West's determination to put the Somali Humpty Dumpty together again and keep the Islamists at bay is the fact that the "government" in Mogadishu is itself avowedly committed to make Islam the pillar of a future Somali state.

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A tangible result of the many-sided conflict that dominates the postcolonial history of the Horn is the survival of three mini-states—Eritrea, South Sudan, and Somaliland. These colonial creations ceased to exist in the first phase of nation-state building, only to be resurrected in the second phase after decades of struggle for "national liberation." In the case of these three states, nationalism has a reflexive rather than authentic origin. It is not the assertion of a historic identity or ethno-cultural distinctiveness that seeks ideological expression and political recognition, for there are no such shared features in any of the three. Nationalism is rather a response to the attempted imposition of the identity, ideology, and culture of ruling elite through the agency of the state and to the political exclusion and economic marginalization that went with it. Eritrea is the clearest example of this scenario.

Despite nationalist efforts to endow it with an earlier history, Eritrea first appeared as an Italian colony on the northern end of the Ethiopian plateau, which the Italians were allowed to hold on to despite their defeat by the Ethiopians in 1896 in the battle of Adwa. Previously, the region had been a dominion of Abyssinia and, demographically, an extension of Tigray province. The lowlands below the plateau, however, were the domain of Muslim pastoralists; consequently, the Christian highlanders had no presence and little interest in that area.

The Italian colony of Eritrea that came into being in 1890 included both the Christian highlands and the Muslim lowlands. Over the course of half a century, colonial rule bought considerable change to the highlands. A sizeable Italian expatriate community and capital spurred urban growth and created demand for manufactured products, housing, and transport. People flocked from the countryside to meet the rapidly increased labor demands. The collapse of Italian colonialism in 1941 was succeeded with a decade under the British Military Administration. While WWII lasted in Europe, the economy was fully engaged in the production of goods for the domestic market and for export to the region. This period saw the emergence of two social classes—workers and the intelligentsia—which would both play leading roles in the political future of the former colony. Education during the Italian period was limited and conducted in the language of the colonizer. The first primary school was opened by the British in the 1940s. As a result, there was effectively no local Eritrean intelligentsia at the time, a fact noted by the visiting United Nations representative in 1950 who reported: "the Eritrean people lack the capacity for self-government" (United Nations 1950, 26).

The United Nations was tasked with deciding the future of the colony and it proved a thorny matter, not least because the inhabitants themselves could not agree. Having deemed that self-government was not feasible, a choice had to be made between competing claims from aspiring guardians. Italy's claim for a trusteeship was rejected by most Eritreans. British officialdom entertained thoughts of dividing the colony, merging the lowlands with the Sudan and the highlands with Ethiopia. In view of the historic and cultural links that existed, Ethiopia had the strongest claim, and the imperial government pursued it vigorously. It garnered support from the Christian highlander Tigray-speaking population and among the budding intelligentsia who organized a unionist party. The Orthodox Church provided strong support and ideological guidance so that Christian and unionist became almost synonymous.

In view of the inferior status of Islam and second-rate citizenship of Muslims in the Christian kingdom, most Muslims in Eritrea were strongly opposed to the Ethiopian bid. With some opting for secession and others for a United Nations trusteeship, they lacked political solidarity and did not command sufficient attention. Thus, religion became a key factor in Eritrean nationalism. In the end, the United Nations chose to link Eritrea and Ethiopia in a federal system, and it came into effect in 1952. Elections held that year—the first and last genuine exercise of its kind in Eritrea—showed more or less an even political schism between the two religious communities and installed a unionist administration.

The federal system granted a degree of autonomy to Eritrea that proved to be unworkable because it was a glaring anomaly with the pattern of centralization the imperial regime was perfecting in its domain and also involved a liberal constitutional experiment in the shadow of monarchical absolutism claiming to rule by divine right. Moreover, it granted social and political parity between Christian and Muslims. The functioning of democracy in Eritrea, complete with political parties, elections, free press, and an organized labor movement, constituted a dangerous precedence for the imperial regime that allowed none of these in Ethiopia. In short, the federation was a threat both to the regime and the imperial state. Not surprisingly, the imperial regime entered the scheme in bad faith and began undoing it before the ink in the agreement had dried. Ten years later it abrogated the agreement and made Eritrea an Ethiopian province.

The struggle for national liberation began immediately. It was not "national" in a pan-Eritrean sense for, as in most instances in Africa, it involved more than one "liberation" movement. In this case, the two competing national liberation factions fought each other while fighting their common enemy, the imperial regime. Again, as in most instances in Africa, they represented different constituencies and identities, as well as different visions of the future nation. The first movement represented the Muslims of Eritrea, who had most to lose by the dismantling of the federation and the parity provided by its constitution. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was founded by Eritrean students in Cairo and Muslim dignitaries in the Eritrean lowlands. With modest support from Nasser's regime and later on from Arab regimes in the Middle East, they were able to field a guerrilla force in the lowlands of Eritrea, opening a new battlefront for an Ethiopian army already engaged with the Somali threat at the other end of the country. The imperial regime's response was to blame the uprising on its Arab neighbors and to secure increased military from the United States and Israel, the latter an aspiring regional actor already engaged in supporting the rebellion in southern Sudan.

Entrusted to the military and security forces, the suppression tactics mainly involved occasional raids in the lowlands that seldom engaged the guerrillas but had dire consequences for the civilian population. At the same time, security harassment of Muslim community leaders and former Muslim activists forced many to flee abroad, leading to increased support of the ELF. The movement had a conservative Muslim leadership and no particular ideological goal, other than independence for Eritrea. As far as the future was concerned, Eritrea was viewed in the context of the wider Arab culture and regional political relationships.

Even so, the lure of independence had considerable appeal among young Christians in the highlands, especially among workers and students in Asmara, and the ELF established a branch there to attract them. Militarization caused a downturn in the economy. The exodus of the remaining Italian expatriate contingent affected the workers and gave rise to a feeling that the imperial government was deliberately stifling the local economy. Already alienated by the quelling of the Eritrean trade union organization, workers became easily susceptible to the appeal of nationalism. Students were particularly incensed with the imposition of Amharic as the language of instruction and as a condition for entrance to university. Eritrean students were well represented in the university population in Addis Ababa, and were swept into the radical wave of the student movement with its forceful opposition to the Haile Sellasie regime. When this opposition took to the streets of Addis Ababa in the second half of the 1960s, the Eritreans there turned to the ELF in increasing numbers.

The radical inflow had an unsettling effect on the ELF, whose leadership had settled in Cairo, while the organization in the field had morphed into local fiefs competing for resources and recruits. Imbued with Marxist notions of liberation, the newcomers envisaged a combined social and national revolution that was far from the ELF leadership's perception of the future. Dissatisfaction with the absence of leadership in the field and a clear sense of direction was diffused throughout the organization and eventually produced pressure for reform. Former student radicals were in the forefront, and since the majority of them were Christians, and Christians were generally were in favor of reform, highlanders represented a disproportionately high percentage of supporters in the dissident movement.

The movement for reform took a concrete form when a few men who had been sent to China for training returned in 1967. Their vision of reform inevitably led to a clash with the leadership and split the ELF. The organization that became known as Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) was formed in 1971, and the schism in the nationalist movement was formalized. Most of them Christians, the founders were anxious to disclaim religious motives. "We are freedom fighters not prophets of Christianity," they declared in their manifesto entitled *Our Struggle and its Goals*. Muslims attracted to reform defected from the ELF to join the new movement, many of them rose to leadership posts, and even more joined it after the ELF was sidelined. Nevertheless, Christians remained predominant in the EPLF.

The rival fronts fought each other and the Ethiopian army throughout the 1970s. When the imperial regime collapsed in the middle of the decade, they came close to liberating their country, only to be pushed back when the Soviet Union came to the aid of the Derg. The EPLF proved to be by far the more efficient of the two, paying strict attention to political education and fighter training, as well as relentless indoctrination in the essence of an Eritrean national identity that had to be created de novo. War was waged on ethnicity and religion, and a fictional history of the Eritrean nation was produced. Marxism made its ideological

presence felt in the redistribution of land and in the ban on polygamy, child betrothal, and forced marriage. Female emancipation was an impressive achievement that brought many young women into the guerrilla army, where they were treaty equally to men. Self-reliance was a key policy in the EPLF, which led to the establishment of medical, educational, and technical facilities in the field. Following the rollback of the mid-1970s, the front secured a base in the remote Sahel region in the north, where it managed to repel repeated attacks by the overwhelmingly superior Ethiopian forces and kept the revolutionary flame burning.

By contrast, the organizational capacity of the older movement, the ELF, deteriorated. The Derg offensive forced it to retreat to the western lowlands, weakening its presence on the Eritrean plateau. In the lowlands, it came under attack by the Ethiopians, the EPLF, and its Tigray ally, the TPLF. By the end of the decade, the ELF's fighting force had been decimated, and by 1981 the surviving units crossed into Sudan to be disarmed by the Sudanese. After twenty years of struggle, the oldest Eritrean liberation movement ceased to exist.

Eritrea's thirty-year struggle for independence ended dramatically in May 1991 with the collapse of the regime in Addis Ababa. Shortly afterwards the new regime agreed to abide by the results of a referendum held in Eritrea that reflected the overwhelming support for independence. Having long fought to eliminate its rivals in the nationalist camp before independence, the EPLF proved even more intolerant of competition afterwards. It set up an administration manned by its cadre and a government composed of its leadership, headed by Isais Aferworki and Ramadan Mohammed Nur as his deputy. After Ramadan retired to private life, all pretense of collegiality in the leadership was abandoned, and Eritrea's slide to a personal dictatorship under Isais seemed as natural as it was inevitable. Keeping with its nation building mission, the regime set about to submerge ethnic and sectarian distinctions within an aspired Eritrean national identity. The traditional administrative structure of Eritrea that coincided more or less with ethnic divisions was changed to larger, ethnically mixed zones with new names. A direct line of command ran from the president's office to the Ministry of Local Government to the local administrators, all of whom were appointed by the center. Eritrea's system was quite the opposite of the one adopted in Ethiopia, which strove to match administrative with ethnic units. Needless to say, Ethiopian ethnic federalism was anathema to the Eritrean regime. The question of language in Eritrea was sidestepped by not adopting an official one. Tigray, Tigre, and Arabic are still used in government and education.

The Eritrean leader has often rejected liberal democracy as an alien system unsuited for Africa and advised Africans to look to their own tradition for guidance in designing political systems. However, he has failed to produce any system for his own country, and after a quarter of a century Eritrea remains a rare example of a state without a constitution, ruled by a small cabal in the president's office. It would seem that a mighty nationalist effort has failed to produce not only a nation but even a fully organized state.

Eritrea's posture in its relations with its neighbors has been consistently aggressive, leading to a falling out with all of them, starting with Sudan, a country that had provided assistance to the Eritrean rebels for many years. The casus belli, here, was the emergence of a Muslim opposition group, the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM) in the teeming Eritrean refugee camps in eastern Sudan, allegedly sponsored by Khartoum. In the mid-1990s, Eritrea became involved in hostilities with Yemen over a couple of rocky outcrops in the Red Sea that were claimed by both. At the same time, Asmara sent troops into Djibouti

to claim a strip of its neighbor's territory, only to withdraw when France came to the aid of its former colony.

The resumption of the conflict with Ethiopia came as a surprise, because the EPLF and the TPLF had collaborated in the struggle against the Derg. The latter supported Eritrea's claim to independence, and after coming to power great hopes were raised for close ties between the two states. A strip of valueless land on the unmarked border between the two countries seemed an implausible cause for the war that broke out between them in mid-1998, which lasted two years and cost the lives of an estimated one hundred thousand souls. Ethiopia's military superiority forced the Eritreans to abandon the disputed area, and the fighting stopped in mid-2000 when international intervention secured a truce.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea war illustrates a malignant feature of the nationalist pursuit of cultural homogeneity, i.e. ethnic cleansing. The victims here were the many Eritreans who were longtime residents in Ethiopia, many of whom were born there and intermarried with Ethiopians. They had been invited to vote in the 1993 referendum on Eritrea's future, and many voted for independence. The act of voting was now interpreted as the forfeiture of Ethiopian citizenship, and thousands were deported on the grounds that they constituted a security threat. The deportation was carried out in a summary and brutal manner, splitting families, and depriving a community that had been prominent in trade and services of its property. Eritrea retaliated by expelling Ethiopians living there. The bitterness caused by this episode ensured that relations between the two countries would remain hostile and the possibility of war imminent. Both regimes energetically worked to undermine each other by hosting dissident movements seeking to overthrow their rival across the border. The situation changed abruptly and dramatically with the new government in Addis Ababa in April 2018. Among his many initiatives, the new prime minister Abiye Ahmed included a reconciliation with the Eritrean leader Isais Aferworki and sought normalized relations between the two neighbors.

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A colonial creation, Djibouti is the odd example of a state that does not claim a national identity and is not pursuing national integration. With an estimated population of half-a-million (it has not been counted since the 1980s), a strip of arid land with no permanent water sources or any other natural resources, Djibouti is unviable by any standard, and owes its survival entirely on external factors. It would be difficult to imagine a more artificial entity than this mini-state on the Red Sea. Nevertheless, while its people are mired in extreme poverty, the ruling elite have amassed wealth by manipulating what Bayart (1993) called "externalities."

When the French managed to carve out this enclave on the Red Sea coast, its inhabitants numbered no more than thirty thousand widely dispersed pastoralists. The majority were Afar, a nation whose homeland was parceled between Ethiopia, Italian Eritrea and the French colony, a fragmentation that has not been healed to this day. The minority were Somali of the Issa clan who also inhabited the adjacent region within Ethiopia. The port of Djibouti, built by the French, developed into an important entrepot for Ethiopia and northern Somalia. The Somali community expanded and came to dominate the emerging urban economy. In time, the Afar, most of whom retained their pastoral lifestyle, were outpaced and marginalized by the Somali.

As decolonization approached, the future of the enclave became a hotly contested issue between Somalia and Ethiopia. Somalia had a strong case; after all, Djibouti was represented in the star of the Somali flag. Mogadishu sponsored an irredentist faction called the Front de la Liberation de la Côte Somalie (FLCS) to press for the reunification of Djibouti to the Somali Republic. Ethiopia, who depended on the port for its foreign trade, countered with a claim of its own. Inside Djibouti, opinion on the issue was divided along ethnic lines with the Afar solidly in opposition to Mogadishu's claim and the Somali generally supporting it. France maintained a military presence in the enclave and resolved the issue temporarily by delaying independence until 1977. When it was put to a vote at that time, the issue was settled when, disenchanted with the Siad Barre regime in Somalia, the Somali themselves by and large chose independence.

Since that time, the Djibouti Republic has been ruled by the Issa Somali clan. The founder of the dynasty, Hassan Guled Aptidon, ruled until 1999, when he was succeeded by his nephew and present ruler, Ismail Omar Guelleh. Maintaining a threadbare electoral façade, the ruling faction has swept every election since independence, winning every seat in the legislature, and has been able to ignore not only a feeble fragmented opposition but also the entire population of the mini-state as well. This disjunction between state and society was made possible by the astute manipulation of "externalities," which has enabled the state to function independently of the local economy.

France funded the state's perpetually unbalanced budget before and after independence while also providing firm political and diplomatic support for the regime after independence. Eritrea's independence returned Ethiopia to its historical landlocked status, and forced it to turn its attention to the port of Djibouti, the natural entrepot for the hinterland. The renewed war with Eritrea compelled Ethiopia to invest heavily in developing the port itself and the transport links with Addis Ababa. This decision by Ethiopia was a bonanza for the mini-state, and for the regime itself, which now used its power to appropriate a growing share of the market. The emerging economic model could be termed a presidential economy since so much of it is in the hands of the ruling family. Needless to say, power in the mini-state is highly centralized in the office and the person of the president, who makes many of Djibouti's laws and policies through decree.

The Afar languished in the political and economic exclusion until the beginning of the 1990s when the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) launched an armed struggle in the Afar inhabited northern districts to challenge the Somali monopoly. Initial success against Djibouti's puny military force threatened the regime. The assertion of Afar political ambition, however, was unwelcome to all of Djibouti's neighbors, who have marginalized Afar subjects of their own. The Issa Somali regime's defense was underwritten by France, which still had a military base in Djibouti. Isolated, the Afar uprising eventually fizzled out, the leadership of FRUD split, and rebel factions were lured by the Djibouti regime to negotiations in 2000 with promises of appointment to office.

The greatest economic coup for the regime came at the turn of the century, when it managed to outbid its neighbors in the region and turned the enclave into a military base for America's War on Terror. It was the ultimate and most lucrative rentier deal, which, aside of the financial windfall, secured the regime's political future at home and strengthened its hand in dealing with external pressure. "This monopoly rental income permits the regime to thrive autonomously from the Djiboutian people. Those in control of the state apparatus are not dependent on citizens for revenue. This means that the normal and mutually constitutive

relationship between governed and governor wherein citizens hold both rights and responsibilities to the state – and vice versa – does not develop. There are very few accountability mechanisms in Djibouti" (Brass 2008, 8).

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The Somaliland Republic is the third state to emerge from the revision of the geopolitical map of the Horn. The former British Protectorate in northern Somalia, home of the Ishaaq clan, had a fleeting moment of autonomy in 1960, enough to elect a legislature that voted to join the Somali Republic in a union that was sealed almost immediately. This period was the heyday of Somali nationalism and the union was a voluntary expression of it. Even so, there was anxiety arising from the realization that the unified state would inevitably be dominated by the much larger Darod family of clans in central Somalia with Mogadishu at the center. The northern preference for a decentralized state structure with local autonomy was made clear when the population there voted against the unitary, centralized system designed by the Somali Youth League and approved in a national referendum. Northern disgruntlement manifested immediately afterwards in a mutiny of northern army officers. Subsequent events were to amply justify northern doubts.

Reflecting the enduring defining pattern of Somali social structure, the resistance to the Siad Barre regime that emerged after the invasion of Ethiopia debacle in 1977 formed along clan lines. The Somali National Movement (SNM) was predominantly an Ishaaq insurgent organization that launched raids in the north from bases in Ethiopia. In 1988, the beleaguered regimes in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu agreed to cease supporting each other's enemies. Ousted from its bases in Ethiopia, the SNM attacked and briefly captured Hargeisa and Burao, Somaliland's largest cities. The response of the regime in Mogadishu was extreme. It hired white mercenary pilots to bomb and level Hargeisa to the ground, and its army carried out mass reprisals against Ishaaq civilians. The dice were cast. Following Siad Barre's overthrow in 1991, the clans in Mogadishu began fighting over his replacement, prompting the SNM to declare Somaliland's secession.

Some of the events that followed are without precedent in the region. First, the SNM did not install itself in power, as is usually the case with successful insurgent movements. Second, it agreed to disarm and surrender its weapons to the government that would eventually be formed. This unprecedented act of self-abnegation allowed the reenactment of the traditional mechanism of conflict resolution with the full participation of traditional authorities. It was a long and difficult process that took more than two years. At the start, Ishaaq clans fought among themselves for control of territory and local resources. In the meantime, sections of several other clans inhabiting areas of Somaliland were uncertain about the secession and their own future in an Ishaaq-controlled state. It took months of clan conferences at the local level to pacify the warring factions. A national conference held over several months in 1993 included the participation of clan elders. There, a national charter for peace and governance was adopted that would serve as a provisional constitution until 2001. The structure of government fused indigenous forms of social and political organization with Western-style institutions of government. A bicameral Parliament that included a House of Elders along with a House of Representatives integrated traditional authority into the state structure and was the key to the legitimacy the structure enjoyed for the rest of the decade. Another national conference held in 1997 laid down the framework for the transition

to democracy, and a constitution adopted in a referendum in 2001 allowed the formation of three political parties to prevent fragmentation along clan lines.

A series of local and national elections held since 2002 have been judged generally free and fair by foreign observers. To some extent they served to reassure the non-Ishaaq clans, though not all of them. More important they have consolidated the image of Somaliland as a state in control of its domain physically and politically. Its government set two goals to pursue in the first decade of twentieth-first century: build a state and gain international recognition. Considerable progress has been made in developing structures and systems required for the state to perform the functions attributed to it. Most observers agree that Somaliland ticks all the boxes in this category. Yet, despite the efforts of its government, Somaliland is confronted with a solid international boycott and remains a de facto state.

To many observers this seems irrational, if not perverse. "The empty shell of the collapsed state of Somalia enjoys international recognition, whereas Somaliland in northwestern Somalia, which seceded in 1991 and developed as a *de facto* state, goes unrecognized," one observer remarks (Hoehne 2009, 163). It seems the mobilization of clan solidarity to underpin the state and the enlisting of traditional mechanisms to facilitate its transition to modernity does not fit the model approved by international agencies. It also demonstrates Africa's lack of sovereignty and freedom of choice.

Conclusion

The overarching goal of political life in the Horn of Africa since independence has been the attainment of the nation-state, generally considered the pinnacle of political modernization. This article outlined the simultaneous pursuit of this goal by a number of rival nation-state building projects working at cross purposes in a zero-sum game. The process has been mayhem, the result has been mutual self-destruction, some states were mutilated to make room for others, but none has made progress towards the goal commensurable to the cost. Moreover, the process continues with no end in sight.

The Horn of Africa is an extreme example of a phenomenon that is not uncommon in sub-Saharan Africa: the imposition of a model of political organization in an entirely alien setting regardless of consequences. Fundamental to this phenomenon are the divisions opened between tradition and modernization, nation and tribe, urban and rural society, the ruling elite and the rest of the population. Much of sub-Saharan Africa's political turmoil is the result of this Procrustean experiment.

Chapter 3
Bolshevism and National Federalism in Ethiopia
John Young

3.1 Introduction

Civil war broke out in Ethiopia on November 4, 2020 when the national army at the be-hest of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed attacked the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) administered state of Tigray. There were many differences between Abiy and the TPLF, but foremost was the Front's support of national federalism and the prime minister's back-ing of a return to the centralized administration of past Ethiopian governments. The issue of national federalism has been controversial since it was first introduced by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991, but the war encourages the debate to be revisited. This chapter considers national federalism as an alternative arrangement to the Western nation-state and examines its theoretical origins in the writings of the Bolshe-viks and the early experience of the Soviet Union, compares Soviet experience with that of Ethiopia under the EPRDF, and attempts to draw some insights.

Alone in Africa, Ethiopia was not a colony, but an independent state that took the form of an empire and competed with the European powers in the scramble for territorial gain in the continent. While other African empires collapsed before or with the advent of European colonialism, successive Ethiopian imperial governments defeated—as in the case of Italy in 1896—or came to arrangements with the colonial powers—as in the case of Britain and France—and thus maintained its empire well into the modern era. Moreover, its collapse late in the twentieth century was not due to foreign intervention, but because of internal contradictions. Ethiopian experience thus set it apart from the rest of Africa; its wars of liberation were not against a foreign power but against the imperial regime of Haile-Selassie and the Derg. With the possible exceptions of South Africa and South Sudan, all the major African armed struggles were anti-colonial, but the EPRDF fought the state socialism of the Derg to realize its own version of socialism and ways to address the national question. Again, in contrast to the rest of Africa, the EPRDF explicitly rejected the European modelled nation-state. Instead, the system of national federalism formulated by the EPRDF has its inspiration in Bolshevik ideas and the experience of the Soviet Union, spurned Western practice. And the ideas it drew upon were the product of a long debate among the Western political left in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to the brutality of forced assimilation, marginalization, and crushing of rival nationalities during the national democratic revolutions of the British, French, German, Italian, and American states.

In opposition to the European model of political development, the international politi-cal left was of one mind in viewing the nation-state and nationalism as obstacles to achieving a society of free people (Bookchin 1994). For the left, nationalism united people in a hier-archical arrangement that obscured the ultimately class-based contradictions that served to

oppress the workers and other marginalized groups to advance the interests of capitalists who needed captive national markets. Anarchism represented the most extreme manifestation of this leftist conviction and held all states to be barriers to human freedom. Marx and Engels sometimes endorsed nationalist struggles, such as that for Polish self-determination because it had the objective of undermining the reactionary Russian Tsarist regime. However, they held the nation-state to be a transitional phenomenon to be overcome in realizing a nation-less and class-less communism.

In response to the threat posed by the rise of reactionary nationalism and Islamism, the Bolsheviks oversaw the construction of a federation that deliberately undermined the dominant Russian nation and endeavored to politically, culturally, and economically advance the marginalized communities, not as an end in itself, but as a means to give birth to a socialist state. That the commitment to this ideal declined, the Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors perverted the goal of socialism, and it collapsed in 1991 does not negate consideration of that experience since it continues to cast light on the national issue in contemporary Ethiopia and elsewhere.

The collapse of the Soviet Union cannot be attributed solely to the rising nationalism of its component parts and instead to growing anger at the unaccountable elites ruling the federation and a misconstrued reform process under Soviet President and General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Mikhail Gorbachev. But it is noteworthy that the Soviet Union broke up along national lines and should Ethiopia not overcome its long-running crisis, given added weight by the outbreak of war in November 2020, the country could follow the trajectory of the Soviet Union and disintegrate.

Although the writings of the leading Bolsheviks on the national issue and the early experience of the Soviet Union had widespread support in the Ethiopian Student Movement (ESM) from which all components of the EPRDF and much of the opposition had their origins, its practical application to federalism was widely greeted with skepticism and opposition. On the one hand, it was opposed by Amhara and other Ethiopian nationalists who held it would bring about the disintegration of Ethiopia. On the other hand, it was opposed by secessionists, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), and those who assumed that it was subterfuge to keep the minority Tigrayans in power, that no serious power would be devolved, and that none of the country's nations would be permitted to secede. Although the EPRDF maintained that its approach was a realistic response to the country's endemic national conflicts and that the Western modelled nation-state was unsuitable for Ethiopia and Africa, it was at best ignored on the continent and at worst viewed as a recipe for disunity and weakening the central state.

Most scholars have opposed the EPRDF's approach to the national issue and thus began a dialogue of the deaf. Academic critiques have typically been informed by Western social science, a belief in the superiority of the Western nation-state, support for models of federalism designed to suppress the kind of national consciousness that the EPRDF's policies gave rise to, and a religious like faith in Western liberal democracy. Hence the popularity of Abiy's rejection of EPRDF 'authoritarianism' and support for a Western version of democracy. Abiy's vision for Ethiopia harkens back to a golden age of pan-Ethiopian unity and the absence of ethnic conflict under unitary governments. Unfortunately, there was no such golden age and instead there is a long history of Ethiopian emperors and the Derg trying to overcome national revolts at great human cost.

Understanding this better than Abiy and the Amhara centrists who form his ideological core, the EPRDF tried to construct a system that passed considerable powers to national communities, not as its critics would have it to bring about the demise of the Ethiopian state or to ensure the self-aggrandizement of Tigrayans, but instead to overcome national oppression and ensure the state's survival. That the TPLF and EPRDF model of decentralized national based administrations was not always successful and in need of reform cannot be contested, but it represented an important attempt to contain national strife that has long threatened to dismember Ethiopia, while the centrism pressed by Abiy is a tried and failed approach.

In an environment of Western triumphalism in the post-Cold War era, critics often considered it enough to link the EPRDF's model of federalism to Bolshevism to discredit it. Meanwhile, EPRDF supporters were reluctant to acknowledge their theoretical dept to Bolshevik ideas and Soviet experience and instead were reduced to contending that only a radical devolution of power to national communities could save the country from disintegration. There was much truth in this, but it provided little basis for understanding the EPRDF's model of federalism and could not be defended on either theoretical or comparative grounds. The EPRDF had the power, but the academics and other critics have overwhelmingly dominated the debate, and with each crisis faced by the regime there were new attacks national federalism. The November 2020 war provides a context to reconsider whether centralized unitary government or a version of national federalism best meets the needs of Ethiopia, assuming that the country survives its present crisis.

After reviewing the writings and approaches of the leading Bolsheviks on nations and nationalism and the experience surrounding the establishment of the Soviet Union, this study will outline the development and implementation of the TPLF and EPRDF system of national based federalism. The experience of the TPLF (and subsequently EPRDF) system will then be compared with that of the early Bolsheviks. The chapter concludes that Ethiopia's ongoing crisis is not due to the EPRDF's national federalism, and a reformed version of it still provides the best hope that the country can survive. But national federalism could have been strengthened if the TPLF and EPRDF had not rejected class as both a unifying factor in the country and a means to mobilize Ethiopia's marginalized people.

3.2 Bolshevism and the Nation-State

On the eve of revolution, the Russian empire state covered one-sixth of the planet and was made up of an enormous variety of peoples, cultures, and religions overseen by a tsar who doubled as both head of state and of the Orthodox Church. The tsar gained the loyalty of the various national components of the empire by co-opting part of the indigenous elites, assimilating them through administrative adaptation, and establishing Russian settler colonies in the peripheries. The collapse of the Russian empire was ultimately due to its over-reach in the First World War and the growth of nationalist movements in the non-Russian parts of the empire, both of which provided a critical opportunity for revolutionaries. National consciousness was largely a Western import and initially restricted to intellectuals, but the heavy-handed response of the regime, Russification campaigns, and the construction of a national hierarchy produced growing resentment. Meanwhile, the Central Asian revolt of 1916 served as an expression of these developments and Muslim fears of assimilation by a Christian regime.

After initially playing down the significance of national sensitivities, the Bolsheviks supported national demands. Josef Stalin, himself a Georgian, who became the Bolshevik commissar of nationalities wrote what became his most influential theoretical contribution, "Marxism and the National Question" in (1913) on the problem. Stalin defined the nation as "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" (Stalin 1913, 10). Stalin followed Marx in holding that nations developed in the context of the decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. But herein lay a tension because the Bolsheviks held that the nation and nationalism would ultimately disappear with the realization of socialism, but in the short-term it treated nations as primordial identities. For Stalin and the Bolsheviks, nationalism was "a bourgeois masking ideology," and they made a distinction between opposing national oppression and supporting nationalism.

In Western Europe, the rise of capitalism produced independent nation-states under national bourgeoisies while in Eastern Europe, including Russia, it gave rise to multinational empire states under feudal, capitalist, and mixed political elites representing the dominant national bloc. In Russia, this role was carried out by Greater Russians (Russians, Belorussians, and Eastern Ukrainians) who dominated a well-organized aristocratic military bureaucracy. The Bolsheviks held that tsarist Russia was a "prison house of nationalities" perpetuated by a "Greater Russian chauvinism" that imposed its language, culture, and religion on the empire's subjugated population, and this produced nationalist responses. To gain the support of ethnic minorities, the Bolsheviks attacked Greater Russian chauvinism, proclaimed the sovereignty and equality of the empire's nations, and mobilized the marginalized minorities around a commitment to national self-determination. The right of self-determination meant that only the nation had the right to determine its destiny, outsiders did not have the right to forcibly interfere in the life of the nation, and a nation could arrange its life in the way its members wished (Stalin 1913, 23). This demand shocked European rulers, most of whom hosted discontented national minorities, but it was also attacked by many in the revolutionary left of the era, including Rosa Luxemburg. Even though she herself was Polish and Jewish, she opposed granting her own communities rights, including Polish independence, which Lenin strongly advocated, because—she contended—it undermined the international class struggle (H. Scott 2008). Bolshevik thinking, however, was not based on any liberal idealism and instead was meant to undermine bourgeois nationalism, win the support of the people, and facilitate their advancement.

These notions were enshrined by the Bolshevik government's *Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia* on November 15, 1917, immediately after the October Revolution. The declaration included the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia, self-determination, including secession and formation of separate states, abolition of all national and religious privileges and restrictions, and free development of national minorities and ethnographical groups inhabiting the territory of Russia. This commitment was deemed decisive in the civil war which pitted the Bolsheviks against a Russian chauvinist White army committed to a "one and undivided Russia" (Simon 1991) and supported by Western armies. But Lenin always made a distinction between the right to self-determination, which was part of a broader struggle for democracy on the one hand, and secession on the other. The commitment to self-determination would allow nationalities to realize that they did not need secession to retain national rights and privileges, or as Stalin would later say, "disunion for the purpose of union" (Kasprzak 2012, 152). In other words, if nations were sovereign and

equal conditions prevailed, the national will would determine whether autonomy or federation would prove satisfactory and secession would be rejected.

Lenin emphasized the importance of acknowledging the nationalism of the oppressed peoples and establishing a socialist federation of nations in the former Russian empire to ensure they were not captured by a reactionary bourgeois nationalism. He considered the national struggles of economically undeveloped colonized countries for liberation as being inherently progressive because they undermined the power of capital and distinguished them from the reactionary nationalism of the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, "Lenin's acceptance of the reality of nations and national rights was one of the most uncompromising positions he ever took, his theory of good ('oppressed nations') nationalism formed the conceptual foundation of the Soviet Union and his NEP-time policy of compensatory nation building was a spectacularly successful attempt at a state-sponsored conflation of language, culture, territory and quota-fed bureaucracy" (Slezkine 1994, 414). But doubts remained and in 1933, Hans Kohn (Kohn 1933, 21) wrote, "by the very process of dragging the peoples of the Soviet Union out of the period of religious medievalism through its work of enlightenment, and leading them to a new trust in themselves and to modern technical product, it awakens in them also the will to self-expression and to cohesion of the nation, and there grows up in them […] through nationalism, the opposing force with which Communism has to contend not only in the Russian people but in the other peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union."

Also problematic was the position of the "backward" peoples of the Soviet Union who did not constitute nations and thus did not have the right to self-determination. The focus here was less on their rights and more on state paternalism to politically, culturally, and economically raise them. In this light, raising backward groups culturally was held to be as significant as the provision of territory for their advancement. Nationalism was not meant to preserve small national units, but rather modernize them, even if this meant that they would have to be assimilated. Indeed, nationalism as a tool of modernization would become a defining characteristic of the Soviet Union. While Lenin (1913) opposed forceful assimilation, he considered resisting assimilation as akin to swimming against the currents of history. In many cases, demands for language or separate national schools were futile and the dangers of doing so were many. Foremost, it amounted to the promotion of archaic, feudal, and backward elements, thus stalling modernization. It offered an illusion of the permanence of national identities to small groups with little vitality and facilitated the bourgeoisie's exploitation of the proletariat, thus distracting the working classes from the objective of socialism.

In the early period of the Soviet Union the Bolsheviks sought to end domination by Greater Russians, a position taken even though most Bolshevik leaders were themselves Russians. In their efforts to combat Greater Russian chauvinism, the Bolsheviks actively discouraged assimilation of national minorities and went to considerable lengths to promote the development and consciousness of the non-Russian peoples. This sometimes even included the expulsion of Russian settlers from non-Russian territories. At least until Lenin's death, Greater Russian chauvinism was assumed to pose a bigger danger than local nationalisms. The result: "The Soviet central state did not identify as Russian, and Russians were driven to bear the burden of the empire by suppressing their national interests and to identify with a non-national empire" (Vihavainen 2000, 79). But chauvinism was not limited to Russians and a new policy towards national equality had to be pursued to remove all traces of distrust and alienation inherited from the epoch of capitalism. A comprehensive resolution

to the nationality problem within the former empire, Lenin believed, would ensure loyalty to the emerging Soviet state.

The 1920s and 1930s in the Soviet Union were devoted to the assignment of national territories to national groups and nationalities, and this was followed by nation-building, which attempted to construct a full range of national institutions within each unit. Lenin favored establishing autonomous units, however small, with homogeneous populations that could attract fellow nationals from all over the country and even beyond to eliminate national oppression. While Rosa Luxemburg advocated territorial autonomy, Lenin held that did not go far enough to resolve the nationality question or quench the thirst of nations for the right to complete liberation and only amounted to a reformist change. As well as granting each officially recognized nation its own territory, they were given a measure of autonomy under indigenous elites, encouraged to develop their own culture and language (and where the language was not in written form to construct it), and have a direct role in the central government, essentially an affirmative indigenization action program known as *korenizatsiia*.

The Soviet system embraced traditional custom, law, and local leadership of Asian minority peoples, including nomadism and the integration of the Islamic Sharia into the Soviet legal code. The territories of the nations were extended from the republic level to townships and villages, so that each republic was a mosaic of differentiated national subunits, often with different languages. For groups who did not have a national republic, an all-union administration was created.[1]

Language was the core of the policy, and minority nationals received preference in access to higher education and job openings in industry and public administration while the use of languages other than Russian was promoted in administration and higher education. The focus on language led to the conversion of sixty-six languages from the Cyrillic script used in Russian to the Latin script before its reversal in the 1930s (Martin 2001, 185–203). At the time of the revolution, literacy rates in Central Asia ranged between 2 and 7 percent; by the end of the 1920s the Soviet Union had largely eradicated illiteracy and was in the process of industrializing the national republics and *oblast*s with indigenous workers (Smith 1999). Nor were the Bolsheviks only concerned with advancing nations, and efforts to expand the social, political, and economic opportunities for women constituted "the earliest and perhaps most far-reaching attempt ever undertaken to transform the status and role of women" (Lapidus 1978, 3).

Many of the groups granted national status did not fully meet the criteria laid down by Stalin's "Marxism and the National Question" because of their lack of national consciousness and the problems posed by the enormous diversity of the old Russian empire. Unintentionally, the USSR became an "incubator of new nations" rather than a "melting pot," and thus it was the first state in history to be formed of national political units. In complete contrast to the old European multi-ethnic states, the Soviet Union responded to the rising tide of nationalism by promoting the national consciousness of its minorities, which in the view of one observer represented "the most extravagant celebration of ethnic diversity that any state had ever financed" (Slezkine 1994, 414).

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[1] By linking the definition of nation to possession of land, Stalin precluded groups like Jews and Germans in the Russian empire from having the right to self-determination because they did not have their own territory. Later, a region was established for the Jews, but they were typically urbanized and highly educated and did not adapt to farming, and the project failed.

Dividing the Soviet Union along national lines was also held to be the most effective means of governance, and local rulers—even though vetted by the CPSU—had to be indigenous people to assure the non-Russian peoples that they had been granted genuine national self-determination. Both Stalin and Lenin had written critically about the disintegration of the Social Democratic Party of the Austro-Hungarian Empire along national lines shortly before the First World War, and to ensure that experience was not repeated in the Soviet Union all existing national socialist parties were forcefully dissolved, replaced by local affiliates of the CPSU, and all national armed forces were either incorporated into the Red Army or eliminated (Simon 1991).

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was officially established in 1922 as a federation of nationalities, which eventually encompassed fifteen major national territories, each organized as a Union-level republic (Soviet Socialist Republic or SSR), and each republic had constitutionally guaranteed equal rights and standing in the formal structure of state power. Smaller minorities were made into autonomous republics (ASSRs) and still smaller minorities were given *oblast*s in a comprehensive multi-tiered federal arrangement.

To ensure the interests of the national groups were defended at the center, a Soviet of Nationalities was established as one of the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. As opposed to the Soviet of the Union, the Soviet of Nationalities was composed of the nationalities of the Soviet Union, which in turn followed administrative divisions rather than being a representation of national groups. The arrangement seriously diminished representation of larger groups, such as Russians, in favor of the smaller national groups of the Soviet Union. Many of the functions of the presidium of the Soviet of Nationalities were dissolved at the end of 1937, but it survived as the sole central political institution formally devoted to the nationalities question (Martin 2001).

The opposition of the Bolsheviks to any differentiation between nations that could give rise to insurgent nationalism was expressed in the widely repeated slogan: "national in form, but socialist in content." The building blocks of the Bolsheviks were class and internationalism and while nationalism was to be courted in the short-term, it was to be abandoned in the mid-term in favor of a unified worker's socialist state, and in the long-term the ideal was one language and one culture under international communism (Vihavainen 2000). The Bolsheviks contended that nations could only develop socialism when they reached equal status with the majority Russians.

Even though foreign policy was the prerogative of the all-union government, the Ukraine pursued foreign relations with Ukrainian minorities in Poland and Czechoslovakia and eight million Ukrainian nationals in the Russian and other Soviet republics. Central Asian republics exerted control for a time over immigration and delegates of the Turkic republics participated in an international conference in 1926 on a plan for the development of Turkic written languages (Martin 2001, 193).

The authority of the central government, however, was never in doubt, because it maintained sole responsibility for economic and military matters and was under the direction of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, itself a centralized body made up of the various federation components. The frequent result in the view of Lenin and Trotsky was excessive centralization, and they repeatedly complained that the central bureaucracy was a major obstacle to realizing the commitment to nation-building. Indeed, a major theme in Lenin's *State and Revolution* (Lenin 1917b) was his concern to destroy all the remnants of the old regime, including its stultifying bureaucracy, which he saw being replicated under the Bolsheviks.

The emphasis on a nationalized and centralized economy also limited the authority of union governments. But given the pervasive poverty, especially in the central Asian republics, unified economic planning was deemed critical to rapidly increasing desperately low living standards.

By the mid-1930s this policy was in retreat, and while the large national regions were kept intact most village and district level units were abolished. During Stalin's Great Terror of 1936–38 "narrow nationalism" became the focus of repression. Nonetheless, Articles 15 and 16 of the 1936 Constitution guaranteed the rights of the Union Republics and for each Republic to have its own constitution, while Article 17 gave each Union Republic the right to secede from the USSR.

Stalin's commitment to "socialism in one country" further undermined the nationality policy and began a process that weakened the internationalist focus of the Bolsheviks. On the eve of the Second World War, Stalin began a campaign of Russification, which increased with the war, and Russian became the language of inter-national communication throughout the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, the choice of language in the schools was given to parents and most of those outside the Russian federation selected Russian because it was deemed to offer more job opportunities for their children. Nonetheless, the commitment to national rights remained a core principle of the Soviet Union, and until its demise it continued to serve as a key point of distinction with Western governance practices.

Despite the retreat from the transformative positions of the first two decades of the Soviet Union, the theoretical writings of Stalin, Lenin, and other Bolsheviks on the rights of nations and national minorities and the means to give expression to those rights are important because they challenged Western orthodoxy, particularly the notion that the nation-state is the end-point of political evolution. One of the greatest achievements of the Soviet Union was the rapid advance and industrialization of the various Asian nations and this development led to claims that the USSR had realized its mid-term objective of a unified worker's socialist state. But its longer-term objective of one people and one culture under international communism became increasingly unrealistic. By the time of Khrushchev and Brezhnev it had become clear there would be no transcending of nationalism. "Nations were there to stay; nationalism would have to be managed rather than transcended" (Lovell 2009, 113).

3.3   Ethiopia: Ideologies Under Assault

The parallels between the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary Russian empire and Ethiopia are remarkable. The Ethiopian emperor, who like his Russian counterpart was head of state and of the Orthodox Church, attempted to assimilate the different ethnic elites into the cultures and languages of the Amhara ruling class. It employed *neftegna*s (gun carrying settlers) from various ethnic groups to forcefully occupy territory for the empire. While Ethiopia did not have pogroms like Tsarist Russia, it did have indentured peasants, forced national evacuations, lowland African people who were viewed as slaves, and a distinct racial hierarchy. The Ethiopian student revolutionaries began their campaign against that empire and its prison of nationalities, which proved remarkably easy to collapse. Afterwards the real struggle began against the *Derg*. Future EPRDF leaders were strongly influenced by Bolshevik experience and contended that the establishment of a federation along Russian lines was the best means to preserve the integrity of Ethiopia and advance its objectives, and Soviet experience continues to provide insights into the EPRDF's national policies.

While there had been revolts in the periphery against Emperor Haile-Selassie, their leaders did not have the capacity to overthrow the imperial authority. It was not until the emergence of the Ethiopian Student Movement in the late 1960s that an opposition took form that could ideologically challenge the regime and prepare the ground for it to be overthrown. Before, the primary influences were Western modernization and the development of Japan as a traditional polity. In a context of rising global radicalism, however, the ESM quickly assumed a Marxist orientation even while the students initially rejected national divisions in the country and extolled Ethiopian nationalism, which was held to transcend other identities and loyalties (Young 1997b). The early ESM focused on three trends: pan-Ethiopianism, democratization, and the national question.

The national question came to the fore over the problem of whether to support the Eritrean demand for the right to self-determination. Most student activists contended that since Ethiopia was feudal, Eritrea could not be considered a colony and therefore supported a unitary Ethiopia. Only a minority held the country to be in a transitional phase in which nations and nationalist movements could emerge and be supported. Particularly influential was student leader Walleligne Makonnen's contention that Ethiopia was not yet a nation, but an Amhara-ruled collection of nationalities and paraphrasing Fanon concluded that "to be an Ethiopian you will have to wear an Amhara mask" (Balsvik 1985, 277–278), a position also held by the nationalist Oromo students. Debate continued, and the students progressively shifted at least in principle from a position of outright condemnation of secession to recognizing the right of Eritreans and all of Ethiopia's people to self-determination. They also endorsed a conception of Ethiopia as a "prison of nationalities," a phrase drawn from Russian revolutionary experience.

Debate over the national question continued to bedevil the students and while accepting in principle the full right of self-determination, in practice many students followed what became Stalin's later position of condemning any calls for national self-determination as "narrow nationalist" and "separatist." Meanwhile, the country's leading revolutionary party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) mobilized on a pan-Ethiopian basis and called for a proletarian revolution. Nonetheless, its leaders were sufficiently aware of nationalist sensitivities to establish the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) to mobilize Oromo. In contrast, groups largely from the non-Amhara core of the country, including the future leaders of the TPLF, highlighted the nationalities issue and held "Amhara chauvinism" to be the enemy in a context where a Shoan Amhara elite imposed its language, culture, and Coptic faith on the peoples who made up Ethiopia. Ultimately the difference between the EPRP and the TPLF was not a strategic question since the TPLF affirmed that the class contradiction superseded all other contradictions. Rather it was a question of whether the national issue was primary for purposes of mobilization, as affirmed by the TPLF, or class, as held by the EPRP. The TPLF contended that its own formation as a Tigrayan national party, together with other national parties, such as the Afar Liberation Front, Western Somali Liberation Front, Sidama Liberation Front, and the OLF, provided conclusive evidence in support of its position. Not only was the issue unresolved, but it led to conflict between the parties.

In opposition to what became the EPRDF position, the future OLF did not single out Shoans for the imposition of their culture but all northern Ethiopians who were frequently

conflated with *neftegna*s.[2] The OLF concern was with the traditional Abyssinian state dominated by the Amhara, but in which the Tigrayans were junior partners, and both practiced a form of settler colonialism in the territories. The TPLF view was that the regime was feudal and Amhara-dominated, not like South Africa as contended by the OLF. Oromos, they held, interacted and lived throughout the country. While they had the right to self-determination, because their problem was not a result of colonialism, they did not have the automatic right to secession.[3]

Sensitive to the nationalism of their Tigrayan followers and appreciating the limited capitalist development in the country, which meant that the working class was a negligible force while the peasants and ethnic minorities loomed large, the TPLF focused on the peasantry. The Front emphasized national struggle and held that the national contradictions had to be resolved before multinational class struggles could be settled. The early TPLF entertained the idea of Tigray's secession before proclaiming the right of Tigrayans as a nation to self-determination but insisted this would only take the form of secession if the revolutionary forces failed to overthrow the Derg and realize a democratic Ethiopia, a formula consistent with the position of the Bolsheviks. According to one TPLF veteran, Stalin's (1913) article became a "bible," while another said it was read "scores of times." The TPLF leadership widely read the Marxist classics that were translated into Tigrinya to the extent that another veteran said, "Our life was one of fighting and studying Marxism," and Meles Zenawi was smitten with the experience of Enver Hoxa's Albania after a 1984 visit. However, the front never proclaimed itself Marxist or even socialist and at best would only acknowledge that some of its leaders were Communists or Marxists.

The Derg also ascribed to Marxist principles, aligned with the Eastern Bloc, declared equality among the country's ethnic groups, and promised self-administration. In 1983, it established the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities (ISEN), which had two mandates—assessing the distribution, social, and economic conditions of ethnic groups in the country and recommending a new state structure that would provide regional autonomy for the various ethnic groups. Ultimately, the regime was not prepared to accept nationality as a political phenomenon that had to be addressed by a radical re-ordering of the basis of power in the state. Instead, the Derg introduced the constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) in 1987, which established an asymmetrical regime of regional autonomy.

Under this configuration, some of the provinces affected by the national/regional insurgency were organized into five autonomous regions—Eritrea, Tigray, Dire Dawa, Ogaden and Assab—while Eritrea was provided with more autonomy. In addition, the Derg translated the constitution into some peripheral languages and employed non-Amharic languages in its literacy programs, but there was no linguistic autonomy and Amharic remained the working language of the government at all levels. Moreover, "these measures were not intended to provide administrative and political autonomy as the military regime and its vanguard party, the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) continued to centralize power."[4]

The failure to fully acknowledge national rights encouraged the national based revolts that would ultimately be the undoing of the regime. The threat that politicized national

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[2] Email from former and late President of Ethiopia and former OPDO leader, Dr. Negaso Gidada, March 1, 2017.
[3] Author interview with Gebru Asrat, former Chairman of Tigray, Addis Ababa, May 13, 2017.
[4] 'Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism: History and Ideology', retrieved from https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/13839/chapter%20three.pdf, accessed March 20, 2020.

groups pose to social stability arises directly from their exclusion from states specifically organized to monopolize power for particular favored groups and preserve a status quo in which they are the prime beneficiaries (Markakis 1994), something both the Bolsheviks and the TPLF opposed. It is thus national monopolized states, and not marginalized groups, that are the cause of struggles over state power in Ethiopia and the Horn.

After establishing itself in Tigray, the capture of central state power increasingly became the focus of the TPLF and that necessitated either accepting non-Tigrayans within its ranks, which would involve reinventing itself as a pan-Ethiopian movement, or—and this more closely matched its philosophy—forming a multi-national front. The TPLF thus established the EPRDF as a front with a unified program, leadership, and army. Where movements did not exist, it established them (see Young 1997b, 62, 166). The OLF was never considered for membership because it favored the "establishment of a people's republic of Oromia" although it subsequently divided over the issue (Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) 1976, 15–16). For its part, a consistent fear of the OLF was that "the TPLF aspires to forge hierarchical relations with the Oromos."[5] The Amhara-dominated Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (EPDM) was replaced by the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) to emphasize its national character and distinguish it from Professor Asrat's All Amhara Organization. The ANDM came together with the TPLF to form the EPRDF, which were joined in 1990 by the TPLF-constructed Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization (OPDO) and later by the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Front (SEPDF). It was that alliance as the EPRDF took power in May 1991. A host of other armed national groups were invited to a peace conference in July and subsequently joined the EPRDF in the transitional government.

Some leaders, including Meles, had visited Europe prior to the EPRDF assuming power, most had travelled in the region, and all had spent time in Sudan. Nonetheless, they were surprised by the political realities they faced on the eve of their assumption of state power. The realities were two-fold, and both proved major obstacles to EPRDF hopes of implementing socialism, which their leaders understood to mean a transformative make-over of Ethiopia. First, they were coming to power at a time when the "socialist world," even if condemned by the TPLF/EPRDF leadership for its betrayal of socialism and the working class, was collapsing before a triumphalist and aggressive capitalist West. Capitalism only had a weak hold economically in peripheral areas of the global economy like Africa in 1991. But as an ideological formation it was rapidly assuming a hegemonic position that could not be ignored by a poverty-stricken Ethiopia that desperately needed finances, not only for development, but to fend off the prospect of another famine on the scale of 1984. Moreover, by the early 1980s neoliberalism had been widely embraced by the metropoles of capitalism, and with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc they were anxious to speed up the role back of the welfare gains of the post-World War II working class.

Second, Derg rule had completely tarnished the notion of socialism in the mind of the citizens of the country. 1991 marked the formal collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, but its crisis was evident to even the most casual observer by the late 1980s, and there was a growing need for the EPRDF to confront the emerging situation. In addition, as one TPLF veteran said, "The Derg was so hated that upon coming to power we [the EPRDF] couldn't say a word about socialism. Our people hated Marxism." Another veteran said,

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[5] Email to the author from Leencho Lata, former leader of the OLF, March 12, 2017.

"The Ethiopian people think that socialism and the Derg are the same and both are hated." No doubt this was true, but hatred of the Derg's so-called socialist project was widely known long before the EPRDF came to power.[6]

It was in that context that the Front held an emergency congress in the field in 1990 in which it decided to be "more political and less ideological to survive." This was graphically expressed in a transitional program that Meles hastily formulated and which contradicted much of what the TPLF and EPRDF had long advocated. The EPRDF endorsed a market economy, effectively the previously hated Washington Consensus, and felt compelled to further endorse—but not effectively implement—multipartyism and political pluralism to alleviate Western fears of its perceived Marxism-Leninism. The EPRDF also quickly stopped referring to its role as that of a vanguard party overseeing Ethiopia's transition from pre-capitalism to socialism, and the TPLF's Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT) and its ANDM, OPDO, and EPRDF counterparts were quietly dropped. Among the EPRDF leadership, the rapid displacement of a set of ideological formations that had informed and inspired a generation of cadres was carried out with remarkably little dissent, so convincing were the obstacles that had to be confronted. But acceptance by the Front's base of these ideological gymnastics was not so easy to put into practice.

While any notion of a transformative project was rejected, the EPRDF was not prepared to accept the loss of Ethiopian autonomy demanded by the Western power brokers, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The issue came to a head within a few months of the EPRDF assuming state power in 1991 when the IMF demanded not only adherence to a market economy, but for the government to privatize land, financial institutions, and all state corporations. Refusal to bow down to these demands led to the IMF suspending a USD 127 million loan, an action strongly condemned by Joseph Stiglitz (2002) in his book, *Globalization and its Discontents*. Even Meles, who was among the EPRDF leaders most willing to compromise with international capital, insisted that the government would not permit a market in peasant land, loss of control over the financial and other key elements in the economy, or reverse national based federalism that the Front was in the process of implementing. Although accepting that endorsement of capitalism meant some loss of sovereignty, control over fiscal and monetary policy remained key objectives of the Front and this more than any remaining socialist sentiments explain its willingness to stand up to the IMF.

While the notion of a vanguard party had lost its meaning since the EPRDF had given up its socialist aspirations and no longer claimed to lead any classes, the practice of the party maintaining a leading role in governance continued to ensure its program could be realized, convince its cadres that a progressive project (even if not a socialist project) was still being pursued, and maintain power in a context where a measure of pluralism was demanded by the West. This approach was called revolutionary democracy, a confusing term popularized by Meles in a context where socialism was formally rejected. In practice, it was largely directed at rent-seekers who in class terms were defined as the corrupt wing of the national bourgeoisie.[7] Although no longer the vanguard of the peasantry, the EPRDF maintained an attachment to it. And while the individual rights that characterize capitalism were af-

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[6] During my visit to TPLF occupied Tigray in 1988, party cadres were reluctant to talk about ideological issues, especially the attraction of some of its leaders to Albania.

[7] Alex de Waal takes up this issue in his 2015a published book, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, Polity Press, 2015.

firmed, group or national rights under the guiding principle of national self-determination, and through the pursuit of a nation-based federalism, became a core commitment of the regime, which held that there was no contradiction between the two principles.

3.4   Establishing a Nation-Based Federalism

The EPRDF convened a national conference in July 1991, which was attended by twenty-seven organizations, nineteen of them representing national groups and only three were of a pan-Ethiopian persuasion. The EPRP and the All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement (MEISON) were not permitted to attend the conference, ostensibly because they failed to renounce violence, but it had more to do with their opposition to the national-based program of the EPRDF and a history of bad relations between them.

During this period, two main opposing groups took shape, together with a third minor group.[8] The EPRDF, its allies, and the OLF gave priority to the right to national self-determination, which was held to be a necessary precondition for democracy. Like Abiy in present times, the second group resisted what they considered the ethnicization of Ethiopia because it did not reflect the country's history, would undermine unity, and sow the seeds of discord. Essentially this group viewed Ethiopia as a nation-state and saw the EPRDF and OLF project as a threat. A final and smaller group made up of national minorities welcomed these expressions of national assertiveness and self-rule but feared that some of the more developed nations might decide the fate of the weaker minorities.

The conference adopted the EPRDF's Transitional Charter, which laid down the legal framework for reconstituting the state and devolving power along ethno-regional lines. Some critics claimed these arrangements were designed to ensure the hegemony of the minority Tigrayans (Balcha Berhanu (2007); International Crisis Group (2009)), others that it gave the central government too much power, and still others that it would bring about the disintegration of the country. Essentially the argument pitted the fears and claims of ethnic nationalists (primarily Oromo) against those of upholders of a centralized Ethiopia (primarily Amhara). In a response that could have been written by Stalin, the EPRDF said that the war had been a product of an ethnically dominated state that threatened state disintegration and Front policies were designed to both preserve the unity of the state and harness ethnic energies to promote development.

The EPRDF's denigration of historical conceptions of Ethiopia was in sharp contrast to previous regimes (Clapham 2002) and was not even accepted by many Tigrayans. But like the Bolsheviks, the TPLF wanted to move beyond frequently mythical portrayals of the past and remove the central place of the Amhara in that past. Nonetheless, Ethiopians continue to be challenged by the questions as to whether Menelik II was an oppressor or a nation builder, with Abiy in the latter camp. The EPRDF wanted to reconstruct an Ethiopian identity that acknowledged its imperial past but was not in tension with existing and emerging ethnic identities.

In January 1992, the Transitional Government passed the "Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of National/Regional Self-Government," which divided the country into ethnic blocs. The Boundaries Commission was founded that made language the critical

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[8] Email from Medhane Tadesse, independent researcher, February 12, 2017.

variable in defining ethnic markers[9] and fourteen regions were established, with divisions in the regions left to local governments, again following the pattern of the Soviet Union.

But anger over what it perceived as the EPRDF's failure to follow the spirit of the Transitional Charter led to clashes between OLF and government forces. While the EPRDF demanded that the Oromo Liberation Army be demobilized, the OLF insisted that its forces be integrated into the national army. Competition between the OLF and the OPDO, together with the flawed 1992 regional elections, led to increasing tensions and the departure of the OLF from the transitional government. From the perspective of the EPRDF, the OLF was trying to achieve through negotiations what it could not accomplish on the battlefield while the OLF wanted to press to its fullest the logic of the EPRDF commitment to national self-determination. There were also problems with the National Liberation Front in the Somali region and the Sidama Liberation Front but given the overwhelming military and political power of the EPRDF they were brought in line.

The departure of the OLF ended a major obstacle to EPRDF plans, but it also lost the support of an organization that broadly shared its vision of a federation and opposed a centralized Ethiopian state. Although the OLF was militarily defeated, it remained a political threat. Without an alliance with the OLF, centralizing tendencies increasingly came to the fore. This problem is even more evident in the wake of the assent of Abiy and pursuit of a renewed centralization when the two strongest forces in Ethiopia in favor of decentralization—the TPLF and OLF—have been divided by a legacy of bitterness. If the TPLF is defeated in the November 2020 war it would also dash Oromo hopes of a decentralized federalism, and thus Abiy may be inadvertently laying the groundwork for their reconciliation.

While having important minorities, Tigray, Amhara, Oromo, Somali, and Afar regions had ethnic cores. But the other regions were formed by bringing different ethnic groups under one unit. The only apparent basis for this distinction appears to be the size of the ethnic community. Even here, tiny Harar was given special status and not included in Oromia, despite its Oromo majority, to protect its cultural survival. Meanwhile, the two and half million strong Sidama were only granted a zone within the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People (SNNP) Regional State. The EPRDF was slow to organize affiliated parties in the Somali and Afar regions because it concluded that clan, and not ethnicity, defined identity in pastoralist societies, and thus it endeavored to work with traditional leaders.

The resulting configuration was far from clear and the regions were highly diverse with respect to size, population, and resources. The lack of ethnic homogeneity in even the five aforementioned states necessitated special zones and *woreda*s (districts) to accommodate minorities. The Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Region was the most ethnically diverse, which necessitated the establishment of fourteen zones and five special woredas. This restructuring did not always take place peacefully as some areas lost administrative status and groups fought to have regional and woreda centers and the accompanying budgets. The regional structures were already operational before they were given a constitutional basis by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution, which was passed in August 1995.[10]

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[9] In making language as the critical indicator of ethnicity, the EPRDF again closely followed Bolshevik practice. Although experience in northeast Africa provides numerous examples of national groups that see themselves as part of a broader national community even when they do not share the same language, other groups do share a language, but do not consider themselves part of a shared community. (See Schlee 2001; 2008.)

[10] Proclamation No. 1/1995.

Unlike those in the West, the Ethiopian constitution is not just an agreement between citizens but also constitutes an agreement between national groups (Young 1998). The EPRDF explicitly rejected the nation-state model that underpins Western states and was transplanted to Africa. The constitution's definition of the nation closely followed Stalin: "a nation, nationality or people is a group of people who have or share a large measure of common culture or similar customs, mutual intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory."[11] The definition proved sufficiently vague (the distinction between nation, nationality, and people was never made) that determining boundaries was largely made politically.

In keeping with devolving power to national groups, the powers of the federal government were identified and limited: "All powers not given expressly to the Federal government alone, or concurrently to the Federal Government and the States, are reserved to the States."[12] But this is immediately clarified by Article 51/2 that gives the federal government the right to "formulate and implement the country's policies, strategies and plans in respect to overall economic, social and development matters" and Article 52 empowers the states to "formulate and execute economic, social development policies, strategies and plans for the state." By this provision economic planning and development were centralized in similar fashion to that of the former Soviet Union.

The same tension exists between centralization and decentralization. For example, Article 39 specifies that "Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history." It is not clear whether land belong to the nations, nationalities, regional states, or the federal government although practice has been that natural resources belong to the federal government. That would also seem to be implied by Article 40 which states that, "The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as natural resources, are exclusively vested in the State and the peoples of Ethiopia."[13]

While the rights of peasants and pastoralists is affirmed, a problem arises due to the statement, "Without prejudice to the right of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples to the ownership of land, government shall ensure the right to private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements establishment be law." How the federal government can give land grants to private investors, an area of considerable controversy in the lowlands, without prejudice to the rights of individual Nations, Nationalities and Peoples is not explained.

A further basis for centralization and critical to the pursuit of state-led development is Article 89, which makes clear that development is primarily the prerogative of the federal government and that "government has the duty to hold, on behalf of the People, land and other natural resources and to deploy them for their common benefit and development."

The constitution provided for a bicameral legislature at the center made up of a House of Peoples Representatives and a House of the Federation, which bears comparison to the Soviet of Nationalities. While the former body is elected by direct universal suffrage for five years and has exclusive power of making laws, the House of Federation represents national

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[11] Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Article 39(5). http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/et/et007en.pdf, accessed February 4, 2020.
[12] Ibid, Article 52.
[13] See also chapter 5 in this volume.

groups, and its representatives are selected by the regional or state councils with every recognized nationality having at least one representative and an additional one for every million people. The House of Federation has the responsibility of resolving differences between the country's national groups and acting as a court of last resort through its Committee for States' Affairs. It also decides on the division of joint federal and regional tax sources, subsidies of the federal government to the regions, and it nominates a largely symbolic president for the country who must then be approved by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

As in the Soviet Union, language is considered the determining characteristic of nations in Ethiopia and Article 5 of the 1995 constitution grants the equality of all the country's languages and gives the regions the right to determine their own working languages. But just as Russian became the language of inter-ethnic communication across the Soviet Union after 1936, Amharic was designated the "working language" of the federal government. Apart from the Amhara, the other major language groups, such as Oromo, Tigray, Somali, and Afar, began teaching in their indigenous languages for the early years of school and Amharic served as a secondary area of study, before turning to English for the latter years. Just as many Central Asian groups dropped the Cyrillic script used in Russian in favor of the Latin script, the OPDO abandoned the Abyssinian Geez script for the Latin alphabet and this was followed by many ethnic language groups in the Southern Region. And just as the shift from Russian proved to be an obstacle for employment prospects for many Central Asians, so many Oromo have discovered they are handicapped in seeking jobs outside their region and in the Amharic-speaking central government. Hence rose the demand that Afaan Oromo be given the status of a national working language.

After initially encouraging the development of indigenous languages, the problems of isolation and lack of resources led the EPRDF to stress unity and efficiency and discourage administrative proliferation. With every incentive for local politically ambitious groups to call for their own region, zone, or woreda, the ruling party shifted gears on a process that followed from their own political program. The Soviet Union took the same course, in part for these same administrative reasons and because Stalin returned to promoting a Russification that he and the Bolsheviks had previously attacked. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has also encouraged Russian nationalism and emphasized its links to the Orthodox Church.

However, the war with Eritrea produced a wave of pan-Ethiopian nationalism that initially trumped the national consciousness the regime had fostered and gave the lie to President Isaias Afwerki and others who had assumed that Ethiopia under the EPRDF had been reduced to a collection of warring national groups. This bears comparison with Soviet experience where the Second World War (the "Great Patriotic War") produced a powerful wave of nationalism led by Russians, which encouraged Stalin to launch his Russification campaign against narrow nationalism. In the wake of the Eritrean war (1998–2000), the EPRDF also condemned narrow nationalism, but it is noteworthy that the pan-Ethiopian nationalist wave was often led by peripheral and marginalized communities like the Nuer of Gambella who used the war to assert their Ethiopian identity. The Tigrayan-led EPRDF could not permit the espousal of Ethiopian nationalism to be confused with Amhara chauvinism and as a result attempted to popularize notions like democratic nationalism to distinguish it from the chauvinist nationalism of the Amhara and the narrow nationalism of separatists.

As was the case in the Soviet Union, national states in Ethiopia are based on a conception of primordialism although, unlike the Soviet Union after 1991, the EPRDF end game

was no longer to construct a nationless and classless future. Following Soviet practice, the officially designated regions do not always coincide with the established regional boundaries, the system undervalues shared histories, changing characteristics, population movements, and by attempting to contain these groups it sometimes undermines national integration. As was the case in the Soviet Union, many people in Ethiopia have mixed national origins. And just as Greater Russians in the non-Russian heartland bore much of the cost for the Soviet governance configuration, so the status of the Amhara in Ethiopia was reduced because of the imposition of a nation-based federalism.

Like the Soviet Union, Ethiopia's regional states have executive, legislative, and judicial powers and are headed by powerful presidents. Below the presidents are zonal administrations that are appointed by the regions and tasked with overseeing woreda administrations. Woredas have elected council, elected executive and judicial bodies, and the power to prepare, determine, and implement activities within its own areas concerning social services and economic development.[14] There are also provisions for special woredas to provide self-government for minority ethnic groups not numbering enough to establish zones or regions, and they report directly to the regional governments. At the bottom of the governance hierarchy is the *kebele* which has responsibility for law and order and providing basic services.

Critics of the EPRDF system of federalism have noted that the privileging of "indigenous" national groups has often come at the cost of limiting the rights of minority groups within the regions. In response, some of the regions have granted these minorities special woredas, but they do not have guaranteed representation in the regional government or its institutions and unless they form geographical blocs, they may be politically marginalized. Regional states have not always protected the rights of national minorities, but out of respect for the constitution, or in the case of Oromia concern about arousing national sensitivities, the center has refused to take up the issue in a context where Oromo nationalists direct their anger against what is held to be a TPLF-dominated EPRDF and national government. There have also been problems over boundaries and the establishment of local administrations throughout the country, and some of them have led to violence. As with the Soviet Union, such disputes were dealt with in an EPRDF-dominated state, but in the case of the Oromo region the disputes spread to the streets and posed a major political challenge for the government.

The Constitution of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) has elected zonal councils, which in some cases represent specific ethnic communities, while the regional state executive is shared among the political elite in much the same manner as at the federal level. As a result, the Southern region has been called a "federation within a federation" (Assefa Fiseha 2015), and with the exception of demands of Sidama for their own region until recently the region was widely considered the best administered in the country. The same cannot be said of Oromia, which has from its inception been administratively weak and has major border conflicts with its neighbors.

In other regions, like Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella, which could be compared to some of the backward Soviet Asian republics, a different practice emerged. Before the imposition of the EPRDF system of federalism, national conflict was common, particularly in Gambella between the Anywaa and the Nuer, but there was no developed nationalism and no support for secession. There, the EPRDF took a paternalistic approach to governance.

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[14] Proclamation 7/92, Article 40.

Initially, this took the form of the Regional Affairs Department and later the Ministry of Federal Affairs, which operates out of the Prime Minister's office. Previously known to "hire and fire" poorly performing governors and other regional officials, since 2001 its overt role has declined and it is now limited to "enhancing the capacity of the less developed states" (Assefa Fiseha 2015, 17). Despite the weaknesses of some of the regional governments, the EPRDF followed the Soviet Union in devoting considerable human and financial resources to developing peripheral cultures and languages, expressed by the country's foremost secular holiday, which celebrates cultural diversity.

3.5   Comparisons and Analyses

The EPRDF came to power at the end of the Cold War and the start of a new era of Western triumphalism and renewed efforts to remake the world in its image. The West insisted that capitalism and its system of economic organization, governance, values, and ideology be wholeheartedly embraced and the socialism that inspired the EPRDF relegated to history's dustbin. The EPRDF was caught between its own ideology and the unanticipated realities of the post-Cold War era. The EPRDF model of governance was based on the writings of the Bolsheviks and experience of the Soviet Union, but during the armed struggle it condemned the same Soviet Union as "social-imperialist." Indeed, shortly before taking power and on the eve of the collapse of the socialist bloc, the appointed leader of the TPLF and EPRDF, Meles Zenawi said, "the Soviet Union and other Eastern-bloc countries have never been truly socialist. The nearest any country comes to being socialist as far as we are concerned is Albania."[15] Despite such views, the EPRDF might still have expected to align with the socialist bloc or at the least have it provide a counterpart to the West and the ideological space to pursue its program.

A useful starting point is the debate of the left at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that foresaw the dangers inherent in unbridled nationalist movements. The Bolsheviks' fear that they would assume a reactionary and violent form if they did not encourage and lead rising nationalisms was borne from the First World War in which 17 million people were killed. This was followed by fascistic nationalistic movements that provided the background to the Second World War and the death of 50 million more people. And in the present era, neofascist movements are expanding in Eastern Europe, finding constituencies in Germany, Italy, France, and the Netherlands, and xenophobic nationalism was at the core of Donald Trump's electoral victory in November 2016. Closer to Ethiopia, waves of ethno-nationalist violence have swelled in Somalia and Sudan, and independent South Sudan experienced a full-fledged civil war in 2013.

Until the recent appearance of balanced studies of the Soviet Union and its experience with nation-building (e.g. Blaut 1987; Vihavainen 2000; Martin 2001; Slezkine 1994)[16], the widespread view was that its collapse on December 26, 1991, was due to its failed state-managed economy and a misplaced federal model. These conclusions were also used to discredit the EPRDF project. However, the collapse of the Soviet federation can be attributed

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[15] *The Independent*, London, November 28, 1989.
[16] Western "Sovietology" held that national rights were systematically denied in the country in favor of a totalitarian Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but when the Soviet Union splintered along national lines the position of the Western experts abruptly changed. Even the role of Stalin is being challenged in important studies such as, Getty and Manning (1993) and Furr (2011).

to many factors, in particular dissatisfaction with the central government and not intractable national differences. In response to widespread dissatisfaction, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced *glasnost* (opening), *perestroika* (restructuring), *demokratizatsiya* (democratization), and *uskoreniye* (acceleration of economic development) at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986. He subsequently called for a confederal Soviet Union in which the republics would regain much of the autonomy and sovereignty they had prior to Stalin's changes. Apart from the Baltic republics, Georgia, and Armenia, there was little support in the Soviet Union for outright secession. This was made clear in a March 1991 referendum in which 76 percent of the people with an 80 percent turnout voted to preserve the Union and eight of the nine republics subsequently signed the new union treaty (Brown 1996).

To reverse the reforms and reassert the central government's control over the republics, eight high-ranking Soviet officials orchestrated a coup and demanded that Gorbachev reject the treaty and declare a state of emergency. He refused, was held prisoner, and only freed by the intervention of the Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, who declared the coup unconstitutional and led a public protest in the streets of Moscow. Once the coup was defeated, however, Yeltsin (who wanted to quickly carry out market reforms) and the other republic leaders set about dissolving the Soviet Union without consulting the voters or even the Supreme Soviets of their respective republics. The beneficiaries of the breakup of the Soviet Union were not the people, many of whom continue to be upset at the development, but the newly emergent political elites who moved quickly to assume the role of petty national based autocrats and take possession of state industries, resources, and properties.

While the USSR economy was stagnant in 1991, it was still experiencing a 2 percent growth rate and the economic crisis only developed after the breakup as a result of the shock doctrine of privatization and free markets pressed by Western economists in thrall to market fundamentalism. The result in Russia was not only hyperinflation and a 50 percent GDP loss but also the rapid decline of all social indices: sudden spikes rates of poverty, crime, corruption, unemployment, homelessness, disease, mortality, and income inequality, along with decreases in calorie intake, life expectancy, adult literacy, and income. Russia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia witnessed a 42 percent increase in male death rates between 1991 and 1994.[17] It was not socialism that brought about the rapid decline in living standards for the people of the former Soviet Union, but the pursuit of neoliberalism and the so-called Washington Consensus, under the direction of the IMF and World Bank. Moreover, until the coming to power of Vladimir Putin, Russia had become a virtual colony of the West and the US.

In the wake of Abiy's war against the TPLF Ethiopia faces a not dissimilar crisis, and like the Soviet Union the crisis had its roots in bad political decision-making and not because of its system of national federalism. Before Abiy dissolved the EPRDF, it experienced three major crises—in 2001 in the wake of the Ethio-Eritrean war, after the 2005 national elections, and in 2016 after a dispute over the expansion of Addis Ababa. This chapter cannot analyze these crises, but it is important to make their political character clear and emphasize that they could not be resolved by undermining the two major accomplishments of the EPRDF—national federalism and state-led development.

The crisis facing the EPRDF in the first instance derived from attempting to pursue a program of political and economic reform and rapid development in a highly unfavorable

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[17] BBC (2009) "Privatisation raised death rate," January 15 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7828901.stm, accessed March 20, 2020), see also Vladislav M. Zubok (2009, ix).

international context even though its conclusive military victory over the Derg gave the ruling party a measure of authority, administrative competence, and autonomy that set it apart from other ruling parties in Africa. But those advantages could not insulate the EPRDF from power struggles and conflicting visions that beset the party during and in the wake of what should have been its triumphal victory over Eritrea in the 1998–2000 war. While glossed over to present a united front, the TPLF was bitterly divided over the conduct of the war. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi led a minority faction that advocated a more conciliatory approach. The struggle came to the fore after the war and spread to other components of the EPRDF. The outcome was the emergence of a much empowered Meles, a massive purge of the party that eliminated many veteran leaders, and the end of the long-standing system of collegial leadership. One of the positive features of TPLF decision-making had been its rejection of the personality cults that have always featured in Ethiopian politics and the embrace of shared decision-making. This position meant that individuals like Tewolde W. Mariam with his sober thinking and organizational skills could complement Meles's quick intelligence or check his sometimes authoritarian impulses.

As well as eliminating many party stalwarts who he considered obstacles to his increasingly authoritarian rule, Meles also used the opportunity to remove (in the case of former Defense Minister Siye Abreha) and jail corrupt members of the EPRDF, or "rent-seekers" in the parlance of the Front. Siye was a particular concern because he had gained the support of a group, including some who challenged Meles's wartime opposition to the capture of Assab, the Eritrean Red Sea port. Meles turned to Marx's "Bonapartist thesis," which examined the circumstances in which counter-revolutionary military officers coopt the radicalism of the popular classes to mask their narrow base and attack their enemies. Meles's contended that some among the TPLF and later EPRDF were using their privileged positions in the state for individual gain. It was a curious argument to make for the leader of a party that had disavowed any attachment to Marxism and while some rent-seekers were removed in the resulting purge so were party devotees who embraced Marx more than Meles did. Crucially, Tewelde, who had opposed Meles's military policies, was removed as was Tsadkan, the chief of staff, who played a lead role in defeating Eritrea.

Also, of concern was that instead of conducting a *gim gema* or evaluation of the EPRDF's performance in which he would likely have faced strong criticism, Meles insisted that the party assess his Bonapartist thesis. This demand set the stage for the leadership division and the subsequent expulsions. Meles then continued his battle into the EPRDF and after refusing to call a meeting of the party's General Assembly, its highest organ, the purges spread. Achieving an almost complete victory, Meles and his colleagues claimed that the changes and expulsions brought clarity and ideological coherence to the party. But subsequent events prove that was not the case.

The EPRDF may have ascribed to capitalism, but nation-based federalism was not altered, the economy continued to be state led, the EPRDF affirmed its commitment to "revolutionary democracy," decision-making continued to be based on democratic centralism, the party officially rejected liberal democracy, and in practice it claimed what amounted to a proprietorial right over the country's peasantry. Medhane Tadesse and I concluded two years after these changes: "there are limits to how far the EPRDF can move away from its Marxist-Leninist origins. On one hand, it has accepted the presence of a national bourgeoisie, on the other it has made clear its continuing support for the development of an autonomous national economy in which the state retains a major role. Moreover, in such key areas as national

self-determination, land tenure, federalism, the vanguard status of the TPLF and EPRDF, support for the peasants, and lukewarm attitude to pluralism and civil society, the ruling party has not shifted position" (Medhane Tadesse and Young 2003).

Rather than a genuine renewal and audit of the party's performance, the main feature of the exercise was the demotion of Kuma Damaksa of the OPDO, the imprisonment of Abate Kisho of SEPDF, the resignation of the former Ethiopean president Negasso Gidada, and with the assistance of the ANDM, the empowering of Meles. These expulsions made it possible for Meles, who had become the darling of some sections of the West, to expand the country's military cooperation with the US and brought it increasingly into the US and Western security network. Given its overwhelmingly dominant political and military position in the country, opposition outside the party did not pose a serious threat, and few of the party dissidents wanted open conflict. The party thus united around Meles and this ensured that its problems could be attributed to the displaced dissidents, the changes he introduced would set Ethiopia on the right course, and no real evaluation would take place.

The unification around Meles also ensured that genuine problems of political direction, relations with the increasingly disaffected and growing urban population, and international relations were left to Meles and his advisors. These tensions came to the fore during the 2005 national elections in which 192 protestors were killed and 50,000 youth were arrested by the Ethiopian security forces. Meles's response was that this was not a political problem, but due to youth unemployment and economic disaffection. Against this background, he announced the goal of rapid economic development through state led development. In fact, this approach was already being implemented (Tadesse Medhane 2016), but under Meles it was largely guided by the experience of the rapidly industrializing states of Southeast Asia and not the Soviet Union.

The results of EPRDF state led development have been impressive: from 2000 to 2013 Ethiopia's annual per capita growth rate has averaged about 10 percent or almost double that of sub-Saharan Africa and life expectancy has increased from 52 years in 2000 to 63 in 2011. And while Ethiopia had one of the highest rates of poverty in the world in 2000 with 56 percent of its people living below USD 1.25 a day, by 2011 that figure had dropped to 31 percent (Hill and Eyasu Tsehaye 2014). Other social indices are equally impressive. The World Bank found that "Agricultural growth drove reductions in poverty, bolstered by pro-poor spending on basic services" and that 60 percent of the national budget was allocated to sectors of the economy that favor poor people (Hill and Tsehaye 2014, 17). Consistent with the EPRDF's claim to represent the interests of the peasantry, poverty reduction was almost exclusively in the countryside. These achievements, however, have been denied or ignored by critics of the regime. Since coming to power, the EPRDF contended that Ethiopia would disintegrate if poverty was not overcome. Front leaders also believe it would have to govern for decades to ensure the implementation of the necessary economic policies to secure a genuine transformation for the country, a policy that is inconsistent with notions of pluralism, competitive elections, and the regular transfer of power. Moreover, and unlike the proscriptions of economic orthodoxy, these achievements were not due to an unconstrained free market, but to high levels of government investment, projects, and planning.

However, rising living standards have not dampened discontent, which peaked again in 2016 over the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromo lands. Land grabbing for real estate speculation and industrial use had caused conflicts in various parts of Oromia and these problems came to the fore when Oromo farmers on the outskirts of the national capital were

victimized. The problem began as a result of the arrogance and incompetence of administrators of the central government who were so anxious that land be made available for industrial development that they did not follow constitutional provisions to consult the Oromo regional government whose lands were needed or the municipal government of Addis Ababa. It also became apparent that OPDO officials were complicit in the extortion.

In a context where the government was increasingly distrusted, this administrative issue became a major political problem as Oromos claimed their fundamental rights were being denied. The government responded to their grievances by shooting hundreds of demonstrators, arresting thousands more, declaring martial law, and bringing the army on to the streets, thus exacerbating the problem. Meanwhile, Amhara in their regional state had their own grievances that included claims of Tigrayan dominance and the incorporation of the territory of Walkait into neighboring Tigray. They, too, went to the streets to protest and were shot. Probably more alarming for the EPRDF leadership was fear that the Amhara demonstrations were encouraged, or at least not discouraged, by the regional government. While the prevailing narrative maintains that Tigray benefited from domination of the national government and the EPRDF, Tigrayans complained of their expulsion from the Amhara region and the abuses and political marginalization they experienced in Oromia.

Apart from unleashing the security forces, the government responded by conducting hundreds of in-house appraisals, carrying out a massive purge, particularly of the OPDO, and holding out the possibility of further devolution of authority. As was the case after 2005, the government claimed that youth unemployment was a contributing factor to the problem and diverted more state resources to overcoming it. It promised better governance, reform of state institutions, appointment of non-party members to the cabinet, and other measures of a largely technical nature.[18] But these measures did not dampen the distrust in the government, just as raising living standards did not bring the EPRDF support.

The government's critics were not united, with some attributing the problem to national federalism and others to state led development, but collectively they emphasized EPRDF authoritarianism, TPLF domination, and the need for democratic change. Critics accused the EPRDF of being elitist and opaque, running roughshod over competing political organizations, having scant respect for elections, controlling parliament (of the 547 MPs in the current House of Representatives only 1 belonged to an opposition party and 1 to an independent party), having a fetish about control, opposing the emergence of an independent judiciary, viewing urban dwellers and middle class Ethiopians as potential enemies, and assuming a proprietorial position over the peasantry.[19] EPRDF policy successes included the raising living standards, increasing educational levels, and improving opportunities served to create a growing class of people disaffected at their political marginalization. While cultural diversity was encouraged, political pluralism was given short-shrift and independent voices in civil society, the media, and trade unions were repressed by the EPRDF. The state was crucial to the EPRDF in similar fashion to that of the Bolsheviks. The situation is analogous to that described by Gramsci (Gramsci 1992, 873) who wrote, "the state was everything, yet civil society was still primordial and gelatinous."

The authoritarianism tendencies of the EPRDF was a genuine concern, but the demand for democratic change is problematic. First, the kind of democracy proposed—liberal democracy—has been radically revised under the impetus of neoliberalism and lost much of

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[18] Ethiopian Prime Mister Speech to the parliament, October 10, 2016.
[19] See e.g. Ottaway (1995), Gudina (2003) and Aalan (2006).

its liberating character. Second, it is a product of the advanced capitalist states and cannot be translated wholesale to Ethiopia as Abiy is discovering. Neoliberalism is not just a means by which the economy is organized, but also involves increasingly undemocratic forms of governance. The notion that the only means to achieve development is for peripheral states to adopt the institutions and practices of the West was the by-word of modernization theory in the 1960s. It subsequently fell out of favor because of its blatant Eurocentricism, but again came to the fore in the late 1970s and 80s under the guise of neoliberalism, which held that privatization of state assets, floating currencies, rejection of economic justice, and the like are prerequisites to achieving development.

In practice, this meant elections served as a means for the orderly circulation of elites, the role of governments was reduced as decisions were increasingly made by corporations beyond public purview, national sovereignty was undermined as governments were made beholden to the Bretton Woods institutions and international trade agreements, and everyday life was increasingly subject to the laws of the market and commodification. Former US Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, gave the game away when he declared that elections do not matter much because thanks to globalization the world is governed by market forces, not elected representatives. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West rejected long established notions of economic justice and equality while private enterprise was held to be the foundation of democracy (Abrahamsen 2000). The growing inequalities within states and between states were legitimized and held to be a necessary product of development, while socialism was viewed as antithetical to democracy and associated with a failed Soviet model.

The EPRDF was correct to view neoliberalism as inappropriate for a poverty-stricken Ethiopia. But issues of accountability, the authoritarian character of the state, and the EPRDF's hegemonic position in the government could not be brushed aside simply because the model of governance being pressed on it by the West and its elite supporters in the country were not suitable. To be clear, the EPRDF's endorsement and pursuit of national self-determination, national rights, economic justice, and equality are all critical components of democracy, especially when it is appreciated that historically democracy was understood to be a process to advance the interests of the poor, the disenfranchised, and the nationally marginalized. But genuine democracy involves the widest possible popular engagement and empowerment, respect for basic human rights, and does not involve the protection of powerful interests, all of which characterized EPRDF governance.

The EPRDF rejected liberal democracy, but failed to develop, refine, and press alternative means of accountability, such as gim gema, that had been widely employed to critically assess programs, leadership, and the personal conduct of its members (Young 1997a). Gim gema became a cornerstone of the TPLF's practice of governance and after 1991 was introduced into the various institutions of the state. TPLF leaders believed that gim gema would ensure that the movement maintained its revolutionary ideals and not succumb to the temptations of state power. But the TPLF never had the power or the level of commitment to fully introduce gim gema into the federal government and civil service, therefor it was never given a legal basis or refined in response to the new conditions of administering a state (Tadesse Medhane and Young 2003). As one senior TPLF cadre noted, party members were receptive to gim gema and personal criticism during the armed struggle because they had little to lose materially, but after victory careers and social standing could be threatened and

this potentially revolutionary tool has become formalistic and an instrument of management (Medhane and Young 2003).

Notions like gim gema were a product of the revolutionary past and, together with the Bolshevik thinkers that inspired the TPLF and EPRDF, became a source of embarrassment. The EPRDF rejected neoliberalism but at the same time endorsed its two main principles—capitalism and global economic integration. The EPRDF spurned liberal democracy, but its alternative was a thinly disguised authoritarianism. The high moral standards of the TPLF during the armed struggle were rooted in socialist values, but since the commitment to capitalism in 1991 public morality was increasingly shaped by the market, and the EPRDF looked to technocratic leadership and managerial systems to contain corruption and rent-seeking with, at best, mixed results.

While it would be a mistake to blame Meles entirely for the problems faced by the EPRDF, he did end the system of collegial leadership, which provided a measure of control over him and ensured open debate at the highest levels of the party and government. Even his admirers cannot defend the underhanded means he used to force long serving and loyal cadres to leave the TPLF and EPRDF. He replaced experienced cadres with technocrats, apparently assuming that since he had provided the development map the country could safely be put on auto-pilot. This ensured there would be no audit of the EPRDF and debate would be restricted to technical measures. Meles was widely respected but never popular in the country.

Although condemned by international human rights organizations he was admired by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and former US President Bill Clinton. Meles's desire for international acceptance led him to cooperate with Western security forces and align Ethiopia's foreign policy with the US Global War on Terror and join George Bush's "coalition of the willing" in the war against Iraq. To his credit, Meles inaugurated *Metekakat*, or leadership replacement, which led to the retirement of many among Tigrayan political and security elite. It also meant that upon Meles's death in 2012 Hailemariam Desalegn, a Pentecostal Christian and a member of one of Ethiopia's most disadvantaged communities, the Welayta, assumed power. But perhaps the biggest failing of Meles was marginalizing potential challengers, constructing a government and ruling party dependent on him, turning his back on the pursuit of class politics, and laying the basis for the EPRDF's ideological confusion and displacement.

Abiy was able to come to power because of a tactical alliance between the Amhara and Oromo components of the four parties that made up the EPRDF to isolate the TPLF. Once in power Abiy ended the state of hostilities with Eritrea for which he gained the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, although by the end of 2020 the borders between Eritrea and Ethiopia remained closed and there was no trade between the countries. He was successful, however, in establishing a pact with Eritrea's President Isais Afwerki, who also opposed national federalism because it threatened his unitary state, to fight the TPLF. Abiy's policy of reconciling with foreign based armed groups weakened the central state, made parts of the country ungovernable and led to what he claimed was an attempted coup in June 2019 when an Amhara extremist officer who had been dismissed in 2009 for an earlier attempted coup and then rehabilitated by Abiy, killed the Ethiopian chief of defense staff and a handful of other senior officials.[20]

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[20] New York Times, June 23, 2019.

Apart from Tigray, Abiy has faced major problems in Oromia where the central government has lost control of western parts of the state and jailed many from the recently returned armed groups as well as civilian party leaders, while 81 civilians were killed in June 2020 after the popular activist musician Hachalu Hundessa was killed by the army. Many of these problems stem from the disillusionment of Oromos who have discovered to their dismay that Abiy who they had viewed as one of their own supports the centrist government that generations of Oromos have opposed. Having lost his ethnic constituency, Abiy largely depends on the Amhara elites who he elevated to senior positions in the security services, Amhara militia angered that the TPLF has taken over disputed border lands, and state governments that are largely made up of allies he has placed in power. Although Abiy has made clear that the main point of contention is to replace TPLF supported national federalism with a unitary state, there is no indication that most Ethiopians want a return to the centrist government that produced countless national rebellions under the imperial system and the Derg.

Almost from the day he took power, Abiy viewed the TPLF as the main threat to his regime and long before war broke out, he had dismissed Tigrayan ministers and officials in the government, Tigrayan heads of the army and national security, and many generals. Things reached a crisis when Abiy, who has never been elected by the Ethiopian people, indefinitely postponed national and state elections scheduled for September 2020, because of Covid-19 according to his allies, or because he would lose claim his critics. Responding as strict constitutionalists or in an effort to embarrass Abiy, the TPLF went ahead with elections in Tigray, won resoundingly, and as a result neither the central government, or the state government recognized one another.

Long before Abiy took power there was a virtual consensus of the need to reform, but not end, the system of national federalism. EPRDF policies had served to increase the standards of living of many Ethiopians, but this economic advance empowered the central state and threatened to undermine the EPRDF's decentralized national based federation. Meanwhile, economic development gave rise to classes in the towns, cities, and countryside that employed the nationalism that EPRDF policies encouraged to attack the government. Youths in Oromia and the Amhara region launched attacks on the TPLF and Tigrayans, shutting off road transport to Tigray for weeks while the central government did nothing. The central government also did little to protect Tigrayans living outside their home state, mostly in the Amhara region, from being killed and forced off their land. Meanwhile, Oromos charged Tigrayans along with Amhara of expanding into their lands during the feudal era and complained of TPLF domination of the EPRDF.

Like the Soviet Union, in the wake of Meles's death Ethiopian governance was in need of reform, but the changes pressed by Abiy together with his anti-TPLF and by extension anti-Tigrayan campaign have led to war. And the longer the war continues the more that central government troops will be reassigned from locations, particularly in Oromia, to the Tigray battle fronts and thus provide opportunities for armed groups in these areas, the more that ethno-nationalist groups elsewhere in the country led by the OLF will conclude that should the TPLF be defeated their hopes for achieving a decentralized Ethiopian state will die, and that differences between these groups and the TPLF can be overcome and bring their collective weight against the Abiy government. Instead of defeating the TPLF as a means to defeat national federalism, Abiy's war could instead bring about the disintegration of Ethiopia or result in an even more decentralized federation.

3.6   Conclusion

Consideration of the EPRDF's system of national federalism and approach to the nation-state has largely taken place within the confines of Western social science, but this chapter has proceeded from the assumption that much can be gained from examining these issues in light of the studies of the Bolshevik leaders and early developments of the system in the Soviet Union. Not only were the TPLF and other political parties that emerged from the Ethiopian student movement strongly influenced by the Bolsheviks on the national question but the imperial Ethiopia they were dedicated to overthrowing bore striking comparisons to the Tsarist Russian empire overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

There are, however, limits to these comparisons, notably the early Bolsheviks were largely Russians dedicated to dismantling a Russian constructed empire, while the leaders of the TPLF were drawn from a community that had been junior partners in an Amhara dominated feudal state. While the Bolsheviks smashed the Tsarist state and replaced it with their own as a means—they hoped—to realize their objective of socialism, upon coming to power the EPRDF dropped its commitment to a transformative project, endorsed capitalism, and largely operated through the existing central state. While national federalism was an end in itself for the EPRDF, for the Bolsheviks it was a way station on the road to socialism.

Despite, not because of, its approach to the national question, the Soviet Union collapsed, and thus ensued a long period of decline and suffering for many people of the former federation. Unless Ethiopia can overcome its problems, it could face a similar fate. The suffering in the states of the former Soviet Union was due to the adoption of neoliberalism and acceptance of liberal democracy, the solutions professed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for Ethiopia. But what set the Soviet Union on the course to that catastrophe was a flawed reform process and one that did not address growing economic inequalities. The reform process launched by Gorbachev was desperately needed, long delayed, and unavoidable, but its catastrophic results were due to the fact that the Soviet Union had long since betrayed its revolutionary origins (Furr 2011).

Although the EPRDF leadership contended that ideological concerns were resolved in 1991 with the acceptance of capitalism and the Front and its components did not take up ideological issues again until the advent of Abiy, there remained a tension, if not a contradiction, between its commitment to capitalism and the remnants of a leftist past in its orientation, party structure, policies, and commitment to the peasants. TPLF and EPRDF fears about the response of the West to its leftist ideological orientation in 1991 were understandable given the triumphalism of a resurgent West claiming victory over socialism and prepared to use its political, economic, and even military power against dissenting third world regimes. That global power continues to be a major constraint on the ability of peripheral states to formulate policies that meet the needs of their people, not serve the interests of the capitalist metropoles, and maintain national sovereignty.

But that was then, and the global context now is less constraining. The unipolar world that existed in 1991 has undergone radical changes and the West no longer poses the threat it once did. China is a major player on the international stage in both the economic and political spheres. Having forged close relations with Ethiopia, China ascribed it a major role in the African link to the China's One Belt One Road project. The European Union is in crisis, and in the aftermath of the election of Donald Trump the alliance between Europe and

the United States, which served as the bedrock of the post-Second World War international order, is decidedly shaky.

But what has most altered the global context is the growing international opposition to neoliberalism in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and this has been acerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. To be sure, neoliberalism remains entrenched and continues to be endorsed by Western social democratic parties. But socialism has always been a broad house and one that more closely conforms to the pre-Abiy EPRDF commitment to state led development, land nationalization, and a Bolshevik inspired national federalism than adherence to capitalism and global economic integration. Moreover, any version of socialism must have a base in the working class, yet that class barely existed when the EPRDF assumed power in 1991. A generation later, a working class is emerging in Ethiopia, opening up a range of political opportunities.

Related to this was the confusion that proceeded from EPRDF's attempt to be all things for all the people. Embracing capitalists and the working class often led to repression of workers and unions and undermined the Front's relationship with the working class, which should have been at the core of a party committed to fostering rapid and equitable development. Indicative of the problem is the fact that fewer than 10 percent of workers in the expanding textile industry are unionized, and there is no national minimum wage in the private sector (Rosen 2016). While the World Bank drew attention to the success of the EPRDF in dramatically reducing extreme poverty, even before the advent of Hailemariam and Abiy there were also indications of a society becoming increasingly unequal, one being the 108 percent growth in the number of millionaires in Ethiopia between 2007 and 2013, the highest growth rate of this group in Africa.[21] This figure is explained by both the phenomenal levels of growth in the country as well as privatizations. The biggest beneficiary of the privatizations—amounting to 60 percent of all government privatizations—was Mohammed Hussein al-Amoudi, an Ethiopian-Saudi dual citizen and richest man in the country, whose close relations to the government, particularly Meles Zenawi, had long been a matter of controversy and has called into question the competitiveness of these actions.[22] Al-Amoudi was one of many rich and powerful businessmen arrested by the Saudi Arabian government in mid-November 2017.

Equally misplaced was the EPRDF claim to represent the interests of both rich and poor peasants, something Giday Zera Tsion warned against in the 1980s (Young 1997b, 137–138). While rich peasants did not pose a threat during the armed struggle, development in recent years generated growing economic differentiation and produced disaffected youth who proved crucial in forcing the resignation of Hailemariam and bringing Abiy to power. But there is little indication that Abiy's program of liberal government and a free-market economy will staunch this disaffection. Indeed, while he touched all the nationalist and anti-Tigray and anti-TPLF nerves in the country with his November 2020 war, the war and his efforts to replace the developmental state with market-based capitalism will produce economic polarization, uneven development, and increased tensions. To be sure, a crisis was already emerging because the EPRDF had rejected its commitment to politics that were "ethno-national in form, class in content," in favor of a devotion to programs and policies that are ethno-national in both form and content.[23]

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[21] New World of Wealth, nw-wealth.com
[22] https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08ADDISABABA82_a.html, accessed February 3, 2020.
[23] This insight is to be credited to Assefa Fiseha an email to the author, November 19, 2017.

While political reforms were needed even before the displacement of the EPRDF, Abiy's rhetorical commitment to democratic pluralism should be treated with skepticism. In its Western version, pluralism recognizes a plurality of groups, interests, and associations in society, but crucially does not acknowledge their power imbalances and the possibility of them being subverted by foreign, particularly Western, interests as has been the case many so-called color revolutions. Genuine pluralism means the existence of a rough equilibrium of power between contending interests and social forces, something which does not exist in Western capitalist societies (Miliband 1989, 29). In any case what Abiy considers democratic government to date has involved power being centralized in the prime minister's office, over-ruling parliament, indefinitely postponing elections, and replacing most state governments with his allies. He also eliminated virtually all Tigrayans from government, the security services, and government corporations, charging them with corruption, although none have been convicted.

Critics from the right argued that the EPRDF's version of national federalism would bring about the destruction of the country upon coming to power in 1991, but instead it preserved the unity of Ethiopia when faced with disintegration after the overthrow of the Derg. Furthermore, it played a critical role in ending the heavy hand of centralization under the Haile Selassie and Derg regimes, gave new life to long suppressed national cultures, and served as a base to develop regional economies. But this achievement was threatened by a recentralization as a result of the developmental state under Meles and the near collapse of the state under the weak leadership of Hailemariam Desalegn, which led to his replacement by Dr. Abiy Ahmed in April 2018.

The national federalism of the early TPLF was part and parcel of a socialist project, but upon coming to power the EPRDF jettisoned that project even while ascribing to a version of the Bolshevik system of national federalism. The Bolsheviks and the Communist Parties of China and Vietnam differentiated the peasantry and explicitly aligned with the poor and middle peasants. In contrast, the TPLF viewed the peasantry as a homogeneous class and did not make common cause with their natural allies among the poor and middle peasants and that left them susceptible to the nationalist appeals of rich peasants and others. The TPLF focus on the peasantry was appropriate given the under-developed state of the Tigrayan and Ethiopian working class. But Ethiopia has been developing a working class and an expanding population of urban poor, and by not championing their interests they too were prone to nationalist appeals of the growing middle class. The Bolsheviks were committed to advancing the marginalized national communities but fearing that nationalism could be used to undermine the state they espoused class-based politics.

The Soviet federation ultimately failed, but Bolshevik support for the rights of oppressed nations was far in advance of the Western capitalist states which until recently worked to eliminate national minorities in their construction of a nation-state. The TPLF/EPRDF and its system of national federalism may also be assigned to history's dustbin, but a reformed version of it offers the best hope that Ethiopia will not follow the experience of the Soviet Union and disintegrate.

Chapter 4
The Afar
John Markakis

> They are taking our soil; we don't know why
> They are digging our land; we don't know why
> Motorcars overwhelm our animals
> Foreign languages overwhelm our language.

> Afar song (circa 1970s)

This chapter will present a detailed case study designed to illustrate the impact of factors highlighted in the chapter "The Crisis of the State in the Horn of Africa" on people in the periphery, including their identity, livelihood, security, welfare, and their response to ruling elite initiatives for nation-state building and socio-economic development. Specifically, the study will examine one ethno-regional group—the Afar—selected due to geography, history, ethnicity, mode of production, and distinct relationship with the center of state power. While these parameters distinguish it from other groups in the periphery, it shares the subordination, marginalization, and alienation that are their common experience. Because the Afar experience with state initiatives has a history unmatched by others in the lowland periphery, an analysis of this group's history and current situation proves helpful in anticipating their future.

The lowlands zone in Ethiopia covers about 78 million hectares, making up about 61 percent of the country's total area. The area has an elevation up to 1,500 meters above sea level, and the general climate is broadly categorized as arid (64%), semi-arid (21%) and sub-humid (15%). The average annual rainfall is less than 700 millimeters, and is unreliable and erratic. The temperature during most months of the year reaches about 30 degrees Celsius, rising to around 45 degrees Celsius during the months of June to August. Evapotranspiration is very high, reaching up to 250 millimeters per year. Low annual rainfall coupled with high evapotranspiration results in a critical moisture deficit and poor prospects for rain-fed cultivation. Throughout history, this terrain has been the domain of mobile pastoralism and remains largely so; however, this mode of production now faces extinction.

After the secession of southern Sudan, Ethiopia had the largest land mass in the Horn, the largest population (about 90 million in 2015), the largest lowland region, and the largest livestock herd in Africa. The bulk of the livestock is held by mobile pastoralists who belong to some 30 ethno-regional communities, representing approximately eight million people, according to official population statistics. Pastoralism is not included as a category in the national census; therefore, this estimate is considered low. The Afar homeland lies entirely within the arid zone. The Afar regional state population is given as 1.4 million, the majority of whom are pastoralists.

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Geography isolated the Afar to an unusual degree until recently, and has more profoundly impacted their identity than any other factor. Their homeland, on the eastern edge of the continent facing the Red Sea, is commonly described as the "most inhospitable" in the region. The Afar Depression in the north sinks below sea level in places. It holds the record for the highest mean annual temperature recorded on earth, and it is covered with sunbaked deserts, salt flats, active volcanoes, and bubbling lava lakes. Salt, exported to the Ethiopian plateau, provided the Afar with a rare link to the world outside. The southern part of the Afar homeland is crossed by the Awash River, the only river that drains the eastern side of the plateau, and irrigates a broad valley where irrigated cultivation is possible. The Awash River is the mainstay of the Afar pastoralist economy, and also supports cultivation in its inland delta where it forms lakes and swamps but never reaches the sea. The potential for commercial cultivation here created an opening for strangers to enter the Afar world and launch an ongoing process of forced transformation. In the second half of the twentieth century, once the Ethiopian state had claimed sovereignty over the region and controlled it effectively, outsiders began to farm the Afar land on a commercial level.

Afar was part of the vast territory incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire during the imperialist Scramble for Africa. During this period, the Christian kingdom on the northern plateau, otherwise known as Abyssinia, massively expanded, doubling its territory and population by conquering what is now the southern half of the country. Typical of pastoralist societies, the Afar had never created a state and had no history of political unity. They had established a more centralized and hierarchical form of government in five sultanates, but four of them were dismantled in the Scramble for Africa. At this point, the Afar Triangle was divided between Italy, France, and Ethiopia, whose share included the Awash River Valley. Only the Aussa Sultanate in Ethiopia retained its coherence and a degree of autonomy until the demise of the imperial regime in 1974.

Pastoralist societies do not lack governance, laws, institutions, or leaders. Maada, the Afar customary law is precise, comprehensive, and efficient because it is known and respected by members of the community. Generally, pastoralists take a limited view of traditional authority (*makabantu*), which is exercised only in conjunction with a council of elders, and this particularly true for the Afar. Every level of Afar social organization has its chief (*Aba*) whose authority is thus circumscribed. The heart of Afar social order is the clan, which is ruled by its elders.

The colonial carve-up did not inconvenience the pastoralists unduly. The Italians and French limited their presence to the coast, and Ethiopians claimed a distant lordship over the hinterland without setting foot in the lowlands. The Italians were first to spot the agricultural potential of the Awash River Valley when they occupied Ethiopia in the 1930s. The Opera Nazionale Combattenti, the agency charged with promoting the settling of Italian farmers in Africa, viewed the Awash as a promising site and began their agricultural endeavors in the Gewane area (Larebo 1994, 106). However, their stay was short and nothing came out of it apart from the present town. The Afar population at the time was estimated at about 60,000 in Ethiopia territory, 19,270 in Eritrea, and 12,341 in the French colony (Trimingham 1952, 172).

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After the Second World War, the imperial government made its first plans for economic development through import substitution and increased exports. The Awash River Valley (whose three sections are distinguished according elevation—Upper, Middle, and Lower) was chosen for obvious reasons, but mainly its potential for large scale, commercial irrigation. Its proximity to Addis Ababa and a string of emerging towns to the south was another advantage, as was the Addis Ababa railway line that crossed the valley. Also advantageous was the fact that, here, land and water were available at no cost because under Ethiopian law pastoralist land was considered unoccupied and classified as state domain; therefore, it could be disposed by state fiat and offered to investors for free along with the water of the river crossing it.

In the 1950s, the first invitation, namely to establish sugarcane plantations and processing factories in the Wonji plain in the Upper Valley, was extended to a Dutch firm with extensive experience in colonial Indonesia. Some 6,000 hectares were cleared for sugarcane, displacing the local Gilo herders as well as many Karrayu cultivators who were promised land as compensation. Emperor Haile Selassie was present at the inauguration of the Matahara Sugar Estate, and the Karrayu people complained to him about the loss of their land without compensation. The Emperor ordered that 8,000 hectares should be given to them. They were still waiting for it when he was toppled from the throne in 1974.

The Upper Valley lies outside the land of the Afar, and they were not directly affected. A few years later, the British firm Mitchell Cotts negotiated an agreement with the imperial government to cultivate cotton in the Middle and Lower Valleys for domestic use. The government thought it prudent to inform the Afar, whose acquiescence was considered essential, given their warlike reputation. Sultan Ali Mirah, whose traditional authority over the affected region was recognized in return for an annual tribute of 2,000 litres of ghee, was summoned to a meeting in the capital and asked to facilitate the project by approving the land grant for the cotton plantations. "I will not give Afar land to the foreigners. You'll have to take it by force," was his initial response (Soulé 2005, 74). Admonished by government officials, he changed his mind the following day. He became the prototype peripheral elite, and went on to enjoy a long tenure with status and wealth spanning three regime changes in Addis Ababa.

The Awash Valley Authority (AVA) was set up in 1962 to promote development in the Middle and Lower Awash Valleys. By 1975, the total irrigated area covered some 57,000 hectares, one-third of the estimated potential cultivable land in the valley, nearly every square meter of it covered in cotton. The investors were a mixed group of foreign firms and private persons, operating on their own or in partnership with the state. Among them was Sultan Ali Mirah, who turned into an entrepreneur overnight. Together with his family and clan elders, he set up 2,500 small plots of less than 10 hectares each and an Aussa Farmers' Association. Free labor was provided by clansmen. When world cotton prices doubled in the early 1970s, the small group of Afar investors became wealthy overnight.

The impact on the pastoralist economy was far reaching. Loss of pastureland caused overstocking in the remaining grazing areas and overgrazing as a result. Plantations blocked access to the river that provided precious refuge for men and animals during the dry season. Hydroelectric dams in the Upper Valley reduced flooding, affecting pasture growth further down the river. With abundant stagnant water, malaria, a common scourge, now became the leading cause of death for the population. There was no compensation for the loss of land or water. Nor did the Afar benefit from the introduction of commercial agriculture. There was

no similarity between the traditional pastoralist economy and the modern plantation system. Very few Afar, other than the Ali Mirah coterie, took direct part in the cotton production, neither as investors for lack of capital nor as employees for lack of skills. Under the AVA program, only a few hundred Afar were settled.

There were 150,000 persons involved in 11 irrigated projects in the valley, of whom 100,000 were non-Afar. Some 10,000 were administrators and technicians, all of them high-landers (Kloos and Adugna 1989, 139). Poorly paid, unskilled seasonal labor was provided by destitute Oromo peasants who came down from the plateau, while Afar worked mostly as guards to prevent herds from invading plantation land. The decline of the traditional economy became obvious during the drought and famine of the early 1970s, when the Afar lost the bulk of their cattle and thousands of human lives without aid ever reaching them. "This destruction of both livestock and grazing areas is of such magnitude and persistence, that the ability of the Afar society to survive as significant pastoralists is endangered," warned a contemporary witness (Cossins 1981, 11).

Land in Afar was held communally and was shared equally by all members of the clan. Authority to distribute land and settle issues relating to it was the prerogative of clan elders. Now land was becoming a commodity to be traded in the market and people's perception of its value was changing. Claims to land became more exclusive, and conflicts over land within and between clans became more frequent. Afar elders exploited their authority to distribute land by renting plots to outsiders and sharing the money with the clansmen. On the one hand, this scheme was viewed favorably by many, particularly the young, who had no inclination to take up cultivation on their own, and Afar participation in the new economy was very limited. On the other hand, elder involvement in land transactions with investors opened possibilities for abuse and self-enrichment, illustrated by the Ali Mirah initiative, giving rise to complaints and resentment that damaged the abuser's status status in the community.

Population displacement and shifting land caused by increasing pressure on land and water worsened Afar relations with their immediate neighbors. On the border of the Upper Valley they clashed with the Karrayu Oromo, themselves displaced by the sugar plantations in Wonji and Metahara. On the opposite side of the valley, the old conflict with the Issa Somali escalated, eventually becoming a major problem for the central government.

<div align="center">*</div>

The overthrow of Haile Selassie's regime in the mid-1970s was the result of a social revolution that eliminated the imperial ruling class together with the land tenure system that was its economic foundation. Abruptly converted to scientific socialism, the military junta, known as the Derg (committee), that seized power at the center of the state proceeded to nationalize the economy, including all land. They also confiscated all investment in commercial agri-culture, quickly putting an end to the rise of an Afar land-owning upper class. The latter did not take this latest dictate from the center passively and resisted. Afar warriors chased state officials out of the region and blocked the road to Assab, where Ethiopia's sole refinery was located, causing fuel shortages in the capital. Ali Mirah fled across the border to Djibouti, and an Afar Liberation Front (ALF) led by his sons rose to confront the Derg. Government forces soon cleared the road to Assab, but security in the region was never entirely restored. Commercial cultivation in the Middle and Lower Valleys ceased. When the military regime

collapsed in 1991, the Afar looted the plantations, destroyed infrastructure and machinery, and left the rest to decay. Not long after, the successor regime intervened with their own policy for the exploitation of the region's resources.

The 1975 Land Reform marked the first time that pastoralist rights were given legal recognition in Ethiopia. Pastoralist "possessory" rights over their land were recognized, and their isolation and marginalization in the state and society was officially noted. It was promised that "special attention" would be given to raise their political, economic, and cultural life and "to equalize these nationalities with the rest of the nationalities in Ethiopia." With the establishment of a Settlement Authority in 1976, the regime laid down the principles that have governed the state's policy vis-à-vis pastoralism ever since: resettlement and agro-pastoralism. Replacing the derogatory term *zelan* (wandering herder) for *arbdo ader* (livestock producer) was a symbolic gesture.

The AVA and its projects in the Awash Valley came under critical scrutiny by the Derg, and in 1977 its scope was limited solely to development of water resources while other state agencies took the initiative for development in the valley. Sugar production on the Upper Valley was nationalized and its management was taken over by the newly-formed Ethiopian Sugar Development Agency. Famine on a biblical scale in the early 1980s highlighted the plight of a country with a 2.9 annual rate of population growth and a 6.9 annual rate of growth of per capita food demand. By this time, the Derg's program to boost agricultural production through collectivization had proven a failure, and a desperate search for an alternative was on. The Ethiopian Valleys Development Studies Authority (EVDSA) was formed in 1987 to prepare the ground for the utilization of the potential for large scale irrigated cultivation in the fourteen major river valleys of Ethiopia. The Awash Valley Authority was integrated into the new body.

In the meantime, the regime had proceeded with the transformation of the Afar economy according to its own terms. Former plantations became state farms, small dams were built to produce more cultivable land, and improved mechanized production methods were introduced; all of these projects were to produce cotton, not food. This need for food was addressed by the people themselves who organized in settlement schemes. The land claimed by the Ali Mirah family and Afar elders was distributed to the clansmen in a program designed to convert them to sedentary agriculture. Villagization, a program pursued by the regime on a country-wide scale, was part of the scheme.

The settlement program was designed, managed, and heavily subsidized by the state and proved neither profitable nor sustainable. One report described it as a "welfare programme" (Kello 1989, 105). Three successive livestock development programs were designed for lowland regions, including the Afar Valley. They were designed to promote the integration of livestock production in the highlands through a variety of inputs intended to improve livestock quality and transport routes to link it with markets in the highlands. These programs had the same fate as many others of the kind carried out in the Horn. A report by the Ethiopian Red Cross at the end of this period remarked: "The Afar feel their way of life has failed in terms of the viability of their pastoral economy, and politically in the maintenance of their regional autonomy and in competition with their regional adversaries" (Ethiopian Red Cross (ERC) 1988, 4).

The list of proffered reasons for the abject failure of pastoralist development in the entire Horn region is long. The design of these programs did not assist pastoralism by adjusting to the demands of the times within the frame of its own mode of production but rather co-

ercively transformed it to fit into a model of development that, in fact, had no place for it. "Pastoral production systems are a highly efficient response to an environment which began to disappear in the early twentieth century and has been disappearing at an accelerating rate ever since" (Dyson-Hudson 1985, 173).

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The collapse of the military regime in 1991 signaled a second round of profound socio-economic and political transformation in Ethiopia within a quarter of a century. The successor regime of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) is a coalition formed and led by an insurgent ethno-regional movement, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). It began as a self-declared radical Marxist group, but was compelled to lower its ideological sights in order to gain Western support, ostensibly converting to the free market and democracy. It also committed itself to a federal system of government that promised to shift the balance of state power towards the periphery. In the following years the regime took steps to realize these commitments, yet twenty-five years later it is still far from its goal.

The EPRDF's economic policy retained a major role for what it called the "developmental state," which in effect restricted the space allowed for private enterprise and the free market to function. Similarly, the concept of a "people's democracy," which the EPRDF claimed as its political guide, served to rationalize severe limitations imposed on rival political actors that rendered them impotent. Federalism in practice turned out to be the transfer of administrative functions from the center to the periphery without a meaningful shift in the balance of power between them. The task of administering the periphery was entrusted to a new class of local elite, allied and entirely dependent on the center and bereft of the economic and political resources needed to function autonomously.

The federation was organized along ethnic lines, with administrative boundaries drawn, as far as possible, to coincide with ethnic groups, whose identity and culture were recognized and reinforced through their use in administration, education, and political life. Federalism raised the profile of the lowland periphery and its pastoralist population in the national consciousness. The lowlanders were now administered by their own kinsmen, who constituted the new peripheral elite, free to use their own language, and to celebrate their own history and culture. The EPRDF also promised to close the development gap between the highland and the lowland regions, now called "emerging states," with special programs administered by the center.

Afar became one of nine regional states in the federation comprising the Awash Valley and the Afar Depression, and the Afar in Ethiopia finally got their wish to be united in a single administrative jurisdiction. Simultaneously, however, the colonial dismemberment of this nation was once more replicated be the rival state-building projects in the Horn. Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea in the 1960s had reunited this northernmost segment of the Afar nation with its kinsmen in the south, albeit separated by provincial boundaries. Despite repeated petitions by Afar notables, the imperial regime refused to merge it administratively with the Afar province, and the military regime rejected similar pleas to consolidate the Afar into one province. Eritrea's independence in 1993 restored the colonial map, and the northern segment was once again separated from the bulk of the Afar by an international border. With the rest of the Afar in Djibouti, this nation remained under three flags.

In the Awash Valley, the collapse of the military regime saw the abandonment of all projects for pastoralist settlement, the demolition and looting of infrastructure and machinery, and the return of much land to livestock pasturage. The capacity of the surviving state farms declined steadily due to lack of maintenance and failure to replace worn-out machinery, the silting of canals and clogging of locks after dredging ceased, and the lack of pesticides and insecticides. These problems were all due to loss of funding and direction from the center.

Land remained nationalized, but land earlier confiscated from private investors by the Derg was returned to the clans to use as they saw fit. Ali Mirah returned home and was able to reclaim some of the land confiscated by the military regime. Claiming credit for founding the Afar Liberation Front (ALF), his family became involved in the new political system, competing for local power under the banner of the ALF. It had initial success, and one of his son's became the first president of the Afar regional state. However, the ALF was not an EPRDF creation and refused to join the ruling coalition. It was eventually sidelined.

An Afar People's Democratic Organisation (APDO) was cobbled together, and the trusted former TPLF Afar veteran Ismail Ali Shiro was made the leader. Following a farcical election in 1995, he became region president and took charge of Afar affairs. He proved an able successor to Sultan Ali Mirah in the role of the peripheral elite, and went on to serve in that capacity for the next two decades, a national record for tenure in this office. Ali Mirah was compensated with the return of some 10,000 hectares of land in his homeland and a villa in Addis Ababa. Among his twelve sons and ten daughters several were appointed to ambassadorial and other official posts.

Initially, the new regime's policy for economic development focused on the transformation of the highland peasant economy to eliminate the country's perennial food shortage and dependence on food aid. Later dubbed the Agriculture Led Industrial Development plan, it was also expected to serve as the driver for agro-industrial development. It was a great effort to modernize a peasant mode of production that had changed little over the centuries. Ambitious programs, formulated by foreign experts and funded with foreign aid, were launched with great fanfare in the early 1990s to convince the peasantry to adopt new practices and imported inputs like fertilizer, improved seeds, and chemical pesticides. An army of trained agricultural agents was deployed to oversee implementation. The results were disappointing. The annual rate of growth in agriculture at 2.27 percent was an improvement on past performance, yet still below the rate of population growth of around 3 percent. The attempt to rely on peasant agriculture to spur development throughout the economy was abandoned.

It was a decade before the regime turned its attention to the perennial economic stagnation of the lowlands and pastoralism. Previously, it had concerned itself primarily with securing control over the state's perimeter by setting up political structures tailored to the ethnic federal format. Like the Westernized ruling elite throughout Africa, it ignored the traditional authority structures of pastoralist society and handed over administrative power to a new set of peripheral elite who organized overnight in wholly artificial political parties, clustered under the wings of the ruling coalition.

In the EPRDF's perception, traditional authority was considered a feudal remnant and was entirely ignored in the new federal structure. In Afar, as everywhere else, a centralized regional system of decision making and administration was imposed on a society whose affairs were managed by the elders until now. Traditional authority was not represented at the regional state level, and as a result it had no influence there. However, new state

structures took time to emerge, allowing chiefs and elders to continue administering local affairs, particularly in matters concerning land and justice.

Creating a modern administrative system in the Afar region proved difficult, especially due to the lack of educated and skilled manpower. Highlanders filled most of the posts, while Afar secondary school graduates were sent for training to the Civil Service College in Addis Ababa, an institution founded especially for this purpose. Upon their return, they were appointed to head administration departments, supported by experienced highlander deputies.

At the dawn of the twenty first century, the federal government launched a new development program that relied on two sectors to spur economic growth. The Growth and Transformation Plan (2010/11–2014/15) massively invested in infrastructural development and energy production, funded mainly with loans and aid from abroad. Dams to harness the country's hydroelectric potential and also support irrigated cultivation were the core of the program. Transport and communication were likewise targeted. Ethiopian bank loans, supplemented with funds from the Ethiopian diaspora, sparked a boom in urban construction for housing and tourist hotels that changed the face of Addis Ababa overnight and also began to transform regional state capitals. Urban employment reached unprecedented levels, trade thrived, and the economy scored rates of growth that gained Ethiopia fame as Africa's "economic miracle."

Belatedly, the Afar began to benefit from the economic upsurge. A new town, Samara, emerged on the road to Djibouti to serve as regional state capital, replacing Asaita, Ali Mirah's old seat. Several settlements on the road that served as truck stops expanded to service the increased volume of traffic. These roads later became a bone of contention between the Afar and their Somali neighbors and a perennial thorn in the central government's side. In line with the federal government's policy of upgrading services in all regional states, Samara acquired a university and hospital, while the regional administration strove to expand local education, health, and transport facilities.

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Having failed to turn peasant agriculture into the engine of economic development, the EPRDF turned its attention to the long-neglected lowlands at the end of the twentieth century. Three factors combined to transform the perception of the periphery from land of want to a future cornucopia. Technological advancements to restore fertility in such terrain was the first factor. Increased production was achieved through irrigation innovations, improved crops, fertilizers, pesticides, and modern methodology and machinery. The second factor was the steady increase in the price of foodstuff worldwide, the result of population growth in densely inhabited parts of the world, which attracted capital investment for commercial cultivation in sparsely populated areas in Africa and elsewhere. The dire need in the continent for more accessible and cheaper sources of energy was the third factor. The search for energy sources had been going on for some time. In Ethiopia, it was initiated by the imperial regime and concentrated in the southeastern Somali inhabited section of the periphery. It was continued by the military regime and succeeded in discovering significant gas deposits near the border with Somalia. The perpetual political instability and conflict in the area has not permitted the exploitation of this resource to this day. Exploration on a much wider scale began in the 1990s, with the participation of foreign capital from many countries─led

by China—in parts of the lowland periphery, none of which have come to fruition to date. The role of the lowlands in this context is highlighted by the fact that crop produce can be converted into a source of biofuel energy.

The EPRDF's initial statement of economic policy referred to nomadic regions as areas with special problems, and promised to "issue policies based on studies in order to alleviate the particular problems of these regions" (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1991). No studies or policies were produced, save for a statement a dozen years later, which referred to "phased voluntary sedenterization along the banks of the major rivers as the main direction of transforming pastoral societies into agro-pastoral systems, from mobility to sedentary life." The statement claimed that twenty districts of Afar were already settled (Ministry of Federal Affairs 2002).

The initial intervention in Afar, taken in the early 1990s, was to return the land confiscated by the Derg from private investors, outsiders, and Afar notables to the local people, to be distributed to the clansmen by the elders. The state-owned plantations remained under central government control. It was not long before the combination of cheap land, water and labor began to attract outsiders looking for land to invest in. Since it could not be bought outright, a land renting system was used, whereby the investor negotiated with clan elders to rent plots of land that fell within their jurisdiction to manage. Turning elders into agents in outsourcing land put them in a position to profit personally and to prefer renting clan land instead of encouraging their people, especially young men, to take up cultivation. Pastoralists themselves preferred to collect their share of the rent paid by the investor and to continue raising livestock. Neither the central government nor the region produced a land use policy, and the investors were allowed to use the land and the water as they chose. Environmental damage due to mismanagement of irrigation was one notable result.

The EPRDF also invited the NGO sector to assist the pastoralist sector to adapt to change, provided it "worked in line with government policies." In absence of such policies, NGOs were left free to improvise. Innumerable NGO programs designed to modernize the lowland economy and integrate pastoralism into the national economy followed. The programs covered the gamut of foreign assistance targets, including famine relief, health, education, support of vulnerable groups, and conflict resolution. Theoretically these programs were devoted to preserving pastoralism by adjusting to social change and participating in the modern market. Success was predicated on changing the wandering lifestyle of traditional pastoralism by anchoring men and animals to a settled location, i.e. agro-pastoralism. In effect, pastoralists were required to change their way of life to meet the requirements of the nation-state, not to preserve it. The NGOs were, in fact, preparing the ground for what was soon to become official policy. The blanket failure of these programs testifies to the inability or unwillingness of pastoralists to accept the change demanded of them.

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It was at the turn of the century that the EPRDF began to draft ambitious plans for the Awash Valley that would have a fateful impact on its inhabitants. In 2008, the Ministry of Water and Energy announced the launching of two projects for sugar and ethanol production: one at Tendaho in the Awash River Valley, another in the far southwest corner of Afar on the Kessem River, a tributary of the Awash River. The first phase of building dams and irrigation channels, as well as levelling land had already started. The Ethiopian Sugar Corporation

(ESC) was established in 2010 to take over the projects, as part of the Growth and Trans-formation Plan (GTP) (2010/11–2014/15). An Accelerated and Equitable Development for the Emerging Regions program developed in line with the GTP that had a particular focus on the lowland's periphery.

This plan was designed on a scale that dwarfed previous development ventures. It intended to commit over 320,000 hectares across the country to sugar production. A large part of this expanse was represented by the Awash River Valley where cotton was to be replaced by sugarcane. The Tendaho Dam and Sugar Project was designed to occupy nearly all the irrigable land of the Middle and Lower Valleys for sugar production. It is envisaged to cover a total of 85,000 hectares, 65,000 hectares for sugarcane cultivation, and the rest for infrastructure. It will include not only the existing state-owned cotton plantations and vast areas of grazing land but also—inconsistently, given the EPRDF's penchant for agro-pastoralism—the land traditionally cultivated by Afar in the river's inland delta.

India's Export-Import Agency invested substantially on condition that 75 percent of the project's inputs would be imported from India. The Indian consultancy firm that carried out the first feasibility study described the area to be inundated by the dam, some 17,000 hectares, as "desert" of no importance to the Afar people. The loss of pastureland, it claimed, would be more than compensated by range improvement and the services provided for the people. To compensate the herders for this massive dispossession, it recommended that a mere 1,800 hectares should be reserved for "pastoralist development"(Interim Report: En-vironmental Impact Assessment (Interim Report 2005, 105). Follow-up studies warned of potentially devastating consequences, such as the loss of 15,000 hectares of forested land and 19,000 hectares of bush and shrub land, the consequent extinction of bird life, a malaria epidemic, and the drying of the lakes in the Awash River inland delta.

Initially, the EPRDF vowed not to continue with the population resettlement and vil-lagization policies of previous regimes. These were radical measures taken to deal with overpopulation and consequent land hunger, mainly in the northern plateau, and the spatial dispersal and isolation typical of rural settlement patterns throughout the country confounded development efforts. Initiated by the Haile Selassie regime, resettlement and villagization turned into a major campaign under the Derg, when a large number of people were moved, willingly or not, from north to south, causing much suffering and loss of life. The campaign would not have a lasting effect; most of the survivors abandoned the villages and returned home after the fall of the Derg.

Resettlement and villagization were revived by the EPRDF, with plans to resettle 1.5 million people. Under federalism the central government has no power to move people across regional state lines, and resettlement must take place only within regional state bound-aries. The target this time is the sparsely inhabited lowland zone, where people will be con-gregated in villages to free land intended for commercial cultivation by private investors.

Conversion of herders to agro-pastoralism is official state policy implemented jointly by the Ethiopian Sugar Corporation and the regional state administration. The documents outlining the implementation are prepared in politically correct and pastoralist friendly for-mat, envisaging monetary compensation for expropriated land, provision of pastureland for those who remain pastoralists, cultivable land and water for those who convert to cultiva-tion, resettlement in villages provided with housing, health and education facilities, as well as training for the young who will be employed in the sugar industry. Private investors are expected to share this burden. The Afar administration asked investors to provide at least

20 percent of leased land for this purpose. The Ethiopian Sugar Corporation was expected to do the same, but on a much smaller scale.

State as well as private enterprise is expected to offer local people the opportunity to engage in the production of commercial crops as sharecroppers and outgrowers. The oldest and most successful program of this type is the Wonji project, which includes 12,000 households and 7,000 hectares in a sharecropping partnership that supplies more than one-half of sugarcane production for the factory. The input and operational costs are provided on credit by the state and are deducted from the final income, and irrigation is provided for free. Observers suggest that success in this case is due to the fact that most of the sharecroppers are peasants, not former pastoralists.

The ESC support program for agro-pastoralism has earmarked some 10,000 hectares of land in Tendaho for pastoralist resettlement, of which 2,000 hectares had been distributed by 2016 to 2,000 families in one-hectare plots while 1,000 hectares had been distributed to 1,000 families in Kessem. Eighteen so-called villagization centers have been established, 14 in Tendaho and 4 in Kessem, totaling 18,000 households settled in individual housing. The newly established villages will have schools, health centers, grinding mill facilities, bakeries, mosques, and shops.

The Tendaho and Kessem projects provided compensation for the land taken based on prior land use. The price of land used for crop production was worth double that of land used for pasturage. The money distribution was carried out by elders and project coordinators without supervision, and they received no guidance as to who should receive it or how the money should be used. According to one report, "there are still beneficiaries who complain that they have not been paid and who further note that the money disappeared between the projects' coordinators and the community leaders. Many of the officials interviewed believe that even those who managed to get the payments used the money for their daily consumption rather than investing it to augment productivity and that there was no proper guidance from the regional government as to how to spend the money in useful ways other than consumption. It was after recognizing these problems that the regional administration disbanded the project coordination secretariat and decided that all future compensation disbursements would be done through the region's Bureau of Finance and Economic Cooperation" (Gebrehiwot and Sintayehu 2014a, 107).

Compensation was also offered in the form of plots of land for those willing to take up cultivation. Financial assistance was also additionally offered on an annual basis in order to bridge the time until their first harvest. Plots were limited to one hectare, intended for cereal production and irrigated accordingly. Infrastructure was provided free of charge, and the hope was that they would switch to sugar cane when more irrigation is provided. According to ESC records in 2016, six associations with total of 1,347 Afar households had been formed.

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ESC's ambitious, detailed programs and targets for agro-pastoralism in Afar were seriously affected by the inordinate delay in the completion of the infrastructure and plant. In 2016, several years past the planned date of completion, neither of the two projects was operational and not a single kilogram of sugar had been produced. Built by Chinese contractors, the Kessem project was five years in the making. Planned to cultivate 25,000 hectares, it had

3,000 hectares under cultivation by end of 2016, whose produce was sent to Matahara for milling, or burned. Construction of the Tendaho project had begun earlier and was scheduled to be completed by 2013. About 50,000 hectares were planned for cultivation; with infrastructure the total area would be 85,000 hectares. At the time, the area under irrigated cultivation, both state and private farms, was 26,000 hectares.

The reasons given for the delay are many. "Though the task of covering such a large area of land with sugarcane in three years is challenging, it can be made possible by efficient management and perfect planning," was the blithe conclusion of the original study by the Indian consultancy (Draft Final Report 2005, 36). Unfortunately, neither prerequisite materialized. The grandiose size of the Growth and Transformation Plan and the unrealistic targets it set, are now said to be far beyond the country's economic, technological, and administrative capacity to deliver. The government's choice to entrust a major role in planning, construction, and administration to federal and regional state agencies had negative consequences, given the lack of capacity for the task at both levels. State agencies, ministry divisions and departments, and ministries themselves bid for contracts directly or set up parastatal structures for this purpose. The Ministry of Defence became the biggest local contractor to use state assets. Soon after coming to power, the original parties that formed the EPRDF set up their own business ventures, which flourished on state contracts, and gradually expanded into production, transportation, and construction. The practice was imitated by political parties that appeared afterwards at the regional level as affiliates of the EPRDF. Obviously well placed to win state contracts, the parties were able to get unsecured bank loans. The ESC was staffed with inexperienced young graduates, and senior posts were filled with persons with political connections who were frequently recycled. The Kessem Project had four managers in five years.

The result was a feeding frenzy involving Ethiopian state and private capital, as well as foreign state and private counterparts. Eleven Indian contractors were involved in Tendaho. Chinese contractors were brought in to finish Kessem, after a company owned by the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence walked out of the project, without returning the funds received or incurring any liability, legal or financial. Within a few years the Ethiopian "miracle" had produced a new hierarchy of power and privilege spawned by the "developmental state." It also produced corruption on a monumental scale, which did more than anything else to dim the luster of the "miracle" and peoples' confidence in the EPRDF regime. As an editorial in a local paper noted, "the construction of around ten sugar factories […] is saddled by a plethora of shortcomings that have dented the government's credibility in the eyes of the public" (*Reporter*, 16 July 2017).

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The weight of the argument for agro-pastoralism rests on the expected conversion of wandering herders to sedentary farmers. This scheme has yet to be tested in Afar and Ethiopia, but there is considerable experience in other areas of the Horn, particularly Sudan and Kenya, showing strong pastoralist reluctance to comply. Instead, wherever possible, they far preferred to sell or rent land allocated to them for cultivation to others, quite often to outsiders. Needless to say, this was the experience in Afar under the imperial and military regimes.

"Sedentarization though impoverization" is a trend noted elsewhere in the Horn. As the mobility of the herds is increasingly constrained, their habitat is progressively degraded,

the climate turns drier, and the traditional strategies of coping with successive crisis are exhausted, herdless pastoralists are compelled to take up cultivation wherever possible. Others are forced out of the system and into the peri-urban periphery to take menial jobs, loosening ties to their clan kinsmen.

The staple argument in favor of large-scale land cultivation in Ethiopia is the creation of employment for local people. At full capacity, the projects in Afar plan to employ more than 100,000 people in plantations and factories. The bulk of these jobs are seasonal and the lowest paid, as well as bereft of any form of security. Historically, these jobs have been taken by impoverished peasants who migrate seasonally from the highland to the valley. Afar participation has been minimal and mainly as plantation guards; in 2016 guards worked eight-hour shifts for 32 birr (USD 1.50). It is expected that this will change as young Afar acquire education and relevant skills.

Agro-pastoralism claims to be a replacement for pastoralism, but the economic rationale of this policy is far from proven. Recent studies contradictory to this claim cite, among other reasons, the disappearance of pastureland designated for agro-pastoralism as nearly all the land has been earmarked for cultivation. Furthermore, agro-pastoralism puts a high labor requirement on households as they then have to divide labor between cultivation at home and care of livestock away from home. What is obvious already is the rapid decline and ultimate disappearance of mobile pastoralism, for the very simple reason that mobility is no longer possible. "From our interviews with regional officials, the overriding consensus was that pastoralism has reached a dead end when it comes to sustaining the economic livelihood of the communities," is a recent appraisal (Gebrehiwot and Sintayehu 2014b, 105).

Several studies of the ongoing process in the Awash Valley conclude that "sedentary agro-pastoralism has not been able to provide food security for humans and animals, and thus continued the reduction of livestock through compromising mobility" (Botterli 2015, 21). Others maintain that "pastoral livestock husbandry is more profitable than cotton farming." The same can be said for sugar; livestock remains the best, if not the only, option under these ecological conditions (Behnke and Kerven 2013, 33). As in the 1970s and 1980s, drought induced famine threatened 600,000 people in Afar in 2013. Whatever the final outcome of the latest massive intervention in the Awash River Valley will be, it has initiated a process of economic and social transformation that leaves the future of the Afar people uncertain.

Pastoralism is more than an economic production system. It is a way of life that encompasses a system of social and political organization and a culture woven together since time immemorial. It is an accomplishment that guarantees the integrity, coherence and cohesiveness of pastoralist society and defines its identity, all of which are threatened when mobile pastoralism, the foundation of this way of life, is no longer viable, and a process of adaptation to a sedentary existence is the only option. These consequences are even more potent when the option is dictated by external actors and the pace of adaptation is forced to meet their goals.

The loss of autonomy is the context in which this forced process unfolds, impacting every aspect of society, starting with the clan, the living cell of pastoralist society. It immediately affected the clan structure by undermining the decision-making process and the status of traditional authority. Less obvious is the impact of localized interventions on the clan-based social fabric of Afar society. One report describes the model of plot distribution devised by the regional government, which appears designed to dilute clan claims to land by assigning neighboring plots to members of different clans. Accordingly, each plot

is worked individually by its owner, instead of one person assigned by the clan to work on several adjoining plots belonging to members of the clan. Plots belonging to members of the same clans are often located far apart from each other, making it hard for clan members to help each other.

Demographic change is a noted trend with potential consequences on Afar ethnic identity. The total population of the region is currently estimated at 1.5 million of which some 10 percent is not indigenous. The non-Afar are concentrated in the small towns that have sprung up in the region. The plan envisages a workforce of 100,000 at full capacity, signaling a sizeable increase in non-Afar employment in the sugar industry. The regional administration is another sector with a significant number of non-Afar employees, estimated at over 45 percent. If only because they do not speak Afar, the regional government opted to use Amharic as the working language. Rising concern for the survival of the Afar language prompted the government to prepare to make Afar the language of administration. As part of it, non-Afar civil servants are required to attend Afar language lessons for one hour daily.

4.1   Afar Response

Because of its enormity and hurried pace, the Afar experience provides a particularly striking illustration of state-imposed transformation and the absence of local autonomy and agency. While it is true that change is a negotiated political process involving various agents with varied access to power, including local agents, it is also true that their situation is highly asymmetrical given the loss of local autonomy. It is equally true that the situation itself is subject to change, as shown in the case of the three regime changes in Ethiopia, and that change affects local response and agency. The consequences of regime change are particularly significant in the center-periphery context because regime change has a direct effect on the composition of the local elite and, therefore, the representation of the periphery at the center. A variable factor that lays outside the center-periphery binary relationship yet still impacts it is the interaction among groups within the periphery, a particularly heavy factor in this case. The following pages will describe the Afar position in the negotiation process and their response to the transformation of their way of life.

Afar history is a tale of repelling incursions into their homeland by outsiders to preserve an untrammeled autonomy. The familiar description "inhospitable" in their case applies both to the landscape and to the fearsome reputation of the people. The reputation was sealed in 1875 when Werner Munzinger, a Swiss adventurer and the first white man to venture into the region was killed along with his entire escort. Ethiopia's royal chronicles going back to the fourteenth century record the unsuccessful attempts of Abyssinian rulers to subjugate these people. Although they came under Ethiopian suzerainty at the turn of the nineteenth century, no state official entered their homeland until 1945. At this time, an Ethiopian force was sent to Aussa to dethrone an obstreperous sultan and replace him with his nephew Ali Mirah, who enjoyed official favor. The nephew was left to exercise traditional authority of the post with minimum interference from Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian governor of the Afar district resided on the heights above in Wollo province, and few highlanders ventured into the lowland below. It was not until the appearance of the sugar cane plantations on the Upper Valley in mid-twentieth century that the Afar directly confronted the world outside.

This new development did not directly inconvenience the Afar for they held no land in the Upper Valley. The displacement of the Karrayu and Gilo peoples saw them forced to the

edge of the escarpment in the vicinity of the Awash National Park, where they clashed with the Afar who consider the park their own grazing ground.

Historically, the Afar who live on and near the escarpment have had a complex relationship with their highland neighbors. The relationship was closer in the north where Afar districts were incorporated in the provincial administration of Tigray. The salt trade in which both Afar and Tigray were involved strengthened their relationship. In their frequent clashes with the imperial government, Tigray rebels frequently sought refuge in the Afar lowlands, a tradition continued by the TPLF in the 1970s and 1980s. Afar relations with Amhara and Oromo peasants further south were permanently troubled with frequent clashes over land. Land shortage forced highlanders to cultivate land lower on the escarpment flanks, where they confronted Afar herders moving higher in search of pasture. Drought frequently added further strain on the relationship and provoked violence.

Regional state borders drawn under the federal system sought to prevent conflict of this sort, yet often provoked it, with both sides claiming the borderlands. There have been many clashes on the escarpment border since 1991. The most dramatic occurred in November 2002 when thirty Afar women on their way to market were killed. A study conducted jointly by Amhara and Afar regional governments and based on official police figures reported that 174 people were killed and 75 wounded between 1995 and 2003.

As the cotton plantations began to transform the landscape in the Middle Valley, pushing herders away from the Awash River banks, the peoples' response was bewilderment; they "couldn't understand why" as one song put it. No information or explanation was provided by the AVA, and the traditional leaders were equally perplexed. The example of acquiescence given by Sultan Ali Mirah and elders of his clan was instructive, and no major incidents of violence are recorded for that period, other than clashes between herders whose livestock overrun plantation grounds and guards hired to prevent just that.

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Afar militancy was focused on containing the Issa Somali expansionist pressure westwards in the Afar River Valley. This conflict is the most serious ongoing dispute in the region, with cross-border linkages in Djibouti, Somaliland, and Somalia that concern national security and, consequently, the federal government (Markakis 2011, 301 ff.). "An everlasting animosity," as a painstaking study of it describes it (Yasin 2010, 2), it has a history of gradual escalation and has proved intractable despite persistent efforts at various levels to resolve it. The two have fought for control of a vast rangeland area stretching from the northern foothills of the southern plateau to the Awash River Valley a long time. "War with Afar is fourteen generations old," the Issa say.

Its recorded history goes back over a century, when the battlefront was the Erer River Valley north of Dire Dawa in Ethiopia and west of Tadjura Bay in Djibouti. In the second half of the twentieth century, the Afar and Issa fought a series of bloody battles for control of this area. A battle at Mefayidela in the Alighedi Plain on July 16, 1963, ended with 481 Afar killed and 25,000 of their cattle looted. Seriously weakened, the Afar gradually ceded territory. Weima (Afar) clans were forced to evacuate Erer, Afdem, Mulu, Hurso, and Mieso and move into the Middle Awash Valley, where other Afar jokingly referred to them as refugees. A large clan, the Issa Somali inhabit the Shinile Zone in the Somali regional state adjacent to Zone 3 of the Afar regional state in the Middle Valley. The Issa share the territory

of Djibouti with Afar clans, where they have monopolized state power since independence, largely excluding the Afar. This conflict has scarred the collective Afar psyche. They have not forgotten or forgiven, nor have they lost hope of recovering the lost land.

Until recently, the conflict was over pasture, water, and access routes, a purely pastoralist confrontation. Unlike the introverted nature of the Afar, the Somali are highly mobile nomadic herders, who range widely over the Horn, constantly shifting territory in search of green pasture. Also unlike the Afar, they are active in local trade, exchanging livestock products for grain with peasant neighbors. In the past, they were engaged in the long-distance trade of luxury goods, such as ivory, animal skins, myrrh and frankincense, civet oil, and ostrich feathers. They were actively involved in the caravan trade that linked the hinterland of the Horn with the towns on the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, as transporters, guides, and guards. More recently, they have become major exporters of livestock through Djibouti and Somaliland to the Arab Gulf.

The imperial state kept a low profile in the pastoralist zone, leaving the people to manage their own affairs, and to settle disputes among themselves in the traditional manner. The usual form of intervention was to threaten, or indeed to use force to disarm the belligerents. The furthest the imperial regime went to manage the Afar-Issa dispute was to redraw district boundaries in order to separate them and temporarily station soldiers there to enforce them. It was only when state security was threatened—when violence spilled across international borders, or blocked transport links—that the state intervened. For example, when Issa warriors attacked a train and killed a Frenchman in August 1963, units of the Imperial Bodyguard carried out a massacre of people in Ayisha, the district capital.

External factors intervened to tilt the balance against the Afar. The construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway line that was completed in 1917 crosses the Erer River Valley. Begun in Djibouti by the French, it employed Issa clansmen as transporters, workers, and guards, who later settled in the lowland region crossed by the railway that is now Shinille zone, the Issa homeland. Two decades later, the Italians came and recruited large numbers of Somali askaris from Italian Somalia for the 1936 invasion of Ethiopia. The Issa fought for the Italians and received arms and training in return, as well as a lucrative market for their animals. They used the arms to evict the Afar from the Erer River Valley and gain access into the Alighedi plain for their expanding herds. The Italians considered the Somali as allies, while the Afar, who fought on the Ethiopian side, suffered retaliation.

With the expulsion of the Italians in 1941, the entire southeast region of Ethiopia came under British control. It ended in 1944, but a belt of land alongside the railway line to Djibouti, called the Reserved Area, remained under the British until 1948. Taking advantage of British protection, the Ishaaq clans from Somaliland moved en masse into the Jijiga Plain inside the Somali inhabited region of Ethiopia, creating overstocking and overgrazing that put pressure on clans to the north, including the Issa, to move westwards.

The focus of Afar militancy shifted as an emerging generation of educated youth was drawn into the radical current created by the student movement in Ethiopia to oppose the imperial regime. Afar students in Addis Ababa, Djibouti, Cairo and Europe debated the future of their nation and began to organize. An Afar Rassemblement Movement was founded in 1972 by students from Djibouti. A joint meeting held in Berlin in 1974 resulted in the strategic formation of separate organizations to represent the Afar in Djibouti and Ethiopia, and an Afar National Liberation Movement (ANLM) was founded a year later in Addis Ababa. The division along state lines became a political imperative for the Afar, who realized that

any expression of pan-Afar nationalism, implying a quest for independence, would face opposition by every state in the Horn and would likely be drowned in blood. Afar politicians in Djibouti and Ethiopia knew better than to arouse suspicion on that score.

The nationalization of land in 1975 by the Derg, the show of resistance by Sultan Ali Mirah, and the founding of the Afar Liberation Front marked a turning point in Afar political posture. Initially, the ANLM and the ALF collaborated in preparations for an armed struggle and sought assistance from the Eritrean Liberation Front and the Siad Barre regime in Mogadishu. It was not long before the ANLM radicals fell out with the ALF, led by Ali Mirah's sons, and both organizations became inactive. In 1976, the Derg issued its Programme of the National Democratic Revolution, promising equal treatment for all nationalities and cultures in socialist Ethiopia. Having dismissed traditional authorities throughout the periphery as "feudal remnants," the regime proceeded to raise its own corps of peripheral elite by recruiting lowlanders into a corps of cadres that comprised its political and administrative support. A limited number of lowlanders were trained and then assigned to political and administrative posts in the lowlands.

Leading ANLM members were tempted by the promise of the program and travelled to Ethiopia to meet Derg representatives. Several meetings were held in Afar to negotiate terms, to which elders were invited. Once more, the Afar asked for all their kinsmen, including those in Eritrea, to be united in one province within Ethiopia and to be administered by their own people. The first request was rejected, and the Afar remained divided in three provinces: Eritrea, Tigray, and Wollo. The second was accepted, and several ANLM members were appointed to administrative and political posts in the Afar region. Upon meeting Yusuf Mohammed Gas, the newly appointed head political commissar in Asab, the Derg leader Mengistu Haile Mariam reportedly said: "I found the man who'll work for us." A couple of hundred Afar joined the Working People's Party of Ethiopia (WPPE) when it appeared in 1984. In his speech to the founding congress of WPPE, the regime's leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, declared: "Regional autonomy is the practical solution to the problem, in view of the objective conditions of our country."

The deterioration in the relationship between the regimes in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu, which both avowed Marxist Leninist regimes, led to the Somali invasion of Ethiopia and had a serious impact on the Afar-Issa struggle. In the early 1970s, Mogadishu trained a guerrilla force to prepare the ground for the invasion of Ethiopia. The Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF) had several divisions, one of which was intended to occupy and annex Djibouti and was composed mainly of Issa clansmen. The Djibouti part of the plan was abandoned, but when the invasion of Ethiopia came in 1977, the Issa, well-armed and well-trained, once again pressed their advantage to push the Afar farther to the west.

The Ethiopian counterattack and expulsion of the Somali forces the following year was enthusiastically supported by the Afar but proved only a temporary setback for the Issa, who were later to return to the vicinity of the road to Djibouti. In the 1970s, when the nationalist revolution in Eritrea cast a shadow on the future of the Assab port, Ethiopia's only outlet to the sea, the military regime constructed a road to Djibouti as an alternative. Several of the construction camps along the road soon evolved into hamlets living off the traffic, and Issa clansmen initially employed by the German construction company settled in two of these, Gadamaitu and Adaitu. Here they became involved in the truck-stop service trade, also in smuggling goods across the border from Djibouti and Somalia, as well as raising livestock.

Few Afar settled in these hamlets, and they departed when hostilities between the two groups broke out.

The EPRDF came to power well prepared with plans to transform both state and society in highland Ethiopia, and wasted no time in implementing them. By contrast, it had no knowledge or experience of the lowlands, and had made no provision in its plans for their unique character. The regime's leader, Meles Zenawi, later admitted: "These are clan-based societies, unlike our own peasantry, and we didn't know if our political experience suited them."[1] Nevertheless, later on, the regime went on to impose the same plans on lowland society with little concession for its distinctiveness.

Afar was not a blind spot for the TPLF leadership. Northern Afar had been administered by Tigray and, while still fighting the Derg, the TPLF had recognized the Afar who lived in Tigray as one of the five nationalities in the province and even tried to recruit them in its guerrilla army. The Afar chiefs opposed this, as well as TPLF attempts to set up bases in northern Afar. In 1978, a clash with TPLF units in the region resulted in heavy Afar casualties and further strained the relationship. Eventually, Afar resistance to highlander intrusion into their homeland brought together a band of warriors that included former ANLM members, who called themselves Ugogomo, meaning "revolution." They led a shadowy existence in the depths of the Afar Depression, and menaced any and all intruders. Ugogomo gained notoriety in later years by kidnapping foreigners for ransom and embarrassing the EPRDF regime in Addis Ababa. Despite many efforts, the regime has been unable to eliminate them to this day.

The ANLM leaders and Derg collaborators were rounded up in 1991 and spent the decade in prison. After release, several were appointed to posts in the Afar regional state administration. Mohamood Gas escaped abroad to organize a rebel faction named the Afar Revolutionary Democratic United Front (ARDUF), which claimed to represent Ugogomo. The appearance of TPLF units in Afar was initially opposed by the ALF, and in September 1991 the two clashed in Gewane in a battle that lasted four days and left hundreds of Afar dead and wounded. This signaled the beginning of the political decline of the Ali Mirah family, which made things worse when it demanded the return of nationalized land that had been distributed by the Derg to local people. Hanfare Ali Mirah's term in office lasted only a few months; the ALF split and disintegrated amidst family quarrels. A miffed Ali Mirah took himself to Saudi Arabia once more. He returned after the Ethiopia-Eritrea war broke out in 1998 to attack Eritrea on television and was rewarded with a grant of land in Aussa and the aforementioned villa in Addis Ababa.

In the early 1990s, EPRDF watched Afar political factions compete for local power, a forbearance it maintained elsewhere in the lowland zone while it secured political control of the highlands. In the meantime, the loss of northernmost Afar to Eritrea went almost unnoticed. No Afar voice spoke out against the issue when it was discussed and settled in the July 1991 conference in Addis Ababa or when Eritrea became formally independent in 1994. The Afar People's Democratic Organisation (APDO) was cobbled together in 1995 and won elections that year. The election was a farce that even the government press could not take seriously. In Asaita, the regional capital, one newspaper reported, "voters had virtually no idea how to cast ballots, election officials in the area were either just as ignorant or not willing to explain the process, ten to twelve year old teenagers were voting, and officials harassed

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[1] Author interview with Bitew Belay, TPLF Central Committee member, Addis Ababa, April 2, 2007.

press people when asked for an explanation" (*Ethiopian Herald*, June 19, 1995). The APDO was renamed the Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP) and won every electoral contest held subsequently. It rules the Afar regional state to this day.

The Afar-Issa confrontation escalated steadily in the years that followed, with a number of factors adding to its complexity in the 1990s. The restructuring of the Ethiopian state under federalism unwittingly introduced two contentious points. Firstly, the federal structure of the state requires fixed, recognized boundaries that separate its constituent units. Since the territorial boundaries between states, once drawn, will be definitive and final, it is crucial for the parties involved to secure as generous a settlement as possible. This strategy inhibits compromise and makes negotiations difficult. Secondly, decentralization of the state administration has aggravated local conflict because it provides resources associated with local administrative status. Because of materials and social resources allocated to a *woreda* (district) and the right to control its own budget, local governments aggressively competed to achieve the woreda status.

The third factor is the loss of Assab as a result of the Ethiopian-Eritrean War and the consequent rise in importance of the road connecting to Djibouti that crosses the Awash Valley. After 1998, traffic on the road multiplied, the truck-stop hamlets became hives of activity that attracted highlanders, and the road emerged as a new and valuable source of wealth in the midst of a deprived region. Given the collapse of state control on the borders between Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somaliland, and Somalia, contraband trade acquired new dimensions, and a veritable "common market" emerged throughout this part of the Ethiopian periphery. Not surprisingly, Somali, and especially Issa, pursued this trade, moving freely among their own kin throughout the region. More Somali hamlets appeared on the road to function as staging posts for the contraband trade. The Afar remained aloof and gained no benefit from these activities.

The civil war in Djibouti in the early 1990s was another contributing factor. On one level, the war was an extension of the struggle in Ethiopia—the steady retreat of the Afar westwards in the face of Issa pressure. On another level, it was a struggle between Afar and Issa urban elites in Djibouti for access to state power. The conflict in Djibouti raised tensions across the border and made the mini-state a reference point for conspiracy theories in the Afar-Issa dispute within Ethiopia, each side claiming the other received weapons and manpower from their kinsmen in Djibouti. The end of this forceful assertion of Afar political militancy in Djibouti was an object lesson for them. It was strongly opposed by Ethiopia, Eritrea, and warlords in Somalia, as well as France, which committed soldiers to save the Issa regime from collapse. In the end, the Afar insurgent movement, FRUD, split, and another faction abandoned the struggle when its leaders negotiated with the Issa regime for appointment to government posts.

The Ethiopian-Eritrean War (1998–2001) was fought partly in northern Afar and caused havoc among the population who had to abandon their land and move south with their animals, increasing the burden on already congested and desiccated pasturelands. Thousands of Afar from Eritrea sought refuge among their kinsmen in Ethiopia, and two groups emerged to represent the grievances of the Afar in Eritrea—the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation and the Afar Liberation Democratic Movement in Eritrea. The relationship of the Afar with the Eritrean nationalists was spoiled long before they came to power as a result of the EPLF's attempts to create bases in the northernmost Afar lowland and to recruit local youth for its guerrilla army. After coming to power, the EPLF forcefully disarmed the Afar and

forced them to join the National Service scheme that made conscription indefinite. The fact that women were subject to conscription further alienated this community. Above all, the Afar in Eritrea resented the nationalist regime's policy of national integration, which aimed to eliminate ethnic distinctions in order to produce a homogeneous Eritrean national identity. This policy is the opposite of the one implemented in Ethiopia that has gained Afar cultural recognition and a degree of local autonomy.

In 2000, Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on animal imports from the Horn, the second one in recent years, due to the outbreak of Rift Valley fever. The ban hit the Issa particularly hard, because they are major exporters of sheep and goats to the Saudi Arabian market. It caused overstocking and overgrazing in Shinile zone, and pushed Issa herders to range deeper into Afar territory towards the Awash River where they met an increasingly hostile reception from the Afar.

Violence spilled onto the Addis Ababa Djibouti road, making travel on it dangerous. Afar stayed away from Issa hamlets; even driving through was risky. Provoked by the murder of a popular Afar politician and member of the federal legislature in May 2000, the Afar carried out a massacre in Somali hamlets and the road was closed. In the following four months, some fifty Issa deaths were recorded by the Shinile zone administration. Two years later, an Afar ambush killed a dozen Issa. The road was closed on several occasions, and at least one lorry driver was killed, prompting his colleagues to stage a strike that caused a shortage of fuel in Addis Ababa.

The loss of Assab Port had made the railway and road to Djibouti virtual lifelines for Ethiopia, therefore the federal government became involved in the effort to resolve the Afar-Issa conflict. A newly formed Ministry of Federal Affairs was made responsible, but the Prime Minister's Office took the initiative. The EPRDF's approach to conflict management in ethnic disputes generally relied on consultation, negotiation, and persuasion. Having sidelined the traditional leadership, the federal government depended on the new political leadership in the regional states to take the initiative. The Somali and Afar regional administrations came under increasing pressure from the federal government to reach an agreement on the issues that divided them and to put an end to violence.

This approach made little progress; both sides became even more unwavering in their respective positions. A key issue was the boundary between the two regions that had not yet been adequately demarcated. Basing their case on history and the right of prior possession, the Afar claimed the return of territory up to Erer Valley and jurisdiction over all settlements on the road to Djibouti. The Somali countered with the right of actual possession of the land they now occupy and a demand for a referendum in the roadside settlements, in the obvious expectation that they would become part of their region. They had already moved to preempt the issue by claiming administrative jurisdiction of these towns by integrating them into the Shinile Zone, although the towns lay within the Afar-controlled Zone 3.

The regime's next move was to order the formation of "integrated peace committees" with administrators and elders from both sides, as well as military and security officials to mediate local conflicts and adjudicate disputes in order to avoid clashes. It was agreed that both Afar and Issa would have access to the Alighedi Plain until a definitive border demarcation was made. Innumerable meetings followed without result. The Afar demanded the return of lost territory and a delineated border. "When two people fight, they have to be separated before they reconcile," they said. They wanted the federal government to draw the boundary so that it would have the responsibility of enforcing it. Basing their claim

on current political practice, the Somali wanted a referendum to decide the status of the contested territory, a method that was widely used to determine the border between Somali and Oromo regional states.

The federal government faced a political dilemma. A return to the territorial status quo ante would alienate the Somali, while a referendum would further upset the Afar. And there the matter rested. As clashes continued, the federal government resorted to familiar tactics by bringing in the army to keep the road clear and to stamp out the contraband trade by raiding the settlements, arresting smugglers, and confiscating goods and vehicles. The army also burned a couple of settlements and generally disrupted the local economy founded on smuggling. Though the Issa suffered more, the Afar were not spared; eighteen of them were killed by soldiers in August 2008. Finally, the federal government sought to solve the problem with a dictate. It put the towns on the road under Afar jurisdiction and administration while stipulating that the Somali residents are recognized as an ethnic group and accorded certain rights as provided in the Constitution. Whether this plan succeeds remains yet to be seen.

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The huge expansion of sugar production in the Middle and Lower Valleys began in the first half of the 2000s with the commissioning of feasibility studies that were completed in 2005. In 2008, the Ministry of Water and Energy announced that they were breaking ground on projects in Tendaho and Kessem that was then taken over by the newly-founded Ethiopian Sugar Corporation in 2010. While it is not clear whether the Afar administration was consulted at the outset, there is no doubt that the people in the Valley were unaware of the plans until the second half of the decade. As the construction process proceeded, the federal and regional governments undertook a public relations campaign to convince the Afar of the benefits they stood to gain directly from the sugar industry and from conversion to agro-pastoralism.

Little was said publicly about popular opinion, but the large number of meetings that were held and the multiple visits to the region by the regime leader, Meles Zenawi, to address the meetings indicates a less than enthusiastic attitude among the people. The plan was promoted by the Afar ruling party whose leadership and cadre had a great deal to gain from it since it involved a huge investment in the region from which the peripheral elite were certain to appropriate a share as well as administrative posts. Pressure for posts in the ESC was almost immediately exerted, and the Afar were appointed to several senior posts, including deputy CEO of the ESC. Others made it to similar positions in the federal state administration. The former leader of ARDUF, Mohamood Gas, made peace with the EPRDF and returned to Ethiopia to become vice minister of youth and sports.

The support of the elders was critical for it would determine the reaction of the rest of the population. Naturally the elders were dubious about the news from Addis Ababa, having heard similar promises from previous regimes. They complained of having been ignored by the EPRF and sidelined in the regional administration by the politicians. Redress was promised, and a council of elders was attached in an advisory capacity to every level of the regional administrative hierarchy, a model applied gradually to every lowland regional state. The Afar elders demanded compensation for land taken by the sugarcane plantations, and the state allocated 241 million birr for this purpose. Entrusted to the Tendaho-Kessem

Coordination Secretariat for distribution, "the money disappeared between project's coordinators and the community elders" (Gebrehiwot and Sintayehu 2014a, 107). The Secretariat was disbanded and the task was assigned to a regional bureau.

4.2   Conclusion

For over a century since it was incorporated into the state, the lowland periphery of Ethiopia was regarded as a buffer zone between the highland kingdom with its Christian core and its Muslim neighbors. This role did not require its integration into the highland economy and society, and the state did not intrude into the lives of the people there beyond the claim of a vague suzerainty. As a result, lowland society remained distant and aloof from the profound transformations—economic, social and political—that prepared the ground for the dramatic initiatives pursued by the state in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The Afar experience is a partial exception in that it was the subject of early state initiatives before the era of globalization.

In the global economy in which Ethiopia has recently placed itself, there is literally no space for the traditional pastoralist mode of existence. It has survived to this day because the country itself is underdeveloped and stands near to bottom of the world development scale. Left to itself, the state would not have been able to take significant initiatives in nation-state building or development, especially in the lowland zone. A globalized economy has made it possible by providing the required resources in a formidable combination of external and internal forces—funds and technology for the economy as well as political and military support for the state.

The integrity of Afar society, culture, and identity are facing an existential challenge. Although the typical Afar reaction in the past was forceful and largely effective, the Afar reaction to the latest challenge is divided and weakened as a result. The conflicting opinions stem from the appearance of Western-educated Afar, who have no role in traditional society, and the rise of this group to power under federalism, yet another combination of external and internal factors.

Federalism guarantees autonomy that allows space for the exercise of local agency. In this case, local agency is practiced by a small elite section of the population to neutralize the majority of the Afar people who, at the very least, would have preferred a less cataclysmic approach to development, one that did not involve the loss of their land and dislocation of their society. It can be rightfully argued that the resources of Afar land belong to the Ethiopian nation and the state has the right to make use of them. It is also argued that the Afar way of life would be swept away by globalization anyway, regardless of state action. Whatever the merits of these arguments, it remains true that the fate of the Afar will be decided not by negotiation but through force majeure. "We were unwilling to move because we were comfortable where we lived," one Afar remarked. "The government forced us to move" (cited in Botterli 2015, 22).

The same process of indigenous dispossession in the production and trade of salt is taking place in northern Afar. Once an Afar monopoly exported to the plateau, the exploitation of this essential commodity is now dominated by highlanders associated with the EPRDF. According to a recent study, while Afar are still involved their share is steadily decreasing, and the option of livelihood diversification this sector might have offered is closed. The study concludes that "instead of economic empowerment, what can be observed in the

largely pastoralist peripheral areas is rather a growing economic insecurity and a threatened livelihood. Powerful farming neighbors and a state with an agrarian bias have encroached onto the rangeland, putting the viability of pastoralism into question. This continuity of center-periphery relations of dominance threatens to undermine the moral and political legitimacy of the federation" (Feyissa 2011, 20).

Chapter 5
Borderlands and Transborder Processes in the Blue Nile Region
Günther Schlee

With a focus on the region between the Blue Nile and the Sobat, located in Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, this paper engages with cross-border interactions and cross-border comparisons following the separation of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011.[1] This division is reflected in some of the current problems of both South Sudan and Sudan, including the blocking of nomadic routes, redefinition of citizenship, and expulsions. Within the more narrowly defined resulting "states" in both Sudan and South Sudan, access to citizenship and concomitant entitlements are not granted equally to the entire population, even after the aforementioned processes of exclusion. Since late 2013, South Sudan has been in a state of intermittent civil war. Revolution broke out in Sudan in December 2018, leading to the overthrow of President Al-Bashir in April 2019. Rival forces appropriated the revolutionary process, spawning much violence and culminating in a massacre of peaceful demonstrators in June 2019. In August of that year, an interim government that combined military leaders and leaders of the civilian opposition was formed. In this situation, questions like what and who the state is, whom it represents, who belongs to the nation and who to the state, what kind of nation-state is now in the process of forming, and which rights such a formation entails, are far from having clear answers. There is neither agreement on the empirical level (what is going on) nor on the normative level (what is to be done about it).

Like all human institutions, the nation-state is not a thing but a way to speak and a way to act that works as long as it is shared by many people. What is its status in Sudan and South Sudan? Does it grant uniform citizenship ("universal citizenship") to all its members? Is it just a self-representation addressed at outsiders (like Europeans and North Americans)? Is it an ideal in the head of activists and members of the opposition? Is it contested by people who claim membership or by people who want to keep others out?

Glances across the borders into neighboring areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda show that some of these questions loom large much beyond the confines of Sudan and South Sudan. The question raised in the introduction to this volume of whether the nation-state is the right model for the region can be answered in the negative if we take "model" to mean a descriptive model, a model *of* the nation-state as it is, putting aside the question whether it is a suitable model *for* the nation-state, as it ought to be. The political forces at work are not based on identification with the "nation." Whether this will change in Sudan as a result of the recent regime change remains to be seen. This chapter examines which other identifications are at work in current societal and political changes in the region.

5.1   The "Nation"-State: Questions of Identity and Cohesion

All three of the largest countries comprising the Horn of Africa have split into two or more parts. There has been the split between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1991), the de facto separation of Somaliland from the fragmented south of Somalia (1991), and most recently between Sudan and South Sudan (2011). This contrasts to the rest of Africa, which has honored the policy of the African Union, formerly the Organization of African Unity, that the boundaries of African states, inherited from the colonies which preceded them, should not be changed.[2] Focusing on the latest split, that between Sudan and South Sudan, this chapter seeks to explain this tendency toward fission in terms of the insufficient power of integration or insufficient will. It will explore who the state is, with whom the state identifies as a collective actor or a composite of heterogeneous actors, and which segments of the population identify with the state.

Discourses about the state in Africa show the dominance of the modern European nation-state model.[3] This model is not only used on the level of the "nation"-states, by unionists and separatists alike. In many places, the administrative boundaries at all levels below that of the "nation" or state have been drawn to create miniature versions of European nation-states by following linguistic or ethnic lines. Africans have not been the only ones to do this. Often, the process had already begun during the colonial period. For the case of northern Kenya we have shown (e.g. Schlee and Shongolo 2012, 115) how miniature versions of "nation"-states have won the day even against economic and ecological imperatives. The drive to create "order" by dividing and subdividing the open range into tribal districts and tribal grazing grounds has done much harm to the pastoral economy by depriving it of some of its flexibility to respond to erratic rainfalls and the uneven distribution of pasture.[4]

Apart from a rather mechanical diffusion of inappropriate models, a degree of rationality may also have been involved in the decision to apply European nation-state models. These divisions might have made control easier, by reducing complexity and introducing ways of perception that fit the state, similar to what Scott (1998) describes in "Seeing like a State." The ongoing processes of subdivision in recent years can often be explained as the result of a combination of government and local "elite" interests. The government buys acceptance from local "elites" by creating new districts so that there are new jobs, but the bill for these proliferating bureaucracies is paid by the taxpayer.

Founded in July 2011, South Sudan can be seen as the most recent replication of the European nation-state model, which aims at either giving a territory to a nation that existed before in the framework of some larger entity (the Wilson doctrine) or creating a nation for a territory that previously had a heterogeneous population but had not perceived itself as a nation (nation building). Either way, it is about building congruence between two entities: a nation and a territory. We have learned to accept this congruence as normal, and non-congruence as somehow deviating from the norm. But on closer inspection, territory, which refers to a surface area and is rather a material, and nation, which is a semiotic construct about a collective of people who can also be categorized in dozens of other ways, are unlikely candidates for congruence. One may also look at nation and territory as strange bedfellows

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[2] Art. 3, OAU-Charter 1963, OAU Res. AHG/Res.16 (I), Cairo 1964, Constitutive Act of AU; see also Declaration on the AU Border Programme and its Implementation Modalities, BP/MIN/decl.(II) 2007; see also Touval (1967).

[3] See Seidel and Sureau (2015); Wassara (2015).

[4] Schlee (2011); Schlee and Shongolo (2012).

and the territorial nation-state as an odd phenomenon that one would not necessarily have expected to become a global model.

There are northern Sudanese who do not regard the separation of the south as a loss. Rather, for them it meant a contraction to what they perceive as the "real Sudan," characterized by Arabism and Islam, mirroring the peoples of South Sudan who self-identify as African and Christian. Disregarding the still numerous citizens who do not fit the description of Arabs and Muslims, they saw the more narrowly circumscribed Sudan as a chance to live their culture and religion in a purer and intensified fashion. As they sought the congruence of their nation, their culture, and their state, they were in a tacit alliance with the leadership of the emerging South Sudan. They wanted to "un-mix" the people in support of creating a homogeneous nation-state, or rather two of them, at least in their rhetoric.[5] Officially, this un-mixing was to be brought about by a referendum, and for that some preliminary division was useful.

The negotiated rules for the referendum stated that southern Sudanese, identified as those belonging to southern "tribes," would be able to vote regardless of whether they were residents in northern or southern Sudan. In the months leading up to the referendum, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) opposed the right to vote of southern Sudanese residents in the north. Having established themselves in the north, many of them might have voted for unity. In the end, residents in the north were permitted to vote, but long queues and other impediments made it difficult.

Possible fears by the SPLM that the polls were more vulnerable to fraud by the National Congress Party (NCP) were hardly justified given that separation was by then a forgone conclusion (Young 2012). Whether the NCP actually wanted southern Sudanese to vote for unity is also highly debatable. After the death of John Garang in 2005, the SPLM abandoned Garang's stated aim of a united, reformed "New Sudan," an aim that many of its leaders had only accepted grudgingly. They then embraced the goal of independence. Both sides sought to have their own people in their own territories and did not want any complications, such as the "transnational spaces" social scientists like to talk about, dual citizenship, or special status for minorities.[6]

Attitudes may have changed since 2011, most certainly for marginalized peoples in South Sudan. There, the enthusiasm for freedom from Khartoum and independent nationhood has disappeared in the wake of a new civil war that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions from their homes. In the last years of the Al-Bashir regime, even NCP loyalists in the north engaged in some form of advocacy for the rights of South Sudanese. Furthermore, the outbreak of renewed civil war in the south saw refugees flee in waves to the north where they were welcomed. Harsh exclusionary policies may have given way to a more relaxed attitude, but this change should not be mistaken as a move towards secularism and pluralism. Rather, it can be explained as the generosity of those who can afford to be generous. Separation has made Islamism in the north only stronger.

The events of 2019 certainly deserve to be labeled a revolution in terms of the courage shown and sacrifices made by many young people. The long-term changes, however, have

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[5] To which extent all this involved sincere intentions and had realist prospects is, of course, debatable. As explained, the Arabic-Islamic identification offer in the north, was not comprehensive enough and did not fit nor appeal to important segments of the nation. "Nation building" in the south soon changed into undisguised attempts to spread Dinka domination, as many sceptics in the north had predicted.

[6] See Seidel and Sureau (2015).

yet to be seen. Much of the Freedom and Change movement has a clear secular or religiously liberal and pluralist undercurrent, and peace outside the country (such as withdrawal from the Saudi war in Yemen) and inside the country (such as addressing ethnic claims and regional imbalances) is high on their agenda. Sceptics, however, note that the composition of the "new sovereign council"[7] formed in August 2019 does not reflect this agenda.

But let us move back to 2011. Instead of dual citizenship and the mutual acceptance of minorities, there was a huge wave of repatriation to South Sudan as soon as that new state was formally founded. Timm Sureau witnessed boatloads of people being shipped up the Nile, often stranded halfway and undergoing all sorts of hardship.[8] Some South Sudanese in Khartoum gave up their houses and apartments, but did not make it to South Sudan. Now, they live in tents provided by the UN on the outskirts of Omdurman and Bahri (Khartoum North). Others decided to stay and see what would happen. They have not been expelled but have lost their resident status and no longer have a local administration to rely on if they need documentation. Nor are they eligible for such benefits, such as buying consumer goods at reduced prices when they are subsidized by the government during Ramadan. (To be entitled to the subsidized prices, they would have to prove their resident status, not their religious affiliation.) If they are entitled to a government pension, they only receive half of it and are told that if they want it all the matter must be dealt with in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.[9]

In spite of all this, since the beginning of 2014 there have been new arrivals from South Sudan because of the renewed violence.[10] Before the separation one would have referred to them as IDPs (internally displaced persons). Now they are international refugees. This status may (or may not) make it easier for them to be recognized as refugees by the UN and other agencies. In terms of the numbers of refugees, the situation is comparable to pre-2005 wartime. South Sudan, alone, produced as many refugees in this period as the whole of Sudan did when the north was still directly involved (Schlee 2014). The actual benefits of the "international" refugee status, for which South Sudanese in the north are supposedly eligible, is not quite clear. There have been changing positions on this issue within the NCP. The government of Sudan again has given them some special status, maybe to reduce UN involvement. They are, also, no longer the most conspicuous group of refugees. Since 2015, Khartoum has received a substantial number of refugees from Syria who have been granted a secure status and have started to found businesses. They come closer to the type of immigrants the Al-Bashir government wanted to have because they are Arabs, Muslims, and have much lighter pigmentation. Although impoverished Syrians could regularly be seen begging in front of mosques, other Syrians had money or procured money for investment. As a rule, refugees from South Sudan were destitute.

5.2   The Borderlands along the Blue Nile and the Sobat and the "Third Sudan"

The state Blue Nile, with its capital in Damazin, is part of the area for which the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) provided "popular consultations"[11] (instead of a proper

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[7] https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-sudans-new-sovereign-council, accessed September 2, 2019.
[8] Sureau (2017).
[9] Interview with a Dinka resident of Omdurman by Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, March 2014.
[10] For the political events that led up to the renewed outbreak of violence, see Dreef and Wagner (2013, 23).
[11] CPA Ch. I "Self-determination," Machakos Protocol, Kenya, July 20, 2002, 1.3; https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Machakos_Protocol, accessed March 16, 2020 Naivasha 31 December 2004, Section B "popular consultation":

referendum). The CPA stipulated that an elected government needed to be in place before popular consultations began, meaning that the elections were already over by the time the popular consultations were held. The wisdom of that regulation is, of course, questionable, because it means that most of the transition period from 2005 to 2011 was spent without effective broad consultations on this issue. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) won across southern Sudan, the NCP in northern Sudan. Each side turned a blind eye to any rigging carried out by the other, and the separation of the country was a foregone conclusion. According to the CPA, the popular consultations should have been held within the interim period, but the elections of the State Legislative Assemblies in the two states were delayed by more than a year. Since the results of the popular consultations were meant to be the basis of deliberations of these assemblies, these were also postponed.

Thousands of people participated and addressed a wide range of issues, including the lack of development and security. According to Article 3 of the Popular Consultations Act,

"constitutional, political, administrative, and economic issues" were to be discussed. But the discussions were politicized and narrowed down, by selective reporting and steering the procedures to the alternatives: autonomy (in the SPLA doctrine) versus federalism (not true federalism but a shorthand for the NCP position). As the consultations proceeded, more and more participants appeared to have been coached by one or the other party and made only formulaic statements. So the intended exercise of gathering a broad range of opinions meant to inspire legislative assemblies to look for political implementation was reduced to a kind of opinion poll with a choice between two positions, SPLA versus NCP.[12] The information collected was not suitable for any sort of quantitative evaluation as the participants were not representative and procedures not standardized. Like the CPA itself and other negotiations in and about Sudan and South Sudan, the popular consultations were hijacked by elite positions and reduced to narrowly defined alternatives rather than including a broad range of views and ideas (Young 2015b).

The other state (not in the focus of this chapter) where popular consultations were supposed to be held was South Kordofan, also known as Nuba Mountains. Whereas elections were held in 2010 in the rest of the country, disagreement regarding census figures caused them to be postponed in this region. War broke out when the SPLA did not accept the 2011 election results there. As a consequence, the consultations never took place. Shortly thereafter, war erupted in the Blue Nile.

In the north (the country that continued to be called Sudan after South Sudan had split off), particularly in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile states, the locally based forces of the SPLM felt cheated, abandoned, and sold off to the north by their fellow SPLM members in the Juba Government. Within what remained of Sudan, they continued their struggle for a secular "New Sudan," similar to the late Garang's vision of Sudan. The situation for them was not made any easier when, in 2017, the SPLM-N was effectively dissolved with the former chairman, Malik Agar (ex-governor of the Blue Nile state), and the former General

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subjecting the comprehensive agreement to the will of the people of the two areas (p. 221), https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SD_060000_The%20Comprehensive%20Peace%20Agreement.pdf, accessed February 4, 2020.

[12] Carter Center Urges Political Parties and Blue Nile Popular Consultation Commission to Ensure Genuine Dialogue on Key Issues in Blue Nile State, March 21, 2011; Statement on the Recent Developments of the Popular Consultations July 15, 2011, https://www.cartercenter.org/, accessed June 6, 2017.

Secretary, Yasir Arman, dismissed by the new chairman, Abdel-Aziz Al-Hilu (ex-governor of South Kordofan).

For the six years of the transitional period (2005–2011), the SPLM was part of a government of national unity,[13] with northern Sudanese bureaucrats in many cases serving ministers from the south and vice versa. SPLA ministers had NCP deputies and at the end of the day the NCP may have had more leverage. Indeed, all SPLM ministries had NCP deputies, and it was understood that the NCP person held the power. But ostentatious displays of status and conspicuous consumption by southern elites became part of the Khartoum lifestyle. Oil had started to flow. In 1999, Sudan managed to produce enough oil for its own needs for the first time, and since then it became an oil exporting country throughout the CPA period (2005– 2011). In 2011, due to the loss of the oilfields in South Sudan, the exported amount decreased, but the oil kept flowing from South Sudan through Sudan to Port Sudan, providing Sudan with high transfer fees. In 2012, the SPLM government in South Sudan stopped oil production because of a disagreement with Sudan on transfer fees to Port Sudan. So, a period of relative peace coincided with a period of a relatively relaxed budget situation.

War and peace also had effects on rural life, even far from the war zone. In the state of Sennar and other areas along the Blue Nile River in which Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, Awad Alkarim Tijani, and I conducted field research in agricultural villages in this period, laborers from the south no longer wore rags but fashionable jeans and T-shirts. The farmers complained that the costs of labor were rising, which put them in a difficult position as prices for their products did not rise proportionally.

Wages in Sudan never have been freely negotiated. Only late in the colonial period slavery has been abolished and been fully replaced by wage labour. Abolition often led to problems because the wages of the ex-slaves often did not meet the minimal costs of living which before had been carried by the masters. Later, large parts of the work force in agriculture has been composed of refugees as a result of the turbulent politico-military history of the country, and as these refugees had nowhere to go back to and nowhere else to go, they had no bargaining power and wages remained depressed. So, cheap labor—at worst, forced, at best, not quite voluntary—from slaves (who received no wages and were kept at low costs) and underpaid refugees, has been an essential part of Sudanese agriculture for most of its history.

Now, the southern Sudanese had other alternatives. They could go to the south where foreign aid poured in, the price of rent in Juba was increasing and Kenyan and Ugandan traders were setting up businesses. There, a remigrant might find employment and at least better chances of survival than before, during the war. To have alternatives elsewhere also gave them a better bargaining position in the north. It would be another six years after the beginning of the CPA period, before the region would see independence and the subsequent expulsions of South Sudanese from Sudan (2011). It is safe to say that it was better to be a southern Sudanese in the north during this period than any point in the past or future.

Most importantly, although fluctuations in the levels of violence in Darfur continued most of northern Sudan experienced peace. Fighting between the SPLA and the South Sudan Defense Forces (SSDF), two long-competing forces within Sudan, ended with the Juba Declaration of January 2006, which provided for the integration of the SSDF soldiers into the SPLA. The engagement of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) had ended with the CPA

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[13] CPA Ch. II "power sharing," Naivasha May 26, 2004, Part II 2.2.2.1.

in 2005. In northern Sudan, the TV features celebrating martyrs and martyrdom were no longer on the air, and parents no longer needed to fear that their sons would be lured or pressed into the army. Many people might remember these six years as the best time Sudan has ever had. The same was not true in South Sudan, where sporadic fighting particularly affected the Greater Upper Nile (Young 2012). However, in much of the Sudan, especially the central areas of the north, big projects were implemented (or at least started); there was foreign investment, often Chinese, and a building boom. At the time of writing (2016 to 2019) the city landscape of Khartoum is filled with buildings from that period, often only half-finished.

That relatively peaceful period ended when the SPLM governors of the northern Sudan (now Sudan) states of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, lost their offices and took up arms. Since then, both states can be seen in a broader picture, as part of the violent half circle on the new, post-2011, margins of Sudan. This region, called by some Third Sudan, stretches from Darfur via the border regions with South Sudan to the Red Sea. In both Darfur and eastern Sudan (Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref states) there are armed counter-powers with whom the Khartoum government has had to negotiate. The Darfur "peace process" has dragged on without a conclusion for over a decade, while the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement, signed in 2006, has never been properly implemented,[14] especially as far as promised development funds are concerned. It is only a matter of speculation of when, rather than if, troubles will resume there.[15]

Sudan thus seems to be in the process of shedding its second layer of periphery. After losing South Sudan to independence, it does not even seem able to integrate the proximate south, "the south of the north." Malik Agar and Yasir Arman want to reform the whole of Sudan, but they will hardly be in a position to do so. Abdel-Aziz al-Hillu advocates self-determination of the Nuba Mountains (South Kordofan). These layers of periphery are best visualized as an onion, whose layers can be removed, one by one, until no onion is left. South Sudan seems to be going down the same path. South Sudan may even break up first.

It is too early to say whether the revolution that started in 2019 will change this pessimistic picture. Peace is high on the agenda of the Freedom and Change movement, and there is plenty of good will to address regional imbalances and to solve the internal conflicts of Sudan. But travelling in Sudan in early 2019, when the demonstrations and sit-ins were in full course in Khartoum, I wondered how little the countryside was affected by these events. Rural people suffered from some of the same shortages, like that of gasoline, which had triggered the crisis. But I was surprised to find that national politics was not the dominant theme in the conversations around me, there. The protests and the convictions articulated in Khartoum and some larger provincial towns seemed to be an urban phenomenon (time of writing: August 2019).

There are also dominant and marginalized ethnicities and regions in South Sudan, but unlike the ongoing[16] violence in Sudan, the recent fighting in South Sudan has not been

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[14] GlobalSecurity (2014).

[15] John Young (2006a, 2007) describes the NCP politics of isolating the Beja Congress by striking a deal with their former supporter Eritrea and by insisting of treating the conflicts in the peripheral areas of the Sudan (Darfur, Southern, Kordofan, Blue Nile, Eastern Sudan) strictly as issues to be dealt with separately and in separate fora. See also Pantuliano (2014, 165) and Calkins (2014, 197).

[16] "Ongoing" here does not necessarily mean incessant and high-level. The frontlines in the Blue Nile state and South Kordofan appear to have stabilized and violence may only be intermittent. An army member told me in 2018 how tired the army is of fighting and by 2019 a lot of attention may also have been absorbed by events in Khartoum.

between the center and the margins but within the center itself. Until recently, it has almost exclusively been between two dominant groups that had been fighting for the control of the country for many years. On one side were the Nuer who were mostly in the SSDF and in alliance with Khartoum. On the opposing side were the Dinka, the dominant component of the SPLA that "won" the war of separation (by forcing the government of Sudan to join the peace negotiations that led to the CPA of 2005 and ultimately to separate statehood in 2011). Their so-called win came with the aid of many outside factors, such as political pressure put on Sudan by the US to negotiate for peace, knowing that the SPLA had not come close to defeating the SAF and that parts of southern Sudan were actually controlled by the rival SSDF (Young 2006b). Power games within the SPLM/A have an international dimension because different fractions had different foreign sponsors. But as far as the local and ethnic dimension is concerned, one can say that they have always been between Dinka and Nuer groups and their leaders.[17]

The present split in the government has strong parallels with the SPLA's Dinka-Nuer split in 1991, involving the same Nuer leader, Riek Machar.[18] Though the current, now (2018) five-year-old, conflict initially involved only two ethnicities and can therefore be called an "ethnic conflict," this term should not mislead us to believe that ethnicity or cultural difference is the cause of it.[19] Rather, it is similarity leading to competition that makes the Nuer and Dinka rivals. They have a long tradition of warfare,[20] maintain similar forms of social organization, speak related languages, and, especially because of the large number of Dinka incorporated into Nuer society,[21] share most of their ancestry.[22] They practice similar forms of agro-pastoralism, which means they compete for the same resources. Their leaders and the educated among them also share the common ambition to run the country. The history of conflict between their pastoralist followers, moreover, helps them to mobilize their communities. In fact, the acquisition of the state as a resource and the practice of pastoralism are not just parallel activities but closely interwoven. Army officers and government employees with urban residences might still invest in herds of cattle kept for them by relatives. Lack of trust in the currency leads to money being quickly converted into cattle and ultimately into wives who again give birth to sons, who need cattle for bridewealth, and to daughters, for whom bridewealth might be received. Commanders may have twenty or so wives from different kin groups as a political resource; it narrows the risk of potential revenge by broadening the in-group (Berger 2014). Similarity, not difference, and competition for the same sort of resources, was thus at the root of the renewed outbreak of violence,[23] which started between Nuer and Dinka and later involved others, as far as structural causes are concerned. Of all South Sudanese, the Nuer came closest to the Dinka in terms of fighting skill, warlike traditions, and proximity to state power, and so the Dinka dominated government had more reason to fear Nuer than any other ethnic group. This fear was expressed in private military forces established by Salva Kiir, who were recruited exclusively among coethnics, a system also applied to other government forces.

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[17] Hutchinson (2009) ; Johnson (2009).
[18] de Vries (2013, 165); Walraet (2013, 175).
[19] Schlee (2008).
[20] Sahlins (1961).
[21] Sahlins (1961, 339, 341); Evans-Prichard (1940, 125 ff.).
[22] For similar dynamics between Nuer and Anywaa, see Feyissa (2011).
[23] Cf. Schlee and Horstmann (2018).

These were the structural causes, but not the triggers of the renewed violence. In December 2013, Dinka-led Juba government forces massacred thousands of Nuer civilians in Juba. The desire to avenge these atrocities led to spontaneous mobilization of Nuer youths. Following a pattern that has existed since 1991, the Nuer youths mobilized community defense forces, known as white army forces, or rather a plurality of such armies because there was no formal military hierarchy encompassing them all. Later, some of these were coordinated with or even incorporated into the regular army contingents loyal to the SPLA-IO. Riek Machar claimed to speak for all of these military forces, "white" or regular ("black"), in the context of internationally sponsored peace negotiations, but the fervor of the Nuer forces was fueled by the desire for revenge against the Dinka and the desire to rid the country of Salva Kiir, who was held responsible for the Juba massacre (Young 2015a, 2016).

Precolonial states in Africa and Asia (if not universally) had the strongest articulation of statehood at the center while their power petered out at the margins into a stateless zone or the weakly controlled margins of another state (Schlee 1992). But in South Sudan, the most recent "nation"-state to come into existence, much of the state-like behavior is exhibited on its margins, on the boundaries. The thesis has been quite plausibly put forward that the country is being built up from its borders, although not so much by borderland peoples as by members of the politico-military class who man border posts and run businesses across the borders.[24] Instead of being marginal, the resource-rich and contested boundary with Sudan is the focus of attention, with the other borders also being fertile ground for the emergence of statehood. The state has been able to project such an image even at the border to Uganda, as de Vries (2013, 157) explains in a discussion of a disagreement between local police and the South Sudan government (GoSS) police: "[The local police] felt subordinated and occasionally intimidated by the implied superiority of the GoSS agents, whose understanding of themselves and their role derived from their guerrilla repertoire and their predominantly Nilotic background, which they broadly associate with power."[25]

The ongoing fighting in South Sudan reminds us of the factional wars in Somalia in the 1990s in at least one way. Until 2015, the conflicts had not involved marginal people striving for representation, participation, and an end to oppression (which is the pattern seen in South Kordofan and Blue Nile in neighboring Sudan). That is, they do not involve these marginal people *as fighters* or as party to the conflict. They are not fighting; they are being fought about. Some of the protagonists might have political ideas meant to serve the whole country, but the gross demographic picture lets the conflict appear like an internal affair among some dominant groups of Nilotes: "national" leaders and their predominantly[26] Dinka or Nuer followers. Inside this ethnic core of the state, the Nilotic nucleus, the Nuer are clearly the numerically weaker part. With some justification, they feel sidelined by the Dinka, but they do compete for power with the Dinka, which is something many groups of the outer margin, especially the non-Nilotes, never dared to do until recently.

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[24] Schomerus, de Vries, and Vaughan (2013, 2, 9).

[25] On the continuities between the wartime military factions and the present South Sudanese army, see Jok Madut Jok (2014).

[26] The ethnic base of this political class is broad in terms of numbers as well. The Dinka make up 40% of the population of South Sudan (Dreef and Wagner 2013, 6). This is a high demographic proportion for a dominant ethnic group in the region. In Kenya, the Kikuyu comprise only some 20% of the population, while the Amhara make up about 30% of the Ethiopian population, alongside only 6% of the, until recently (April 2018), dominant Tigray.

In Somalia, there were indeed marginal and oppressed people during the 1990s: the cultivators of the south, some of whom were former slaves and of Bantu origin. They were just a resource to be appropriated by others, at least until some of them had a good harvest and could invest in firearms. Until then, the fighting was about them (along with other resources), not with them and was conducted between northern and central Somali groups of pastoral background with a fighting tradition, not unlike the Nuer and Dinka.[27]

In South Sudan we can note a similar development. The war started in 2013, triggered by the Juba massacres. The political class situated itself in this conflict to compete for state power. All relevant actors were Nilotes: Nuer or Dinka. But since 2016, much of the fighting has been between Dinka and Equatorians. Just like the agriculturalists in Somalia, the Equatorians rapidly changed from being mere victims to being fighters. A difference between the Equatorians and the agriculturalists of southern Somalia may be that the latter were appropriated as a captive work force along with their land. They were part of the loot. The Equatorians often were just expelled. Their land was needed for Dinka cattle. In Western Bahr al-Ghazal, an identical pattern can be observed. The same is true for the Greater Upper Nile region. SPLM-IO, which has its stronghold there, is a broad house that began as a largely Nuer organization but now includes fighters and politicians from many tribes. Even at its inception, many senior IO officials were from non-Nuer tribes. With the fighting increasingly shifting to the Equatorians, Henry Odwar, an Equatorian, was appointed deputy leader.

Just as there were changing alliances within the northern and central Somali clans and sub-clans, we also find alliances that cut across ethnic divides in the Nuer and Dinka clusters. Being capable of crossing the line and bringing one's followers along is a feature of political and military clout.

Moving on from these comparisons between fighting *with* marginal people and fighting *about* them, we return to Blue Nile and its cross-border dynamics with South Sudan. When the SPLM governor, Malik Agar, did not accept his dismissal and was replaced by an army officer appointed by the president, a full-scale war was waged against him and his followers. One may ask what the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N) was fighting for after it had become clear that Blue Nile and South Kordofan would not become part of South Sudan. They may have rightfully felt betrayed by South Sudan, but the enemy they were fighting against was in Khartoum, not in Juba. Part of the explanation may be that they still received support from South Sudan, which, in turn, was supported by Uganda. Whether Juba and Kampala have any policy for the people in Blue Nile and South Kordofan may be questioned, but they still find it useful to have allies there who help them limit Khartoum's power in regional politics.

Being on the same side in a conflict does not mean having the same aims. The aims of these foreign powers need to be distinguished from those of local leaders and these need not be the same as those of their followers. Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) leadership wanted to use its bases in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile to build a country-wide insurgency, but has completely failed and now simply wants to use these territories as leverage for political advantage in Khartoum. But people in Nuba Mountains now resent this game and are again demanding self-determination, not wanting to be used as cannon fodder by their leaders looking for higher positions in Khartoum. (Big positions are

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[27] Schlee (2002) versus Besteman and Cassanelli (1996).

often the reward for stopping fighting, but to get a top position one first has to prove one's military clout.)

After massive ground operations and aerial bombings, new patterns of refugee flow have arisen. For the first time, modern day South Sudan has come to be a country that receives refugees, in addition to having been and continuing to be the source of refugees for many decades. Ingessana, Uduk, and Koma have sought refuge in Upper Nile,[28] but how these refugees will fare there in view of the troubles in South Sudan is anyone's guess. In the refugee camps in South Sudan, they have not been unaffected by Sudanese politics either, like the SPLM-N leadership division. There has been fighting between Ingessana and Uduk. The Khartoum government's influence is also felt there.

5.3   War, Politics, and the Disruption of Nomadic Movements

While these groups of sedentary farmers have fled south in large numbers or have crossed into Ethiopia, nomads who used to cross from Sennar all through Blue Nile well into what is now South Sudan have now gotten stuck in Sennar, north of Damazin, for a number of years.

I shall dwell on the example of the region between the rivers Blue Nile and Sobat somewhat longer than on other areas around South Sudan, as that is where I have been doing field research since 1996, including work with Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, Awad Karim Tijani, and Al-Amin Abu-Manga on "Pastoralism in Interaction with other Forms of Land Use."[29] The processes observed and the social and political configurations encountered here, however, find their parallels throughout the whole border zone between Sudan and South Sudan. I will try to point out these parallels here and there, in an inevitably incomplete way.

For many nomads, Sinja used to be the northern turning point of their seasonal north-south migration. In the early 1990s, many Fulbe at the end of their migrations had two options. For a number of years many of them had been moving far into what is now South Sudan while others had been crossing into the Benishangul, Oromia, and Gambella states of Ethiopia.[30]

A few contextualizing words about Gambella may be in order here. In colonial times, the British had a harbor on the Sobat river (the Ethiopian stretch of which is called Baro) in Gambella and used it to connect this part of Ethiopia to the Atlantic via modern day South Sudan, modern day Sudan, Egypt, and the Mediterranean. In contrast, the French had built a railway from Addis Ababa to Djibouti and tried to steer trade toward the Indian Ocean. The Ethiopian highlands, which separate the rivers flowing west from those flowing east, both literally and figuratively, provided watersheds to foreign influences and trade.[31] Gambella was on the British side of this watershed and closely connected to what now is South Sudan.

The relationship between Ethiopia and Khartoum, however, tended to be conflictual. The history of these two countries supporting each other's armed opposition is a long one. The SPLA was established in Gambella in 1983 largely at the instigation of the Derg or at least its programmatic commitment to a united Sudan. The Derg support of the SPLA was a way to retaliate against Sudan for its unofficial support of various Ethiopian and Er-

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[28] James (2013, 216).
[29] Schlee and Shongolo (2012); Alkarim and Schlee (2013).
[30] Feyissa and Schlee (2009).
[31] See Triulzi (1981); Zewde (1976, 1991).

itrean rebel groups although support was on a very small scale. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) only supported the SPLA after the NCP tried to overthrow the regime and establish an Islamist Ethiopia. EPRDF support for the SPLA also took place in the context of regional opposition to the NCP and this was supported by the US. Gambella, marginal as it may be in all other aspects, was central to these power games. But since 2013 or 2014, in spite of all this, relations between Addis and Khartoum have been surprisingly close, and in 2016 Umar al Al-Bashir even attended the Nationalities Day celebrations in Gambella town, the capital of the state Gambella, as Mossa Hamid Wassie (n.d.) describes. This was neither the first nor the last time al Al-Bashir attended these yearly celebrations in different state capitals of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia.

Some Fulbe considered the Ethiopian direction preferable. On the Sudanese side (now South Sudan), Dinka militias carried out cattle raids and abducted Fulbe women. But in Ethiopia, local opinion started to form against the Fulbe and their cows, which were described as ecologically harmful and having different grazing habits from the smaller and less demanding local cows. Official fears of Islamist terrorism (of which the pastoral Fulbe were unlikely representatives) fanned the flames, and the Ethiopian option was closed to the Fulbe. The generally strained relationship between Ethiopia and northern Sudan, the part with which the West African originating Fulbe were closely associated, and Ethiopian sympathies for the cause of southern Sudan and Sudanese opposition forces certainly were of no help in this situation. Between the 1990 and 2016,[32] there appears to have been an interruption of sizable Fulbe movements into Gambella.

What remained was the option to move seasonally into what is now South Sudan. Fulbe migratory groups made arrangements with the local Dinka, sometimes paying for their safety without actually obtaining it. Fulbe actually allied themselves with or joined southern Sudanese militias. Predominantly, however, pastoral Fulbe became even more closely associated with northern Sudan. While the north-south dichotomy and local pressure to identify with one side or the other was certainly not helpful, from the point of view of local arrangements involving pasture and water, it appears to have been inevitable. Osman (2009, 2013a, 2013b) shows how the Fulbe, who formerly had a reputation of being peaceful, evasive, and always preferring withdrawal to a fight, became more militant and assertive with the backing of the Khartoum government. They were not only provided with arms but with a measure of social security as well, receiving *zakat* (which in the Sudanese case stands for a tax for the poor collected by the state) in the case of the death of a provider or loss of animals.

One prominent figure is Salih Bank, a Pullo (singular of Fulbe) from South Kordofan who developed a following in the Blue Nile region and founded the Katiiba Maa Yanoom (the militia of those who do not lie down). He was believed to possess magic powers that would protect his fighters from bullets so that they would not have to seek cover during an exchange of gunfire. He died of bullet wounds in 2002 (Osman and Schlee 2014).

With the CPA in 2005, the SPLM became a legal and recognized party in northern Sudan as well. In Blue Nile, it had a power sharing arrangement involving the rotation of offices with the National Congress Party, the party of President Omar al Al-Bashir. Being in power in what would later become South Sudan, the SPLM/A was the obvious partner for nomadic groups that needed to cross the emerging north-south divide, and many Fulbe made arrangements with them. Some Arab groups succeeded in doing the same, overcoming the

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[32] Interview by Elhadi Ibrahim Osman at Kineeza, March 31, 2016.

suspicions the SPLM/A had because of the role northern nomads had played in various rival militias.

These arrangements did not help them when South Sudan officially became a separate country in July 2011. Along with many Rufaʿa al-Hoi Arabs,[33] the other major pastoral element in the region, the nomadic Fulbe were expelled from South Sudan. With the war renewed after the dismissal of the SPLM governor, Malik Agar, Khartoum again armed the Fulbe, this time against Malik Agar's "rebels." It later disarmed them again, apparently for fear of independent action and under pressure from large land "owners."

In the southern reaches of the state of Sennar, there are now vast spontaneous settlements of Fulbe and Rufaʿa whose nomadic routes have been closed. The Khartoum government, remembering the services of their former allies, has decreed that 10 percent of the large-scale mechanized farms should be given back to the nomads to be used as pastures. Many of these farms are in fact technically illegal, as they are not in the zone designated for farming. But the governor (*wali*) of Sennar, himself a large-scale agricultural entrepreneur, has not implemented this directive.[34]

Ethnic interpretations are easily overdone. Local (Nuba) cultivators in the Nuba Mountains (South Kordofan) have complained about the government's pro-nomad (which in this setting amounts to pro-Arab) bias and spoken of "imposed stock routes."[35] In Darfur, the national government is in an uneasy alliance with pastoralist militias, and in many parts of the state well-armed pastoralists go where they like and take what they want.[36] These stock routes are defended with little success by range management officers in Blue Nile and Sennar, whose efforts appear somewhat desperate. More powerful players, such as state ministers who double as mechanized farmers, began encroaching on their land a long time ago, even denying rights granted to nomads by higher levels of government.[37] For those confronted by more powerful Arabs, having Arab ancestry is of little help.

The stock routes are typically two-kilometer-wide corridors of pastureland that connect wider pockets of pasture with each other and include water points and markets. They are official and well-documented but often disregarded in practice. Pastoralists who are sued for crop damage by farmers who are illegally using the land for agricultural purposes are usually held liable by local councils dominated by farmers. However, pastoralists might be found right and even successfully claim compensation for any harm done to their animals if they make it to a court of law. Judges who are not corrupted by power and money often side with pastoralists as do dedicated range management officers who want to revitalize the official policy, which they find to be good and sustainable for the overall economy and the natural environment. One other civil service group often allies with the pastoralists. At state level, the ministries of agriculture have different departments for rain-fed agriculture, for pasture and fodder, and for forestry. The "forest people" often sympathize with the pastoralists and want to maintain the stock routes. The routes allow for the survival of trees and shrubs (not

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[33] Ahmed (1974).

[34] The *wali* stepped down in 2015 and has had four successors since, two of them since the regime change in 2019. But still nothing tangible has been done with regard to land allocation and provision f social services to the returnee pastoralists.

[35] Komey (2013, 135).

[36] Musa Adam Abdul-Jalil (2015) describes the war economy in Darfur. Some traditional stock routes are blocked while pastoralists in other areas are unimpacted and even graze standing crops of agriculturalists with impunity.

[37] Schlee (2013).

to speak of grasses and herbs), which would fall victim to bulldozers and plows outside these corridors.[38]

State representatives, such as those in the forestry department, who prioritize "the creation of public goods," as Alex de Waal calls it, are rare compared to those who are guided by personal or more small group interests.[39] Apart from the occasional support by judges who are concerned with justice and civil servants who want to do their duty, the situation as a whole has forced many pastoralists stuck in Sudan to return to South Sudan, irrespective of cost or safety. Agricultural fields not only encroach on areas reserved for pastoralists, but it has been reported that farmers may even burn the grass and other natural vegetation around their fields to oblige the pastoralists go buy crop residues like the stalks of sorghum left standing after harvest from them.[40] Such situations put pastoralists in an increasingly difficult position as money is extorted from them wherever they go and necessary resources for their production are more and more commercialized. Across Africa, farmers and herders long had a mutually beneficial relationship. Herders could graze their livestock on stubble fields at no cost, and the manure left behind by the animals was free fertilizer for the farmers.[41] Now, pasture rights on stubble fields are sold. In years when grain production fails, the withered, immature cereals are only accessible with payment. Likewise, in places where grain production is not even attempted, land owners or controllers demand payment to access natural vegetation. The price of stock for slaughter does not reflect these new categories of cost (Osman and Schlee 2014). Pastoralists are fortunate if they get crop residues at all, even for money. Some farmers have been reported to burn crop residues so as to keep pastoralists away. Today, farmers regard dung as a source of seeds of weeds rather than a fertilizer. Agronomic rationality seems to change with group relations. The exclusionist attitude about nomads is transferred to the dung of their animals. All of these incidents pressure pastoralists out of Sudan and back into South Sudan.

Regarding the situation on the border of Kenya and South Sudan at the other end of the country, Immo Eulenberger (2013, 75) states: "Pastoralists on both sides of the border refuse to take [it] more seriously than the vital needs of the animals they rely on [...]. [T]hey routinely expose themselves to the consequences entailed by movement into territory prone to attacks." Some Fulbe also decided they would have to take their animals back into South

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[38] Interview by Elhadi Ibrahim Osman and Al-Amin Abu-Manga with Osman Al-Arabi, Damazin, June 16, 2013.

[39] "Most members of the political elites of northeast Africa have failed to create basic public goods, and many have abandoned the effort and come to resemble gangsters rather than civic political leaders" (de Waal 2015b, 9). Note that de Waal here speaks of politicians, not of civil servants or judges. Civil servants may of course collude with the political leadership, they may have to carry out orders issued by them, and they may be corrupt. But even de Waal, whose basic point is about venality, underlines the commitment of bureaucrats to maintain order and to keep institutions functional in some cases. For example, he mentions the uninterrupted continuity of statehood in Ethiopia (not all parts of Ethiopia, of course). When the TPLF moved into Addis Abeba and took power in 1991, it was three days before public service salaries were due. The state personnel were told to come to work, and salaries were paid on time (de Waal 2015b). One might call that a transcontinuity, i.e. a continuation across a revolutionary change (Janssen 1992; Schlee 2002). Young notes that the "bureaucratic state" has firmer roots in Sudan than in South Sudan (Young 2015b). This term may refer to commitment rather than technical capability. Alex de Waal observes: "The South Sudanese were perfectly capable of running institutions and developing their country. But Salva Kiir and the leadership had other priorities" (de Waal 2015b, 101).

[40] Interview Ali Osman al-Arabi.

[41] Fricke (1969; 1979); Diallo, Guichard, and Schlee (2000). Regarding Darfur, Musa Adam Abdul-Jalil (2014, 112) writes: "The nature of that relationship [between pastoralists and farmers] has transformed from complementarity to conflict. The same nomads whom the sedentary used to invite to camp on their farms so that the soil would benefit from animal manure are now barred from passing by the village."

Sudan, regardless of cost. And the costs turned out to be considerable indeed. Local administrations charge them all sorts of so-called taxes, often one in addition to others, including *dariibat ad-diginiyya* (beard tax, SDG 2,000 (about EUR 220) from every grown man), *dariibat qalam ahmar* (red pen tax, SDG 1,500 from every person), *dariibat ad-dul* (shade tax, SDG 1,500 from every person), *dariibat al-qutaʿan* (herd tax, SDG 3,000 to 5,000 according to herd size), *dariibat al-fariq* (camp tax, SDG 20,000 to 30,000 according to camp size). Some Fulbe have gone as far as the Sobat River, paying all along the way.

A note on Fulbe relations with South Sudanese, based on interviews Elhadi Ibrahim Osman conducted with Fulbe elders in the village of Kineeza in Sennar on March 31, 2016, allows us to describe some more aspects of these recent interactions.

Traders from this village in Sudan hire a tractor and a trailer and take consumer goods such as sugar and sorghum flour to the area of Girinti in South Sudan to sell to the pastoral Fulbe groups who congregate there during the dry season. There are no Rufaʿa al Hoi in Girinti. The last point they reached is Kashkaash in the Upper Nile area, not far from Buut.

One of these traders stated his dislike of the Nuer because they extract payments from northern traders. He has therefore avoided the Nuer areas (Jikaw and the surroundings of Nasir)[42] and trades mainly with Dinka. He noted that the way the Dinka treat them is getting better year by year and there is no rigid system of fees and taxes as before. He describes this as a kind of normalization of the relations between the Dinka and northern traders after secession.

In contrast to the Fulbe traders, the pastoral Fulbe have good relations and arrangements with the Nuer allied to Riek Machar. (We repeatedly heard comparisons between Malik Agar and Riek Machar in favor of the latter.) Fulbe relations with the Thawra Jikani (Jikani Revolution, one of the militias), as with the rest of the Nuer, are good as long as the Fulbe make the payments demanded by the Nuer. The traditional authorities of both sides, like the Nuer chief Kong from Daat, the Fulbe leaders Omda Bayda, Omda Osman of Uuda Fulbe, and Omda Adam Gawe (killed in 2017)[43] of the Woyla Fulbe, mediate conflicts between their respective groups. Nuer chiefs regularly come to collect money from the Fulbe.

The number of those livestock traders from Sudan has increased and the growing demand has led to rising livestock prices. These traders have more problems with authorities in Sudan than in South Sudan. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Buut only allow a limited quantity of consumer goods to go south and confiscate excess goods.

From an interview conducted by Elhadi Ibrahim Osman in Jar Maare just north of Damazin on May 5, 2016, we learned that the Fulbe have benefited from the fighting between the Nuer and the Dinka, which started in December 2013, as they can buy arms from both of them. Fulbe live in the lands of both Nuer and Dinka and have had conflicts with both, but conflicts with the Nuer are reputedly easier to resolve. Since the Nimeiri regime, clashes with the Dinka have led to long lasting hostilities but their clashes with the Nuer have been short. "We disagree with the Nuer today and might agree with them tomorrow."

Fulbe experience the lack of space and freedom of movement in the north as confinement and many of them have to move with their herds to the south. Older herders are tired of the sedentism forced on them in Sudan and join the younger generation with the herds in South Sudan. They say: "Let whatever happens to them also happen to us!" They are

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[42] Nasir town has been under the control of the government, i.e. Dinka, for many years. The trader is referring to the rural areas populated by Nuer pastoralists.

[43] He was killed in a quarrel over water allocation. (Conversation with Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, December 7, 2017).

aware of the risks. The south is said to be a place where cattle suffer from flood and flies. Moreover, the place is detached and there are no urban centers or markets anywhere near. One Fulbe sheikh is said to travel as far as Juba riding his bulls.

By contrast, Rufaʿa Arabs have only ventured into the neighboring Renk area of Upper Nile, where parts of the local population are also Arabs. They did not have to pay any taxes there.[44]

On October 23, 2016, the land conflict between Rufaʿa (ex-)nomads who were stuck in Sennar and local forces turned violent. We say "local forces" instead of "the state" or "local (economic) elites" because it is not always clear whether state agents act on behalf of the state or on their own behalf. The redistribution of land had not been carried out systematically. Some land was given to the ex-nomads, but it may have been land for which the yearly fees had not been paid by their agro-entrepreneurial occupants or had reverted to the government ownership for some other reason. People spoke of token transfers. Other areas remained contested. One large-scale farmer, Kenaana by tribe, claimed a field on which Rufaʿa ex-nomads had grown sesame. Rather than letting the Rufaʿa harvest, he told the police that he ceded the field to them and that they should harvest it. The police, in turn, tried to stop the Rufaʿa from harvesting so that they could harvest the sesame for themselves and killed two of them. The others withdrew and informed their clansmen in Mazmuum. A larger Rufaʿa force then attacked the police unit, known as Abu Teera (the ones with the bird), killed many of them, and set a four-wheel drive mounted with a machine gun on fire. They also burned down the farm of the Kenaana man.

The conflict had been foreseeable. A month before, ʿUmar Abu Roof, an SPLA member and former minister in the Sennar state government under the National Unity Government (2005–2011) turned representative of the Rufaʿa family Nazir, had gone to Khartoum to alert the government about the harassment of Rufaʿa returnees from South Sudan by the police and the resulting growing unrest.[45]

Our interviews about these matters point to numerous inequities and paradoxes. Land for ex-nomads who have been cut off from their pastures in South Sudan is normally taken from traditional small-scale farmers rather than the big schemes (*mashaariʿ*). The latter are "registered and everything" and the authorities do not dare to interfere with their holders. According to the presidential order from Al-Bashir, if 1,000 feddan of land were taken from these large allotments then 200 feddan (20 percent) would be given to farmers who had cultivated (sometimes even officially!) inside the stock corridors.[46] This order was intended to indirectly help the nomads by clearing the routes but they in fact only got back what had been theirs anyhow. If they even got it back. By 2013, only one route had been opened.[47]

In this section we explored an example of the identification of the state or the state class with a certain economic activity (with large-scale agriculture at the expense of pastoralism), be that a relationship of personnel overlap, part-time engagement in different activities, in-

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[44] Conversation with and e-mail from Ibrahim Mustafa Mohammed Ali, Khartoum, March 18, 2014.

[45] Conversation with Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, Khartoum, November 28, 2016.

[46] Land within the stock corridors has been allocated officially to agriculturalists by the Ministry of Agriculture of the state of Blue Nile. This designation may help to explain their demanding attitude. Agriculturalists who settle inside the stock routes also use fields as traps (known as *champs piège* in West Africa). They have provoked crop damage in order to be able to sue the pastoralists. They have also acted in quite violent ways. (Interview by Al-Amin Abu-Manga and Elhadi Ibrahim Osman with Omda ʿUsman al-ʿArabi, Damazin, June 16, 2013).

[47] Interview by Al-Amin Abu-Manga with Mustafa Daa'uud, Administrative Director of Planning, Blue Nile, Damazin, June 19, 2013.

strumentalization of state-derived power for personal business activities, or kinship and pa-
tronage relations between the two spheres. Often, it is simply the same persons involved.
Umbadda (2014, 42) describes the absentee landlords in possession of large mechanized
schemes as being "mostly merchants from major towns, ex-army officers and retired gov-
ernment officials."[48]

This overlap between state and economy, including violence-based forms of economy,
also corresponds with a regional pattern. In Uganda's Karamoja District, Knighton (2003)
discovered another overlap of statehood and economy. In his article "The State as Raider"
about Karamoja District, he describes how disarmament of the pastoralists has enormously
facilitated cattle raiding by the army. A similar relationship has been found by Walraet in
South Sudan. The special relationship between a perceived Dinka domination and statehood
in South Sudan has already been briefly mentioned, with Walraet (2008, 53) describing the
relations "between the SPLM/A and the numerous Equatorian ethnic groups, who view the
SPLM/A as a vehicle of Dinka domination," as tense. Apart from forcefully appropriating
the tobacco grown by the Didinga, Dinka in state employment or connected to Dinka in
state employment engage in cattle raiding and have monopolized the transborder cattle trade
with Uganda (Walraet 2008). The SPLA, instrumentalized by their Dinka officers, has also
attempted to control the artisanal gold mining carried out by Toposa (Walraet 2013, 177). It
goes without saying that the proceeds from such activities are not state revenue but end up in
the possession of groups and individuals rather than institutions that regulate accountability
and pursue institutional purposes. When the so-called nation does not identify with the state,
and the state, likewise, does not identify with the nation, then these events beg the question
who and what the state is, and who controls it. We shall come back to those questions after
dwelling for a few more moments on the connections between armed force and agriculture
and some of the consequences of that connection.

5.4   The Militarization of Agriculture and Migration to Europe

That agriculture, in the wider sense that includes livestock production, is increasingly car-
ried out in arms is evident from some of the examples mentioned in the preceding section.
Herders have to defend their herds from raiders, including the armed forces of the state. A
landowner gives the right to harvest a crop to the police, and the latter do not manage to
harvest because they meet armed resistance from those who have planted the crop. The list
of examples of armed agriculture can be expanded. In peripheral areas of Ethiopia one can
find farms run by army officers with their soldiers as workers and defenders of the crop.

In the area highlighted by this study, the lowlands around the Blue Nile, the president
of Sudan stationed a unit of former Janjawiid (known as Janjaweed in an anglicized mis-
spelling) from Darfur as "rapid deployment forces" ("rabbits," in local pronunciation). For
a while, local people compared them favorably with other armed forces, because they were
not from the area, not tied to local interests, and also comprised people of pastoralist back-
ground. Then their leader, Hemeti, was rumored to have appropriated a large chunk of land
near Mazmoum in the part of Sennar and to have started agriculture. Whatever the arrange-
ment was, his soldiers were instrumental in keeping pastoralists out. Local farmers, often
those who had leased parts of their land to him, settled around Hemeti's forces to benefit

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[48] See also, Ahmed (2008, 4).

from their protection.[49] In other parts of the country, Hemeti is said to have used the Jan-
jawiid to bring gold extraction under his control. (In a different context and over two years
later, these Janjawiid became notorious for their brutality against demonstrators in Khar-
toum. They moved around town in long convoys of Toyota Land Cruiser pick-ups, and it
was they, not the military, who emerged from the gate of the military General Command
into the camps of demonstrators in front of it and committed the massacre in June 2019.
On whose order they acted remains a contested matter. In the context of the negotiations
between the Freedom and Change forces and the military in August 2019, an amnesty for
the Rapid Support Force has been discussed and Hemeti has become a member of the New
Sovereign Council.)

There are two dimensions of this "militarization of agriculture" that deserve to be ex-
plored in the future. One is historical and one is contemporary. The first is the obvious
parallel with feudalism in Europe, which was based on the same principle, namely armed
groups acquiring agricultural lands, exploiting those who cooperate with them and killing
those who do not. What are the merits and what are the limits of this comparative perspec-
tive? The other one is migration to Europe. Resources in the rural sector are forcefully
appropriated by some people. In other words, those resources are taken from others who
are deprived of their livelihoods. Typically, those deprived of their rural livelihoods would
pursue as much education as they could get, move to a regional town or the capital city, fail
to find proper employment, engage in occasional labor or petty trade (like street hawkers),
and then try to migrate to Europe or North America. Migration to Europe started with rela-
tively well-to-do people, and it continues to be expensive and no option for the poorest of the
poor. It seems to be a phenomenon among those who believe in the promises of education,
progress, and development, having pursued these goals to some extent before being disap-
pointed by their failure to bring concrete improvements. The inexpensive areas of Khartoum
(not the slums and not the posh areas) are where one hears stories of friends and family who
have migrated and may encounter people paying condolences to the families that have lost
relatives in the Mediterranean.

The precise links between the militarization of agriculture (and rural injustice and mis-
management in general) and migration to Europe and elsewhere (labor migration to Saudi
Arabia is relatively well studied) remain to be explored. It may well be that with new forms
of connectivity, smartphones, and the internet, people may jump stages increasingly and
move directly from rural areas to Europe.

Migration is, of course, also a point of comparison between the historical and contem-
porary extensions of the militarized agriculture theme. A large segment of the American
population descends from those who fled feudalism in Europe. Much has changed since
then; the world has been impacted by colonialism, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise
and fall of empires. But some factors have remained. Possession and dispossession of land
played a role in the European migration to America just as it does in the African migration
to Europe now.

5.5   Identity Issues: Who Is the State and for Whom Does It Exist?

Governments often base some of their legitimacy on the claim that they act in the inter-
est of their people (Schlichte 2004, 150–151). The question of course is: whom do they

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[49] Conversation with Elhadi Ibrahim Osman, Abu Naʿama, December 7, 2017.

regard as their people and how do they produce the image of this representation? These questions are difficult to answer and their responses can vary substantially from case to case as illustrated in a comparison of compensation policies for agricultural landowners whose properties are now submerged by water reservoirs following dam constructions. Around 1970, Lake Nasser in the north of Sudan and the adjacent areas in Egypt filled up due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam, and the Nubian riverine gardens and irrigated fields around Halfa were submerged. The Sudanese government then did the obvious and compensated the displaced farmers with farmland elsewhere. New Halfa was subsequently founded in eastern Sudan on irrigated land in the new Khashm al Girba scheme (Sørbø 1985). People from Wadi Halfa were not used to the occasional rain and had to cope with malaria, but it was still a form of compensation.

Agricultural lands, including prime land for flood recession cultivation, have now been submerged in another area as well, with a ten-meter rise in the dam at Roseiris. The reservoir behind it has expanded accordingly, affecting a large area since it is located in a vast alluvial plain. That this extended, shallow lake also has an enormous surface exposing it to evaporation under a merciless sun is of no concern to the local people but might be an issue to regions downstream, further north. Along the new shoreline and in the area below the dam, where open range and rain-fed agricultural fields will be converted into irrigated land, large portions have been and will be allocated to foreign investors. To the local farmers, and now ex-farmers, this has been promoted as "development," with the promise that they will find jobs in large-scale agro-businesses. But will they? It is unclear how much labor is actually needed in modern, mechanized farming. In one case, it was obvious that farmers needed to be compensated with land to be able to remain farmers while, in the other case, the demotion from being a farmer to being a laborer on someone else's farm was presented as a blessing for the affected people. We shall now explore the reason for this difference.

The explanation might be found through an analysis of identity. With whom does the government identify? And who do they identify as the Sudanese people, the people they represent? Does the "nation" include all citizens in the modern sense equally? There is no doubt that the Nubians are real Sudanese. A substantial proportion of the ancestry of the northern riverine Sudanese is Nubian, irrespective of the Arab genealogies tracing patrilineal links back to the Qureysh, the tribe of the Prophet, which many of them have adopted. Even those who claim to be Arab along patrilineal lines would often not deny that their grandmothers were Nubian. But identity becomes more complicated south of Roseiris and Damazin, the area affected by the heightened dam. This region is home to the Gumuz and the Berta, who also live on the Ethiopian side of the border, the Hausa and the Fulbe, who live in Nigeria and Niger as well, and the Ingessana, who have resisted Islamization locally for a long time. Furthermore, there are representatives of many other smaller groups who are descendants of slaves. Their ancestors were not regarded as citizens in any sense, rather as resources, until just over a century ago. It does not seem to occur to the political class that farmers who have lost their farmlands should at least be given the option of holding land elsewhere. It instead appears to be rather a matter of course to them that they should become laborers, and alternatives are not discussed in public.

While the Hausa and the Fulbe have their own traditions of statehood or have lived, like many pastoral Fulbe, in the "gaps" between West African states (Diallo 2008), the Gumuz in Ethiopia have been described by Gonzáles-Ruibal (2014) as marginal groups with a long history of withdrawal from statehood or resistance against it. The same author describes

the Berta as a composite group with different identities. They trace their history to the Funj kingdom that preceded the 1822 Egyptian conquest of the territory that makes up much of modern-day Sudan. They link themselves to northern Sudanese traders (*jallaba*) and their traditions of Islamic knowledge. But they are also Black, have pagan cultural traditions, and inhabit borderlands. On the Ethiopian side, Islam helps the Berta to differentiate themselves from other Ethiopians. In Sudan, Gumuz and Berta groups in villages along the Blue Nile had long struggled to integrate themselves with their fellow villagers in the vicinity of the state capital of Damazin. The fact that they were treated differently from the Nubians further north may have to do with culturalist and racist discrimination.

In addition, one may wonder whether the advancement of ideas inaccurately called neoliberal about large-scale agriculture in private hands does not play a role in explaining why expropriated landowners in the 1970s were treated better than those expropriated in recent years. Of course, there is nothing liberal about this sort of neoliberalism because it is based on state intervention and forceful allocation of resources to some people at the expense of other people. Land grabbing has become more and more common throughout Africa and the threshold of shame of those who engage in it has become lower and lower. But evidence that governments have the same level of high-handedness in their own ethnic constituencies or in the areas culturally closer to them compared to geographically or culturally distant areas is still missing. We shall come back to this point in connection with Ethiopia.

The expectation (or the pretense) was that the former farmers would become agricultural laborers on what used to be their land. To date, however, the government or the new owners of their former lands so far have not even provided employment for them. In November 2014, I saw a truckload of workers from one of the settlements built for those whose villages had been flooded at Wad an Nayyal, over 100 kilometers to the north. They had been hired as day laborers by the local owner of a rain-fed mechanized agricultural scheme. This form of agriculture was called "semi-mechanized" by Ahmed (2008, 5) because only plowing is done by tractor, and harvesting still requires substantial manual labor. As previously mentioned, labor over successive periods in Sudan has been performed by slaves, West African migrants, and refugees from the war in South Sudan. Following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005), many southern Sudanese returned to southern Sudan or explored other options in 2006 and 2007. Farmers suffered because of the rising costs of labor due to these changes. The new inhabitants of these supposedly modern cities still encountered the demand for cheaper labor in rural areas, although the ones we saw at Wad an Nayyal clearly had not found work anywhere near home.

And what was the situation back at home, in and around the modern cities? This is what one official source had to say:

> Resettlement in Blue Nile Over, Karori 2012-11-13
>
> Dams Implementation Unit (DIU), Social Affairs Commissioner Dr Ahmed Al Karori confirmed that the resettlement process for all the citizens affected by the heightening of Roseris Dam is over. 'We have resettled 20,000 families in 12 modern cities equipped with all the necessary services'. Karori said adding that these services include tarmac roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, mosques, clubs and over 120,000 hectares of agricultural lands. On their part, the citizens affected by the Roseires Dam heightening considered the new settlement towns a good achievement.' Citizens are satisfied with the resettlement process, which

> was finalized smoothly and now citizens enjoy good services' said Al Amin
> Abd Al Gadir, Omda of Hamaj tribe that was affected by the heightening of the
> dam. 'This is the first time that we manage to access the various markets during
> the rainy season' said Ali Abaker, one of the resettled citizens adding that now
> his kids get education in schools closer to their homes. It is to be noted that
> the affected citizens formed cooperative societies to manage the agricultural
> projects and DIU provided farmers with all machineries and other inputs.[50]

Reality, however, looked very different. The following paragraphs are based on my notes
from a conversation with Elhadi Ibrahim Osman in Damazin on November 13, 2014.

Since the heightening of the Roseiris dam was completed in 2012, the reservoir has expanded and large areas have been flooded. The DIU had resettled people from the inundated areas into numbered modern cities, Cities No. 1–12 (*madiina waahid–madiina itna'ashr*). Numbers one to six are on the eastern bank, seven to twelve on the western bank.

Discontent rose in those cities for several reasons. First, the flooded areas were, at times, either larger or smaller than expected. In some regions, officials underestimated how much of the area would be submerged. Whole villages, who had lost their fields and homes, spontaneously resettled in the modern cities, living with relatives or building improvised sheds. They never received compensation of any sort.

Second, farmers in areas with less flooding than expected, where fields and villages remained accessible, were not more fortunate. Their lands had been taken over by the DIU (the right to live in a modern city was presented as compensation) and the DIU now appropriated the resources. Logging rights were sold and trees were felled. Some areas suitable for irrigation were rented to farmers with investment capital. In other cases, the DIU just harvested whichever crops, mainly mango, had grown and shared the returns with the prior owners. Nominally they were to receive one half, and that just for a period of three years, but they say they received only 10 percent of what they earned when they did the harvesting themselves. It goes without saying that the costs and benefits of the DIU were not accounted for and that they just paid "one half" of whatever amount they claimed to have earned.

Third, the situation of the modern city dwellers was further complicated by the military confrontation between the Khartoum Government and the forces of the deposed governor of Blue Nile. An armistice agreement with the SPLA-North (Malik Agar) guaranteed access to merchandize for the city populations, but this agreement was broken by the Sudanese government. Consequently, the cities were raided by the Ingessana, the ethnic group to which Malik Agar belongs. Malik Agar had never pursued policies to favor this group at the expense of others, but rightly or wrongly they were identified with the SPLM-N and had to suffer the consequences. As they were cut off from the supply of consumer goods, they regularly raided the markets of the modern cities. The resettled farmers, on one side, were deprived of land by the expanding lake whereas the new land owners, on the other side, were restricted in their activities by the security situation. No animals could be taken west of the road from Damazin to Geisan. Ingessana would kill herders and drive away the animals.[51]

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[50] https://web.archive.org/web/20130708014105/http://www.roseiresdam.gov.sd/en/index.php/home_en/show/ 62, accessed December 28, 2020. Also cited by Linke (2014, 89).

[51] Suffering in the Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains regions is a major preoccupation in the international community and negotiations are now (2017) under way to grant access to international aid organizations. Both sides fear if one side has control of aid, they will use it to their own advantage. People are made hostage to armed groups. With the break-up of the SPLM-N the situation has even become more difficult (John Young, personal communication).

Fourth, the fortunate former farmers were told that they would receive houses in a modern city as compensation. But these houses turned out to be euphemisms for shacks. Malik Agar, while still governor of Blue Nile, once perforated a wall of one of these so-called houses by throwing a hammer at it in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of these structures. The panels of the walls were made in China and some people attributed a new fungus disease, which affects skin, to the unidentified fibrous substances compressed to form them.

And fifth, the inhabitants of these structures, who either have received no compensation for their former lands and houses or inadequate compensation of the kind just described, are still responsible for utility fees. They pay for the electricity poles connecting them to the supply and for electricity. In principle, there is nothing wrong in paying electricity bills, but their source of income evaporated with their displacement, making such costs extremely burdensome. They must also pay for waste disposal. When their shallow latrines have filled up, they have to wait for enough neighboring latrines to fill to justify calling a truck from Damazin to empty them. During the rainy season, the rain water spreads the waste from the filled latrines evenly across the settlement.

If, in an informal context, one asks government officers about the living conditions of the former farmers of the flooded lands and their entitlements, one gets answers like, "They did not own anything anyhow"; "They are slaves"; "They are not real Sudanese."

Sadly, Sudan fits into the wider political picture that reflects this kind of graded identification between government and people. There are those who properly belong to the political entity (who represent the image the government has of their people) and others whose membership is marginal or debatable. Ethiopia is conducting similar practices on a potentially larger scale. Properties that belong to families who resisted incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire a little over a hundred years ago and who were victims of slave raids are now in the process of being emptied of people and leased at ridiculously low rates to big agribusinesses. (The same argument is used: they will be much better off as a labor resource without land, settled instead in planned villages, and waiting to be hired as laborers by the very agribusinesses in possession of their former land.)[52]

In Sudan, the government policy to promote Arab-Islamic civilization, often rather incongruously, provides a basis for distinction between supposedly authentic and inauthentic Sudanese. The discursive power exerted by governmental actors over the question of who is Sudanese has led to a few paradoxes. Darfurians, with a long-established Islamic tradition, are classified as Africans, as distinct from Arab Muslims (note the dissonant terminologies juxtaposing color adjectives with religious affiliations). Other Darfurians, pastoralists with little Islamic erudition and a similarly dark complexion, are classified as Arabs. On the other hand, so-called Nile Arabs of all complexions depict themselves as prototypical Arabs and Muslims[53] even though many of them are descendants of the Christian populations of the Nubian kingdoms that persisted well into the sixteenth century. But true or untrue, these classifications have social effects. Darfurians were among the keenest supporters of the National Islamic Front (NIF), until they belatedly realized they were not accepted by the Arab Islamists.

In Ethiopia, a similar line is drawn between the densely populated highlands and the lowlands. The core of the highlands is Semitic-speaking and Christian, but language fami-

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[52] Abbink et al. (2014).
[53] de Waal (2004); Beck (2004); Watson and Schlee (2009, 12–15).

lies no longer follow the geographical areas of altitude, nor do religions. Semitic languages are also spoken by those who do not belong to the conquerors but to the conquered, like the Gurage. Likewise, the Cushitic language family has representatives within the imperial core of the highlands (Agaw, Oromo), among conquered highland people (Sidamo, other Oromo groups), and in the lowlands (Somali, yet other Oromo, Arbore, Dasanech) to name but a few. In religious terms, Monophysite Christianity was dominant in the highlands while Catholic and Protestant missions, including Pentecostal missions, were only allowed in non-Christian areas, which is where they made their converts. Islam and traditional forms of belief (those which are not part of a world religion) are also more commonly found in the conquered highlands or in the lowlands, but there are exceptions to all these findings. More clearly than by any linguistic or religious differences, the imperial core of the highlands is circumscribed by a different type of land rights, where smallholders have recognized land property. There, development aims at drawing landed farmers into the commercial sphere. But there are divisions even within these core lands. Since the seventh century, Muslims have been denied land rights in the highlands (H. Ahmed 2006). In the lowlands, however, the lands of pastoralists, agropastoralists, and small-scale farmers are not recognized, and the state claims ownership of all land. Meanwhile, foreign and northern Ethiopian investors can acquire enormous amounts of land declared "uninhabited" for purely nominal fees (Makki 2014). In fact, in spite of the prominence of foreign direct investment in the activist discourse, many of these investors are locals. Most of the land especially in Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella was given to domestic investors. The term domestic is interesting, here. In 2010, the researcher Fekadu Adugna acquired a list of 104 investors in Benishangul- Gumuz and found that only four of them were foreigners and the remaining were domestic. According to an anonymous student researcher in 2015, one Gumuz man included in the list of investors was the head of the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State's Investment Bureau. Estimates of the proportion of Tigrayans among the investors in the lowland lay at 90 percent on the high end while in Tigray itself there are no investments in land from outside the region. The discontent with this state of affairs was among the factors that led to the change of government and the accession of Abiy, an Oromo, to the office of prime Minister in April 2018 and to a violent escalation in 2020.[54] Just as in Sudan, new economic dynamics, triggered by the 2007–2008 food crisis and the rush for land, have very diverging effects on proper citizens

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[54] According to Al-Jazeera, on Dec. 23, 2020, in the village of Bekoji in Bulen county in the Metekel zone of Benishangul-Gumuz, 207 civilians were murdered. The Ethiopian military claims to have killed 42 of the attackers in the following days. "Meanwhile, nearly 40,000 people have fled their homes due to the fighting, Bulen county spokesman Kassahun Addisu said." (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/25/death-toll-from-attack-in-western-ethiopia-reaches-222-red-cross, accessed December 28, 2020) While Al-Jazeera refers to the attackers as unidentified gunmen, it is possible to delineate at least the general ethnic fault lines (without attributing individual guilt): According to my email correspondence with Ethiopian friends the victims of the massacre ("over 260") were mostly Amhara, Agaw, Shinasha, and Oromo and the attackers were local Gumuz militias. The background of these atrocities is described in the following way: Over the past two to three years, the Ethiopian government was accusing TPLF of recruiting, training, equipping, and financing the local Gumuz to destabilize the area. Tigray, Oromo, and Amhara have been in fierce competition with each other about land and mineral resources, most importantly gold, in Benishangul-Gumuz. Since the coming to power of Abiy as prime minister, the Tigray and their party, the TPLF found themselves in isolationand supported the local Gumuz, to defend the investments of TPLF military leaders and other Tigray in land and gold mining in Beni Shangul-Gumuz. Also foreign powers are suspected to be involved in destabilizing Ethiopia. The sole evidence for this is the interpretation of their interests. Egypt perceives its water supply to be threatened by the Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile, the Sudan has a border dispute with Ethiopia over a 250 km2 stretch of land on the border in eastern Gedaref, the Faqasha area. (Email correspondence, 26/12/2020) The border dispute with Sudan, however, seems to be resolved by nego-

and on marginalized citizens. These recent developments in Sudan and Ethiopia prompt an analysis on a larger scale, specifically through a look at how regional boundaries are drawn.

Governments often go far in accommodating local forces whom they wish to integrate into their system of rule. In Ethiopia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) ousted the centralist government in a movement that supported self-determination. Since then, ethnic federalism and the celebration of diversity have been the official line (Fiseha 2006, 131–138).

For a period of its history, the TPLF went beyond self-determination within Ethiopia and subscribed to secession in the 1976 "TPLF Manifesto." The secession option was dropped again in 1978. Apparently the TPLF wanted to underline its difference to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (Berhe 2008). According to Young's (Young 1997b) "Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: TPLF 1975–1989," the TPLF was never a separatist movement but supported national self-determination within Ethiopia and also opposed Eritrean separation.

Be that as it may, both positions attribute a strong emphasis on nationalities and with that emphasis in its ideology to the TPLF, making it effectively impossible for them to pursue a centralist line openly when it found itself in power in 1991. With the TPLF at its core, a wider organization was formed, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which comprises many regional branches. The map of the country was redrawn along ethnic lines, replacing earlier administrative units that followed geographical features and lines of communication. There have been remarkable efforts to give local languages the status of literary languages,[55] often making use of the Latin alphabet, while earlier attempts had used the Amharic syllabary (*fidel*).

Below the level of the regional states, the same patterns are reproduced for smaller units. Ethnic subgroups and minority groups within these states have a special status with separate administrations and cultural rights at the *woreda* (district) or even at the *kebele* (village) level. Thus, all Ethiopians should now have, and many actually do, a territory where they enjoy special cultural entitlements as guaranteed by the constitution[56] (the limitations of which shall be discussed shortly). Exceptions are those who migrated within Ethiopia, as Mossa Hamid Wassie (n.d.) shows. But the situation is different in regards to material uses of the land, such as the right to till. Here, the Ethiopian government has reverted to remarkably strong centralism. As in Sudan (Umbadda 2014), most rural land is ultimately government land and traditional rights are treated like grants that can be revoked any time, which happens when well-connected private investors come in. In Ethiopia, regional states can lease up to 5,000 hectares to foreign investors while all contracts involving larger chunks of land are the prerogative of the MOARD (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) of the federal government (Rahmato 2011). This situation may have changed recently. According to Fekadu Adugna (personal communication) the question of who allocated the land was more a question of the power relations between the different levels of government than of the law. The late prime minister Meles Zenawi was in a position to assume the right to make allocations of more than 5000 hectares for the federal government while his successor (Hailemariam, in office until April 2018) was not in the same position. According to Ar-

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tiation. (https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/22/sudan-ethiopia-hold-border-talks-one-week-after-clash/, accessed December 28, 2020).
[55] See Griefenow-Mewis (2009).
[56] See Art. 39, 40 FDRE-Constitution.

ticle 52 (2) of the federal constitution, the basic land policy and laws are set at the federal level and the mandate to administer land is given to the respective region, not to the federal government. The prerogative to make such allocations reverted to the regional level after the death of Meles Zenawi. Since 2016 land allocations are made again exclusively by the regional level of government. Between 2010 and 2016, however, hundreds of thousands of hectares of land have been given out by federal institutions, and the regional governments now have inherited a lot of headaches to administer them.

Recent literature shows that, in a number of cases, large-scale agro-industrial land yielded a significantly smaller output than the same land when it was previously used by "traditional" smallholders (Catley, Lind, and Scoones (2013); Schlee (Schlee 2013). Nomadic pastoralism, which Markakis (Chapter 4) regards as obsolete, may also be taken as an example. This seems to apply both to the state farms of the Derg period and to the huge allocations to mostly foreign investors by the present government. Large-scale agriculture may have its advantages in terms of labor efficiency through mechanization and marketable surpluses, but these may vanish if we take into account the large amount of subsistence production that had fed the people living on the land before reallocation. Furthermore, the ecological impact of so-called oily agriculture is questionable, as it needs 12 kilocalories of fossil fuels, mainly for agricultural machinery and the transport of both inputs and products, for the production of one kilocalorie of nutrition. The fact that these government policies are not in the overall interest of the people, of the state, or of the nation again raises the question of identity in government. Governments clearly do not identify completely with the people but rather with some sections of the people more than others. If the people is taken as the reference point for cost-benefit analyses, then the explanation for these apparently irrational policies needs to be sought within narrower identity constructs as well as sub- and transnational clientelistic networks. More specific definitions of identities may also help to explain why some areas are chosen for land to be leased out while others are not.

One dimension of differentiation used to classify people, quite independently of their cultural closeness or association to government personnel, is their usefulness. The government may derive material benefits from certain sections of the population more than from others. In this case, we would not say that the government *identifies* with the kinds of people perceived as useful, because one can tax or exploit people regardless of their similarities or differences. But the government nevertheless has an interest in protecting and maintaining them. Governments try to keep taxpayers in their own territory, and they might even welcome the immigration of taxpayers from elsewhere. Ideally, they tax them in a sustainable way, which allows them to survive, maintain their productivity, and pay tax next year. The dependency of the government on the peoples' usefulness gives taxpayers a voice. "No taxation without representation" was the war cry of the American revolution. Successful claims to representation may lead to a democracy. History is rich in examples of how *demos* is defined in a democracy. Women and slaves might not be included, or the right to vote might be restricted to property owners, and different categories of people might not have the same number of votes. Even modern democracies, which are theoretically based on "one person one vote," access to power varies radically for different categories of people according to how constituencies are drawn, whether you need a university degree to stand for parliament (Kenya), how much money you need for a successful campaign (USA), not to speak of universally illegal obstacles to democratic representation like rigged elections, post-election

violence,[57] and pre-election violence.[58] In spite of all these caveats, limitations, and short-comings, one can say that democracy can lead to a kind of identification between the people (or at least the majority of whomever manages to vote) and the state institutions. If people do not vote for representatives who are like themselves, they at least vote for those who reflect their dreams and ambitions. Whether or not elected representatives identify with all taxpayers and vice versa depends on the treatment of minorities. General welfare rather than the prioritization of the interests of citizens who voted for elected officials is the cornerstone of this policy.[59] This digression into taxes and democracy does not fully solve the problem of "identification with the state and identification by the state" but leads back to it.

But the topic of taxes leads us to another question: if governments (contrary to their own claims) do not identify with the people (at least not in the sense of an undifferentiated whole), do they maybe identify with the state in a fiscal sense? Identification with the state as an apparatus or an institution varies greatly across northeast Africa depending on how established the state is and how long it has existed. Alex de Waal (2015b) reports that when the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) moved into Addis Abeba in 1991, and the Mengistu government fled, civil service salaries were due in three days. State employees were told to come to work and to keep the institutions going. The salaries were paid on time. Young (2012) explains that Sudan has a longer tradition of the bureaucratic state than South Sudan. Effective taxation however, seems to be a problem everywhere. A successful state in the fiscal sense would be one that offers good conditions for all branches of the economy and is able to tax them all in a sustainable way. Such a state would strive to gain the loyalty and cooperation of all taxpayers, a similarly broad identification like that of the people as a whole. But an effective system of taxation that is conducive to such a wider coherence appears to be missing. In marginal areas, the state (often a lower level of administrative units) sets up road blocks. Militias and other counter forces to the state might do the same. There, fees are collected for whichever state or anti-state organization has manned the barrier or are turned into bribes for the collectors. This system is a far cry from enhancing productivity and then taxing it.

A road block is a bottleneck. You tax people where they have to pass. Deriving revenue from bottlenecks is characteristic of many African countries. You get money where you most easily get hold of it, not where taxation has the best long-term effects. Charging a foreign investor a fee for leasing a huge area of agricultural land is easier than taxing the hundreds of peasants the investor will chase away. But it may be that the smaller-scale agriculture

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[57] There are numerous examples of African presidents who are voted out of office and simply do not go. They stay on by force. Ultimately, they may agree to some internationally mediated "power sharing" deal, but such an arrangement has little to do with the will of the electorate.

[58] While large-scale post-election violence, like the 2007–2008 events in Kenya, has occasionally made it into the international media, pre-election violence has received less attention although it is a regular feature of politics in many places. It correlates to ethnic bloc voting. If one can anticipate election results on the basis of the numerical balance of the members of different ethnic groups, the only way to change elections results is by changing this balance. That is done by massacre, expulsion, or intimidation so that people do not register as voters or do not dare to vote. Other frequent features of pre-election violence include the arrest of opposition candidates and interference with the right to assembly (like firing into gatherings of people).

[59] "The question of the relationship between public welfare and the interests of those in power and their clients to the patron is exchanged for services and goods received by the clients. As a result, the line between the private and the public spheres is so blurred that notions of the public good and of independent civil society are ultimately absent" (Englebert and Tull 2008, 116f).

would have had a higher overall productivity and the effort to tax the peasants effectively, fairly, and sustainably would have paid out.

Another term prominent in the discussion of revenue in Africa is "rent." Many African states are "rentier states." They get their budget (and private benefits of the state class) from foreign mining companies. We have argued that paying taxes gives a voice to tax payers. In a rentier system, foreign companies have that voice.[60]

Governments can also be sources of such rent. Governments in the global North pay governments in Africa and Asia for assisting them in the so-called War on Terror. This may have a paradox effect because the recipients of such rent are interested in a "non-zero level of terrorism" (de Waal 2015b, 185). "Many in the jihadist camp will probably find it more profitable to switch to the counter-terror business, and will find that they can organize an optimal level of terrorist threat such that US counter-terror aid continues" (de Waal 2015b, 126).

To examine different forms of revenue and the incentives they provide to different kinds of actors, we now move along the Blue Nile upstream into Ethiopia, into the area that used to be western Wollega and is now divided between the Benishangul-Gumuz regional state and Oromia. Recent research by Ameyu Godesso Roro (2017) sheds light on how ethnic federalism works here, on the interplay between ethnicity, organized in a particular system of ethnic federalism, and collective and individual material incentives, mostly connected with land rights.

From Ameyu's description of the history in and around western Wollega, it seems that the Ethiopian state has historically played a role in the inception or escalation of ethnic conflict and continues to do so today. The liberation movements that caused the downfall of the Derg regime in 1991 also had an ethnic basis.

Some movements, most prominently the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), were banned from contributing to the design of the new state, meaning the new policies were firmly grounded in TPLF beliefs. Because of the exclusion of some of these parties, the new regime was suspected of continuing the old Semitic[61] dominance, with the Tigrayans now replacing the Amhara as the senior partner in the Semitic core of the state.

In the shadow of this great dichotomy (Semitic core, non-Semitic fringe) we find the local interethnic dyad of Oromo and Gumuz. From the beginning, this relationship was not equal. The Oromo were the senior partners. Oromo clans hosted and protected Gumuz groups, and there have been strong friendships between individuals in the two groups.

With the introduction of commercial agriculture, like cotton production, inequality increased and developed into exploitation. It began under the local Oromo ruler who had become a vassal of Menelik, and increased under Haile Selassie. But there has always been interaction, not separation. Territorial separation, as carried out by the present regime in the name of traditional ethnicity, has never been part of traditional ethnicity. In earlier times

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[60] Somaliland, in spite of the lack of international recognition has been found by many authors a rather well functioning de-facto state. Somaliland is financed not only by port fees but by taxes paid by local telecommunication companies, livestock traders, and many others. The relative stability of Somaliland may be due to the fact that it is an "impecunious" non-rentier state, depending on local sources of taxation and a broad variety of these. This situation may change with international recognition followed by "development aid and mineral extraction" (de Waal 2015b, 140).

[61] Political uses and misuses of the terms "Semitic" and "Semites" abound. In political polemics in Ethiopia, these terms mostly refer to Tigray and Amhara, and not to the minority Gurage and Harrari who also speak Semitic languages.

many of the nationalities of Ethiopia did not occupy mutually exclusive territories, but intermingled. "Ethnic unmixing," a term made infamous by the Bosnian war in the 1990s, is not a consequence of what ethnicity is and always has been all about, but it is a recent change in the character of ethnicity. It is only since 1991 that each of the peoples of Ethiopia have been told that they have exclusive rights to designated territories.

Far from idealizing the past, Ameyu also describes violent interaction, slavery, and armed revolts by Gumuz. Conflicts were aggravated by imperial penetration and heavy taxation. But he also describes forms of conflict resolution by councils of elders and different forms of collective adoption, individual economic partnership, and ritualized forms of interethnic friendship.

Discussing the present regime and the introduction of ethnic federalism, Ameyu questions the sincerity of this notion. Power was never really handed down to the local or the ethnic level. The main problems people have are not with the new federal order but with its absence, with malfunctioning state institutions and the instrumentalization of state institutions by powerful groups and individuals.

In this setting, there was room for maneuver for ethnic entrepreneurs and for strategizing and changing alliances. After an initial connection to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), outlawed in 1992, the Gumuz politicians sided with the winner, the ruling EPRDF, and the landscape of political parties was reshaped accordingly. The memories of the past (or the communicated part of these memories) then started to attribute negative evaluations of the shared history of Oromo and Gumuz and to leave out all positive elements.

The main contested issue is access to land at all levels. It is useful at this point to widen the focus from Benishangul and to look at territorial rights and land ownership as described by the Ethiopian constitution of 1994.

The constitution has a speaker: "We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia." This plural speaker or collective author than allocates sovereignty to an equally plural entity, in fact to the same one. Article 8 reads: "(1) All sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia, (2) This Constitution is an expression of their sovereignty."

Article 39 specifies the "Rights of Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples." It focuses on the right of self-determination including secession, and gives language a prominent place: "(2) Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and to develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history." It goes on to address the right to establish institutions of government. But the actual relationship to the land of this entity, be it a nation, a nationality, or a people, is not so clear. Do the natural resources of a territory belong to the local nation or nationality that has a right to that land, do they belong to nations, nationalities, and peoples as a whole, at the federal level?

Article 40 specifies that "(3) The right to ownership of rural and urban land, as well as of all property of the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia and shall not be subject to sale or to other means of exchange." Upon first reading, it sounds as if the land in question belongs to the respective nations, nationalities, and peoples, but a closer reading reveals that it is their "common property." The land belongs to all of them together. In other words, the federal government, as made up by all the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia, owns the land.

What follows are two paragraphs that appear to reflect abstract norms rather than enforceable legal rights:

> (4) Ethiopian peasants have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession. The implementation of this provision shall be specified by law.

> (5) Ethiopian pastoralists have the right to free land for grazing and cultivation as well as the right not to be displaced from their own lands. The implementation shall be specified by law.

The next paragraph demands a squaring of the circle:

> (6) Without prejudice to the right of Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples to the ownership of land, government shall ensure the right of private investors to the use of land on the basis of payment arrangements established by law. Particulars shall be determined by law.

How the federal government can give land grants to private investors without prejudice to the rights of individual nations, nationalities, and peoples is not specified.

Whereas the constitution typically refers to the "peoples" of Ethiopia, the "Economic Objectives" (Article 89), curiously employs the term "people" in the singular. This distinction makes it clear that development and use of the land are primarily the prerogatives of the federal government. "(5) Government has the duty to hold, on behalf of the People, land and other natural resources and to deploy them for their [natural plural] common benefit and development."

In other words, every Ethiopian has the right to a piece of land where they can speak their own language, but not necessarily to a piece of land where they can grow what they want in the way they want. To whom the land is granted and along which lines it is to be tilled and developed is decided by the federal government.

In spite of the federal and devolutionist language and the alternating use of people and peoples, it is clear that the land in Ethiopia basically belongs to the rulers and that the higher-level rulers ultimately rule over the lower level rulers.

Ameyu describes how this hierarchical understanding of land rights came about in Benishangul-Gumuz and in former western Wollega in general. The history of land rights in this region began as a method of seizing control of land by a conqueror. Since the sixteenth century, the Oromo have divided up land and allotted it to their clans. When the Gumuz joined the Oromo south of Blue Nile in the late nineteenth century, they had to join an Oromo clan in order to be allocated land. Land allocations were also done as personal gifts to leaders. The Oromo, in turn, had to submit to the Amhara conquest and became part of the empire of Menelik.

The Komo, Gumuz, and other peoples had to seek arrangements with western Oromo chiefs, like Jote Tulu and Moreda Bakare, or they had to withdraw from lands into remote areas, not yet effectively controlled by either Ethiopia or the Sudan. These chiefs first lost their independence and then gradually the autonomy they had been granted when they submitted. The tillers of the land could no longer use it as they or as their coethnic seniors wished and the land was taxed. The situation continued until the end of the monarchy in

1974. The Derg was first to be perceived as liberating the peasants from the feudal economy and actively promoted this perception. At first, it enjoyed a high level of acceptance within the peasantry. The new rule, however, was centralist and was soon perceived as high-handed by many. Resettlement of impoverished peasants from the drought-stricken northern highlands region, forced villagization, and collectivization of land alienated much of the peasantry. The land now no longer belonged to feudal lords but to the people, but with that change came a more distant government.

As the previously cited excerpt from the 1994 constitution shows, the EPRDF has maintained this form of ownership. Land ultimately belongs to the state, and the state can declare land "unused" and lease it to big investors, many of whom are foreigners. Customary and local authorities can allocate small parcels of land, and in some areas, there is a rush to do so before higher levels of government lease land to others. Allocations to different people by competing authorities at the same time are not uncommon under these conditions.

Land rights at a communal level have traditionally rested with clans. Under so-called protective arrangements, the Gumuz were affiliated with Oromo clans, meaning the clan was in effect an interethnic institution. This arrangement resulted in ethnically mixed groups occupying the same tracts of land. With a faulty claim to "tradition," land rights at this level have become ethnicized since 1991. Gumuz and Oromo have been said to traditionally occupy different territories, and even different ecological zones: the Gumuz the lowlands and the Oromo the highlands. Expulsions in the name of ethnic unmixing were the consequence of supposed tradition.

But the power of the state overrides ethnic rights. The Federal Republic of Ethiopia tends to respect traditional land rights in the highlands, especially the Semitic core areas of Ethiopia, where the land rights of peasants are relatively secure. Here, ethnic privileges have and continue to play a certain role in protecting the rights of Semites from interference by a government dominated by Semites. (Abiy, who became prime minister in April 2018, has enacted many changes, but the long-term impact of his policies remains to be seen. He is considered an Oromo (a speaker of a Cushitic language, although, in effect, he is a polyglot). Conflict in Ethiopia is still violent and inconclusive.) Land-grabbing takes place in the lowlands,[62] but, there, it affects peasants and pastoralists of different ethnicities alike. The real issue seems to be a class issue: the state class (with internal competition between different levels of government) versus the rest. In all these areas one can say that the real problem is not the rights of the *peoples* but the rights of the *people*.

This is illustrated by Amhara and Oromo settlers who were expelled from the lowlands, which were wrongly but persistently described as the exclusive traditional habitat of the Gumuz. But instead of taking over these lands, Gumuz were restricted to certain areas due to the adverse effects their forms of use were said to have on the forest environment. In

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[62] However, there is significant displacement resulting from urban expansion and industries especially around Addis Ababa. According to unofficial reports, 150,000 Oromo households have been displaced as a result of the expansion of Addis Ababa, without compensation, of course, as the land belongs to the state (Fekadu Adugna, personal communication). This land seizure is an exception in regional terms (highlands versus lowlands) but not in ethno-linguistic terms. The Oromo, after all, are Cushites and not Semites. It is discontent with this policy which led the EPRDF to install an Oromo, Abiy, as prime minister in April 2018. To some extent he was expected to play the Oromo card to satisfy the Oromo opposition. He did not succeed in that. The current violent conflict (end 2020) with the TPLF, in 2018 still the core element of the EPRDF coalition, shows that also the EPRDF (now abolished) misjudged the situation in 2018 in other ways. Abiy not only failed to mollify the Oromo opposition but turned out not to be their man either.

the end, large holdings were given to foreign investors (Roro 2017, 145 f). In cases like this one, we hear much rhetoric about ethnic rights and the protection of minorities, but what materially happens is interaction among elites—the Ethiopian state class and foreign investors.

The resulting situation is far from peaceful. It generates territorial conflict on the interethnic level. Ameyu, therefore, discusses at length the effect of the proliferation of guns and the politics of disarmament on social order, starting with a history of the proliferation of gun ownership in the region under different political regimes. As one of his main findings, he describes the unbalanced way in which small arms control is carried out in the area. As the main (perceived) rivals of the government are the Oromo, and in particular the outlawed OLF, small arms control is vigorously enforced in Oromo areas while the Gumuz remain well armed. (Ameyu argues that the election of an Oromo candidate for prime minister in April 2018 can be seen as a major shift in the ethnic balance of the country. The effects of this change on center-periphery relations in Ethiopia remain to be seen.) There are state-sponsored peace initiatives, but their success is limited. Government politics or policies are often the root causes of ethnic conflicts, but government-sponsored negotiations and peacebuilding activities will hardly bring this to the fore. As to the role of state institutions, they are found to exercise power top down and instrumentalize rather than solve interethnic dissent.

This example may help us to answer some basic questions about ethnic federalism in Ethiopia. Twenty-five years after the present power holders in Ethiopia started what they called the liberation of the nations, nationalities, and peoples from oppressive centralist rule and what political and social scientists call the introduction of ethnic federalism, the ethnic dimension still looms large in the explanations of conflict in Ethiopia. The government is far from having organized a peaceful system of different peoples living under one constitutional system. It still has reason to feel threatened and the recurrent use of excessive brutality can be seen as a symptom of its weakness.

Why is this so? The answers to this question can be sorted into two categories. These two kinds of explanation diametrically contradict each other. One claims that ethnic federalism is wrong because it creates rather than solves ethnic conflicts.[63] The other explanation is that ethnic federalism has not gone far enough or even that it has never been tried. Under the guise of a federal institution and rhetoric of ethnic pluralism, the real power still emanates from the center.

Both views are too simplistic. Both are based on a twofold model of identities: identities on a subnational level (nations in a narrower sense, nationalities and peoples in the Ethiopian terminology, ethnic groups in sociological/ anthropological diction) and on the national (pan-Ethiopian) level. The national level considers Ethiopia as a whole and as one of the almost 200 "nation"-states that are members of the UN and make up the political world according to common perception. Put simply, the model consists of particular identities within a shared identity and defines political entities at different levels. It is difficult to concretely define the protocol for determining which kind of entity may be granted rights

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[63] Examples for this position are given by Hussein (2016, 344) who summarizes recent writings on ethnic federalism as deploring its effects like: "the long standing resource-based competitions become, in general, ethnically tainted. Even within a single regional state, the state restructuring ignited rivalry [over group representation […] and contrary to the pledges in the constitution] the arrangement led to a gradual indigenization of conflict between and within the regional states," (numerous references omitted in this quote).

and political powers when the allocation of those rights and powers is at the expense of another entity. These entities are transformed in the process of allocating or withholding rights and powers. In other words, we are not dealing with fixed entities. When an ethnic group or any other political entity defined by a collective identity is given political powers, legal statues, or territorial rights, its nature is inevitably changed by such decisions.[64]

Ameyu calls this process "the transformation of 'ethnic' identities into political identities" (Roro 2017, 4), adding a twist to the Barthian perspective that ethnic identities form and articulate themselves at the boundary with each other. If this interaction takes place in a shared political space with its own institutions, a third element enters the system of binary interaction. The state, the nation, or, more generally, some more encompassing political entity comes in and changes the relation between the other two. Ameyu calls this "politicization," using the narrow understanding of the term politics to mean something that has to do with states and formal institutions.

A further complication arises if we consider that an implicit assumption in this kind of reasoning is that entities, such as ethnic groups, the federal state, states, and institutions, are actors. The constitutional order provides them with different powers and they interact in consideration of these powers. These entities are subjects (rather than objects) in the sense that they grant powers to other such entities or acknowledge their powers The Ethiopian constitution, as previously mentioned, has "We, the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia" as a speaker, as an actor, and as the sovereign. This constitution (or any constitution for that matter) hardly describes the political reality. Ameyu clarifies that "political entrepreneurs make cultural identity politically relevant to their targeted interests. In this view, political entrepreneurs [...] are driven by predetermined instrumental rationality" (Roro 2017, 4). As often as not, the Oromo, the Gumuz, or the government (or any collective defined by identity constructs for that matter) are used selectively and instrumentally by other actors, individuals, or smaller groups in pursuit of their own interests.

If ethnic federalism serves as a means to solve or contain ethnic conflicts, it is implied that the ethnic conflicts existed before and that the state was introduced to resolve the issues. The way in which ethnic federalism works in Ethiopia, however, often generates or escalates problems.[65] When issues remain unresolved, the current approach seems to be to invest even more vigorously in the tenets of ethnic federalism and to fight the top-down power of local and international political and economic elites. Historically, ethnicity in Ethiopia never took the form of territorial exclusivity. Empowering people and empowering peoples should mean giving everyone a voice, not unmixing people and putting them into separate boxes.

According to an anecdote, Mahatma Gandhi, asked by an Englishman what he thought of Western civilization, answered that he thought that it was a good idea (implying that there had not been much of civilization in the West). In the same vein, one might qualify ethnic federalism in Ethiopia as a good idea.

We find a similar contrast between local perceptions of territorial group rights and administrative policies at a higher level of government in Sudan. There are intense controversies about whose *dar* (homeland) a given territory is in tribal terms. Firstcomers have a

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[64] Cf. Woldeselassie (2017) discusses how the Gurage ethnic group was delineated, how the Siltie in their present composition came into being, whether and in which sense the Siltie were a part of the Gurage, and how the Siltie identity was affected by ethnic federalism.

[65] Examples of this are also provided by the Ph.D. theses of Fekadu Adugna (2009) and Dejene Gemechu (2011).

strong position and try to deny more recent arrivals any form of political representation in the *idaara ahaliyya* ("Native Administration"). "Recent," in this sense, can even be a hundred years or so (Calkins 2014, 181). Fulbe and Hausa who arrived in Sudan after the conquest of northern Nigeria by the British in the first decade of the twentieth century are precisely such newcomers in the eyes of the longer established Arabs or Funj along the Blue Nile. As the Arabs and Funj regard themselves as the owners of the land, they grant the Hausa and Fulbe permission to reside there as guests in exchange for whatever they might demand. The Hausa and Fulbe, unsurprisingly, do not accept their status as so-called guests, nor do they acknowledge the authority of their self-proclaimed hosts. With varying degrees of success, they have always claimed rights of their own that are not derived from concessions made by the Arabs and Funj.[66] All this may soon become obsolete as bigger economic issues take prioritization. When land becomes more valuable, for example, after the expansion of irrigation, higher levels of government will become involved in its allocation. Lines of fission between the central and regional governments have already become visible. Land allocation will reflect the power games between these levels of governance.

The leading strata do not always identify with people who are most like themselves. They may also have an ideal of the people, a vision of how the people should be, which they themselves reflect only to a degree. In spite of intensified internal competition for land in Sudan, the Sudanese government offered 10,000 acres of irrigable land to small-scale Egyptian farmers according to a report by the *Daily News Egypt*, December 13, 2014.[67] All other sources reported that the area involved was 100,000 acres.[68] The reasons given touted unity and reflected the rhetoric of a rather distant past ("Sudan and Egypt are one country") and development ("the great [farming] experience of the Egyptian farmers"). But the role of everyday ethnic nationalism and racism suggests that the farming scheme had a hidden agenda to incorporate a more desirable lighter-skinned population into Sudan. Sudanese people with dark skin encounter discrimination in the marriage market and in employment opportunities, not to mention daily abusive language. Even relatively light-skinned Arab Sudanese do not accept themselves as they are and do not necessarily act in favor of their own people or people who are like themselves. Often, they would like to have lighter skin and to be more Arab (ignoring the non-Arab origins of the Egyptians)[69] and favor those who correspond to that ideal.[70]

Land and the right to make land deals is the core of political competition across Sudan and beyond. At the Darfur peace negotiations in Doha, the regional movements and the

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[66] Abu-Manga (1999, 2009); Diallo and Schlee (2000).

[67] http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2014/12/13/10,000, retrieved December 14, 2014.

[68] E.g. www.africareview.com/ News/ Sudan-offers-Egypt-farmland; www.news.sudanvisiondaily.com/ details.html?rsnpid243584 (both accessed December 24, 2014).

[69] This argument is not meant to single out the Arab Sudanese as particularly racist. Racial discrimination between Africans is an understudied phenomenon (but see O. A. Eno and M. A. Eno 2014; M. A. Eno 2017) because—understandably—racism against Africans by people of European descent has been much more conspicuous and has shaped a large proportion of anticolonial and postcolonial discourses. For understandable reasons, the critique of White racism against non-Whites has occupied such a central place that, for many, the discussion of other kinds of racism has become a kind of taboo. But, also within the region, one finds parallels to Sudanese racism in Ethiopia, not to speak of Somalia.

[70] Despite this somewhat paradoxical identity issue, the relationship between Sudan and Egypt is not free of ups and downs. At the time of writing (2017) all the brotherly Arab rhetoric has ended. Sudan has stopped all imports of Egyptian agricultural projects and accuses Cairo of arming Darfurian rebels. Sudan is now close to Ethiopia (John Young, personal communication).

central government agreed upon one issue involving land. The open range would belong to the state, and thus not to the tribes. Disagreement remains, however, on the point of which state is, in fact, involved. The Darfurian movements would like a unified Darfur to be the holder of these rights, while the Khartoum government views itself as the state.

In Ethiopia, such attitudes are not limited to the Semites. Gonzáles-Ruibal's (2014) research on marginalized groups in western Ethiopia emphasizes that the Oromo, famous for their capacity and willingness to absorb other ethnic groups, do not consider people with very dark skin to be fit for assimilation.

In other cases, most of which involve few natural resources to tempt governments to assume direct control, devolution takes place. Following the logic of the aforementioned Kenyan case, Darfur was subdivided into several internal states with a large number of districts.[71] This approach was clearly a matter of creating administrative posts and political fiefs, and a way for the central government to purchase loyalty. The local demand for these subdivisions is created by the aspirants to these posts.

And what of South Sudan? Does the region's newest state also display some of the tendencies found all around it? Much of rural South Sudan has been far away from any form of modern statehood and the CPA sought to address this issue by bringing "decision-making and budgeting closer to the people" (Rolandsen 2013, 37). This has triggered a process of ongoing subdivision and the creation of more administrative units, even as there has not been enough qualified staff to man the existing administration. Rolandsen identifies two driving forces behind this process. In the absence of a functioning government that would provide services, local government institutions provide nodal points for international networks with missionaries, UN institutions, and NGOs. "Whether a local government office will be able to carry out any of its formal duties is therefore seen as less important than its ability to attract attention of other entities capable of doing so" (Rolandsen 2013, 38).

The other factor is that higher levels of government gain in importance in proportion to the number of units subordinate to them. Salva Kiir introduced 28 states in breach of ARCSS (the 2016 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan), which was based on ten states and has since created a total of 32 states to increase Dinka control and stop Nuer under Riek Machar from controlling the oil-rich states. Like in the case of territorial policies in the administrative sphere, we also find similarities between South Sudan and its neighboring countries in the case of land allocation for agricultural uses. To the deep frustration of all those who had fought for separate statehood in order to have their own land, by 2011 agricultural land amounting to 9 percent of the country's territory had been allocated to foreign governments, companies, or individual investors (Shanmugaratnam and Lokuji 2012, 4). The ongoing war has stopped deals of this kind for the time being and may make many of these allocations meaningless—maybe the only positive aspect of an otherwise political disaster and humanitarian tragedy.

5.6   Conclusion

In northeast Africa, the light is brighter than in many other parts of the world, ranges in temperature and altitude are wider, and the effects of rule and misrule are more extreme. To be poor in Europe may mean inability to afford a vacation; in northeast Africa, it may mean starvation. To lose power in Europe means to receive a pension or to wait for the next

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[71] Hadi (n.d.).

election on the opposition benches. In Africa, it may mean death or exile. Many aspects
of society across the African continent may be similar to other parts of the world, but more
extreme.

I do not think that we need a special kind of anthropology for northeast Africa or that
we need a special kind of political science to explain African politics.[72] Human nature and
the nature of politics is the same there as in the rest of the world. Maybe we can rather see
the events that occur in Africa, which are applicable to humankind and their relationships
with each other as a whole, in a stronger light and in starker contrast.

Alex de Waal has entitled his recent book *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*
(2015b). It has its emphasis on material rewards and individual agency. He examines the
logic of action of political entrepreneurs on a political marketplace. Ethnic and religious
collective identities also find his interest, but mostly from an instrumentalist perspective.
Loyalty is basically bought, and political entrepreneurs need a personal budget (rather than
a state budget for which they are held accountable) in order to buy loyalty. "What is the
price of a militia in Darfur?" is a question which logically comes up in this perspective. For
de Waal, identities play a role in the negotiation of the price of loyalty. "Among the ways
of reducing loyalty spending are […] invoking popular solidarity by appeals to ethnicity,
nationalism or religion" (de Waal 2015b, 25). "Co-ethnicity is part of the bargain to min-
imize the risks of a payroll mutiny." A payroll mutiny is the effect of underestimating the
price of loyalty and the effect of co-ethnicity is enhanced if you kill members of other ethnic
groups or tribes. The fear of retaliation will then strengthen the cohesion of an ethnically
defined fighting force and their loyalty to their leader. Ethnic identities are still relevant
even when the conflict has ended. "Darfurians say that 'conflict defines origins,' because
when disputes come to be settled and compensation paid, everyone must identify with their
tribal group which is responsible for paying blood-money" (de Waal 2015b, 54). The same
holds true for the Somali[73] and others.

De Waal keeps the promise implied in the title of his book and everything he describes is
real. But is that all there is to be said about identity? Much of what is described in this chapter
can be analyzed in terms of payment for loyalty and individual material benefits. When the
president of Sudan wants to allocate land for the northern pastoralists expelled from South
Sudan, he wants to reward them for past loyalty and to secure their future loyalty. If the
governor of the local state does not follow his directions and keeps the land he is supposed
to give to the nomads for himself and his kin, his material benefit (and the support of the
network of the local state class turned farmers) is obviously closer to him than the national
level politics for which he is not held responsible. But how about the sincere conviction of
those who believe to be defending Islam (against the southern "infidels" or the West)? It is
difficult to measure the effect of such sincere convictions but it is equally difficult to deny
their existence.

This chapter has a broader perspective on political identification. It is not only an in-
strument; it also defines the beneficiaries. Identity broadens and complicates the self, so
that cost-benefit calculations are no longer purely individual but include others to varying

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[72] This is my general position. I also think that we do not need a postmodern sociology to explain postmodern
society, nor a postcolonial theory to explain postcolonial power relations nor a postsocialist theory to explain the
postsocialist world. I believe that we can only describe different things as different and explain their differences if
we look at them from the same theoretical vantage point.
[73] Hagmann and Hoehne (2009); Schlee (2017).

degrees. Northern Sudanese favor northern Sudanese not only because they may be of immediate use to them, but because this form of self-identification can be visualized as concentric circles radiating from each individual. These concentric circles allow us to understand the concept beyond pure instrumentalism. Instrumentalism answers the question of how political aims are achieved. Our model also addresses the question of whom political successes are meant to benefit. With the concentric circles, we can visualize that some potential beneficiaries are closer to the decision maker than others and more likely to be included in the cost-benefit analysis (like extensions of the self). In the outer circles people are less likely to be included into these calculations or they are meant to benefit to a lesser degree. Beyond the outer circles, criteria of identification are used in a way to find differences rather than similarities and people are excluded from the benefits resulting from a decision.

The perspective on collective identities and the institutions associated with them (like the people belonging to a state and the state serving the people or serving the nation) leads us to dissolve larger categories into smaller ones. It also encourages smaller groups, who actually share an interest and cooperate with one another, to question their associations with institutions and to look at what institutions actually do rather than what they just claim to do. It is fair to say that this perspective of the relationship between the people and the state is akin to Marxism, which argues that the state does not identify with the interest of the entire people but is the instrument of the ruling class. But again, this claim is overly simplified. A Christian-Semitic bias in Ethiopian politics or a Nile-Arab Muslim bias in Sudanese politics combines people of different economic classes, potentially linked to each other through a relationship of exploitation. These broad categories do not stand for classes. Members of these categories might carry out their struggles with each other in a more sportive or more courteous ways while outsiders might suffer blatant human rights abuses and even be dehumanized. But class is not what unites the insiders; they are united by religion, language, real or fictive genealogy, regional origin, pigmentation, or the language of pigmentation.[74]

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," says *The Communist Manifesto*. The following paragraph illustrates this claim: "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another." (Marx and Engels 1848, 14) This position cannot be easily dismissed as far as the driving forces of societal change are concerned, but it does not hold true from a statistical view of the frequency of conflict. There have been peasant wars (between "lord and serf"), yes, but there have been many more wars between lords about the control of territory and the right to exploit the serfs inhabiting it. The economic rival of a slave owner is the other slave owner who competes with him as a cotton producer. Unless the slave owner is stupid and brutal (qualities admittedly frequently found in such types), there is good reason to keep the slaves strong, healthy, and productive. Visible conflict, therefore, occurs primarily within classes rather than between them.[75]

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[74] I recall a scene in which two of my visitors at the University of Bielefeld were standing next to each other. One of my guests identified as Black Brazilian and produced Yoruba style Black art; the other one identified as Arab Sudanese. Guess whose pigmentation was darker.

[75] On this passage, I have received the following editorial comment: "It is argued that statistically more conflicts happened between slave owners rather than between slaves and slave owners, and that 'there is good reason to keep slaves strong, healthy, and productive.' It may indeed be true that there are more conflicts between land owners than there are slave revolts. But it should, nevertheless be made clear that this does not erase the horrors of slavery" I therefore hasten to assure that I am against slavery and do not deny its horrors. It is my mistake to have thought that such assurances were no longer necessary in the 21st century. Here I did not want to make a moral or political

Let us shift from the examples laid out in *The Communist Manifesto* back to the Horn of Africa. The Nubians, who received land as a compensation for their submerged properties, and the Gumuz, who were in no way recompensed for their lost land further south, belong to the same peasant class but were treated differently because they were racially or culturally constructed as different. The government in Khartoum, the state government of Sennar, and the Rufaʿa pastoralists were all composed, predominantly or entirely, of people belonging to the same broad ethno-religious category: Arab Muslims. In another of the examples discussed in this chapter, the government in Khartoum wanted land to be redistributed to the Rufaʿa, but the Sennar government ignored that wish, and violence sprang up between the Rufaʿa and the Sennar police. Here economic differences at various levels (individual, small group, class) overrode ethno-religious sameness. We could go through the entire chapter in this fashion, but the conclusion is clear already. Identity, economic interest, class, ethnicity, and religion cannot be reduced into one collective category. Their individual aspects as well as the many different ways these categories interact must be looked at separately. The use of identity in this context may be instrumental, i.e. a means to maximize benefits, or it may define benefits recipients.

This terminology is borrowed from economics or rational choice theory. The concept of rationality we find here is a means-end relationship, which maximizes the ratio of benefits and costs. If an action achieves its goal at reasonable cost, we call it rational. Many events and decisions in Africa, such as failed states, are not described as rational by outside observers. In some cases, one group of people may benefit greatly from policies while another group carries the cost. From the point of view of those who benefit, any actions taken to implement policies appear quite rational even if the overall cost-benefit ratio looks disastrous. Whom has a failed state failed if those who run it have become rich? Any cost-benefit calculation needs to ask who is supposed to benefit. The answer is usually the decision maker, but sometimes people act in the interest of others.

Far too often, analysts imply that states are designed for the people, although they know this case is rarely true without some differentiation or is plainly wrong in other cases. Goals and targets are attributed to unidentified entities. Failed states are classified as failed because they are believed to have not met their goals. But they have not failed in the eyes of those who became rich from them. Missing the target is often attributed to poor marksmanship. But that assumption presupposes that we know who was aiming and what the target was. International aid agencies react to "missed targets" or "missed development goals" with "capacity building" and "human resource development" in order to overcome the incapacity of African institutions to meet their aims. Such missions will have little impact if the failed state's decision makers are happy with the way the country works because their unstated goals are met. From the perspective of who are blamed for the havoc in South Sudan, the

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statement but to point to a more general finding of relevance to conflict theory. It is the similarity of social positions and economic interests which generates competition and conflict. In the example at hand slaves might compete for the favours of their masters, masters might compete for markets for the products of their slaves. Both are examples for conflicts within classes rather than between classes. The phrase that people 'fight out their differences' is misleading. More often they fight out their similarities. In the course of conflict, enemies even tend to become more similar to each other by imitating each other's strategies and symbols. Two book length studies (Schlee 2008, Schlee and Horstmann 2018) abound with illustrations for this general principle. Another example is provided by the Nuer/Dinka relationship (above). I think this is of interest here, because in the present context it diametrically contradicts the central arguments of a classical text, The Communist Manifesto, and it is 'counterintuitive' in the sense of diverging from popular parlance and thinking habits.

state has not failed; they have profited from the evolution of events there (de Waal 2015b, 109).

Technocrats ask "how" questions, and economists ask "what" questions in combination with "how much" questions ("how much of what?"). To analyze human interaction (for example, conflict, development, politics, and law) from a social scientific perspective, we must focus on the "who" questions, which have long been understudied. Who identifies with whom? Who acts in favor of whom and against whom? These "who" questions cannot be limited to the biographies and psychoanalysis of individual leaders. They must address collective identifications (Eidson et al. 2017).

Chapter 6
South Sudan: The Fractured State
John Young

6.1 Introduction

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 2005 claimed to end a twenty-two-year-long civil war. It also ushered in a six-year SPLM/A-led transitional government in the south, the Government of National Unity (GNU), national elections in 2010, and a referendum on the secession of southern Sudan. The GNU barely functioned, and the 2010 elections were characterized by massive fraud and the effective division of the country between the SPLM-led south and the National Congress Party (NCP) north, which placed South Sudan on a trajectory to independence (Young 2012). In the 2011 referendum, southern Sudanese voted massively for an independent state, which was officially established with much fanfare on July 9, 2011. But even during the six-year transitional period, and some would argue long before that (Young 2012), the SPLM proved incapable of governing.

However much responsibility for endemic mal-governance, corruption, and abuse of human rights lie with the SPLM, the international community, and specifically the Troika of the US, Britain, and Norway, which sponsored the peace process and agreed to, and at times even pressed for, the establishment of an independent nation-state in the clearly infertile grounds of southern Sudan. The internationals also supported the handover of power to what has not mistakenly been called the criminal SPLA by Professor Mahmood Mamdani, a member of the African Union Commission of Inquiry in South Sudan that was established in the wake of the 2013 civil war (Mamdani 2014). The CPA provided the new country with wholly unsuitable Western institutions of governance as per modernization theory and neoliberal precepts that were in free fall even before the country descended into civil war in December 2013.

More than fifty years after the first wave of decolonization in Africa, the international community oversaw the creation of another would-be nation-state patterned after the failures of the past, and it did not take long for the South Sudanese elites to make clear they could not function within this structure. South Sudan is a territory that encompasses large numbers of Nilotic, Bantu, and other peoples, is divided by pastoralist and farming communities, and is a seasonal destination for many nomads from Sudan. The people of South Sudan largely live in preindustrial rural isolation and contact between them all too often results in conflict. Some of these ethno-cultural groups like the Zande, Shilluk, and Anyaa have a history of kingship and hierarchy, but most of the inhabitants of the country have never established any system of permanent administration and instead traditional authorities are easily and frequently changed. It is also one of the poorest, most undeveloped, and most isolated territories on the planet. It is thus hard to imagine a more unlikely candidate for

the establishment of a Western modeled independent state and it could only be achieved by forcing the extreme ethnic and cultural diversity of the territory's people into the ill-fitting box of a nation-state.

6.2   Constructing a State in Southern Sudan

Isolated and having little contact with the outside world beyond slave-traders and ivory hunters (often the same people), the territory of southern Sudan only began to end its isolation in the late nineteenth century when the Sudanese Mahdiya briefly exerted a measure of control over some of its northern areas. With the overthrow of the Mahdiya in 1898, the British steadily expanded their control, but it was not until 1930 that it could claim to have defeated all resistance, and even then its administration was felt very lightly in most parts of the territory.

With no strong religious traditions locally and a colonial administration under home pressure to bring education and religion to the people for fear they would otherwise convert to Islam, Christian missionaries from various denominations were given domains in different parts of southern Sudan although their efforts, ironically, were largely paid for by Muslim taxpayers in the north. Adding to the insult, the colonial authorities made the southern and adjacent parts of the northern "closed districts" for northern Arabic-speaking Muslims, mostly traders, thus further isolating southern Sudanese from their natural links to the north and inculcating in them anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments, which in turn were reciprocated by the northern Sudanese who looked upon them as primitives. The British built major agricultural and irrigation schemes that formed the economic backbone of Sudan and gave rise to a flourishing civil society but neglected the south until the eve of independence.

British administration thus exacerbated the differences between the Arabized and Islamic north and an emerging African Christian elite in the south. This polarization came to the fore when late in the day the British dropped plans for southern Sudan to join the British colonies in East Africa and decided to link it with the north as a step towards independence. However, the British made it clear to the northern elites that independence could only be accomplished if they gained the approval of the largely traditional southern authorities. The southern elites, in turn, agreed to independence within a united Sudan on condition that federalism was accepted to ensure the inhabitants were protected from domination by a politically and economically more advanced north. The northern Sudanese duly made the required commitments, but they were not kept. Out of the 600 civil service positions that were "Sudanized" with the departure of the British in 1956, only a tiny fraction was given to southern Sudanese. The miniscule southern indigenous elite was not mistaken in concluding they were exchanging one colonial administration for another.

With the end of the colonial era, northern military regimes attempted to overcome ethnic and cultural diversity by pursuing socialism and developmentalism, but they failed because the northern Sudanese elites looked to Islam and Arabism to integrate the polyglot of peoples in the largest country in Africa and this was resisted in the south, most of whom were neither Muslims or Arabs. Meanwhile, the demand for federalism was rejected by successive northern governments because it was viewed as a way station on the road to secession. The ingredients were thus in place for rebellion in the south and there were isolated cases of armed resistance even on the eve of independence. These actions became increasingly widespread in the 1960s when Joseph Lagu formed and led the South Sudan Liberation

Army (SSLA), or *Anyanya*, which held Sudan's two units to be incompatible and called for an independent southern state.

Gaining military support from countries in the region and from Israel, always anxious to undermine its Arab neighbors, the SSLA carried out an increasingly effective insurgency that helped precipitate the military coup of Jafaar Nimeiri in 1969. Upon concluding that the rebels could not be defeated, Nimeiri supported a peaceful settlement of the conflict that took the form of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. This agreement rejected secession but accepted southern autonomy even while the north maintained a unitary structure under military rule.

The grant of autonomy ended southern unity based on opposition to the north and internal conflicts increasingly came to the fore. *Korkora*, meaning a separation into parts, became the demand of Equatorians upset at the domination of the southern state by the Dinka, the territory's largest tribe. Anxious to weaken the south and respond to the opposition of northern political parties to the Addis Ababa Agreement, Nimeiri agreed to the demands of the Equatorians and gave them their own territory. But korkora constituted an abrogation of the peace agreement and caused lasting bitterness between Equatorians and Dinka. Furthermore, it led to fears by the Dinka that Equatorian demands for federalism were code for secession, a position analogous to northern fears of southern demands for federalism. Korkora also revealed the contentious relations between the various peoples inhabiting southern Sudan, the difficulty of arbitrarily and forcefully placing them under one administration, and the domineering tendencies of the Dinka elite.

6.3 The US and South Sudan Independence

The US government took little interest in Sudan's first civil war. This position only changed after President Jaafar Nimeiri ended his affiliation with the Eastern bloc and decisively joined the American camp at which point Sudan became a key component of the US-led Cold War in Africa. Nimeiri was there to do the bidding of Washington, be it support for an isolated Egypt in the wake of the Camp David peace accord with Israel, facilitation of the transit of Ethiopian Falashas to Israel, support for US efforts to undermine the regime of Muammar Gadaffi, or a counterweight to Eastern bloc support for the Ethiopian Derg. And the benefits were clear. The regime's human rights abuses were ignored as was its abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement that led to a resumption of the southern war in 1983 under Dr. John Garang's SPLA. Furthermore, Sudan became the biggest recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa—USD 160 million of which 100 million was for military assistance (Petterson 1999, 9).

But US patronage could not save Nimeiri who was overthrown by a popular insurrection in Khartoum in 1985. The Transitional Military Council took power for one year and organized national elections, which were won by Sadig Al-Mahdi who became prime minister of a highly unstable coalition government. Preoccupied with Islamic politics and unable to convince Dr. John Garang to stop the war and join the government, Sadig gained the enmity of the US because he refused to support its Cold War objectives in the region, particularly the overthrow of Gadaffi to whom he and his Umma Party were close and who had to be convinced to stop supplying weapons to the SPLA.

Opposing the US had costs, however, and Washington suspended concessionary food sales to Khartoum (African Rights 1997). Even before Sadig's government was overthrown,

officials in Washington were quietly indicating they would not oppose a military coup. Meanwhile, Sadig's coalition with the Hassan Al-Turabi-led National Islamic Front (NIF) collapsed after the opposing Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) signed a framework for a peace agreement with the SPLA in Ethiopia (the Koka Dam Agreement) and pressed the government to accept it through popular mobilization and street demonstrations. The Sadig government relented, the NIF left the coalition and was replaced by the DUP. The DUP-SPLA agreement was scheduled to be accepted by the National Assembly when the NIF carried out a coup, which the Egyptians and Americans initially understood it to be of a nationalist character, similar to that carried out by Abdul Nasser.

The US tried to pursue a policy of "constructive engagement" with the NIF until it appreciated that the Omar Al-Al-Bashir headed regime was more of a threat to its interests in the region than the hapless Sadig government. Although the NIF pressed the SPLA up to the Ugandan border, it failed to defeat the southern rebels. In the longer term, the characterization of the war as a jihad and efforts to undermine US allies in the region was a lifesaver for the rebels since it brought the US to the aid of the SPLA. As a result, Washington considered the war to be a conflict between the demonic NIF and the SPLA under its heroic leader, Dr. John Garang, a simplistic theme that would have a marked influence on US policy until the overthrow of Al-Bashir in April 2019.

In the US, Garang's supporters were largely successful in their public relations efforts to transform him from being a brutal dictator and abuser of human rights supported by international communism to a leader struggling to gain human rights for his aggrieved and abused people and an "African hero." Equally contrived was the contention that the SPLA was conducting a united struggle of the southern Sudanese for national self-determination. Garang was authoritarian, southern Sudan was deeply divided, and the SPLA was committed to a united New Sudan rather than a secessionist South Sudan until after his death. South Sudan was divided along both ethnic and political lines. The notion that the SPLA was a unifying force could only be maintained by refusing to acknowledge that much of the fighting in southern Sudan was between southern Sudanese and that many of these fighting forces were aligned with the northern army (Young 2012).

In the latter years of the war, fighting was primarily between a Dinka-dominated SPLA and a Nuer-dominated South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF), an organization of comparable size and which controlled as much territory as the SPLA (Young 2005). But the SSDF was dismissed by the West and denied a place in the peace negotiations because of its alliance with Khartoum even though agreements between southern and north groups have long been common. The SPLA was itself a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an association of largely northern opposition groups headed by the DUP leader and ostensibly Arab Osman Al-Mirghani, while Garang served as his deputy and was in charge of the military wing. In contrast to the notion that southern Sudanese were united behind the SPLA in a war with Khartoum, large and small ethnic-based armed groups across the territory spontaneously took up arms to defend themselves, not just against the northern Sudanese army but equally against the SPLA. The West, and particularly the US, never understood that probably most southern Sudanese viewed the SPLA as Dinka interlopers and it became the cause of endless problems and grief.

Conflicts between peasants and Dinka pastoralists reached new heights during the war after they followed the SPLA soldiers into the lands of the Equatorians in search of grazing lands and water. Meanwhile, Sudan's army provided weapons to those opposing the SPLA,

making them agents of Khartoum in the eyes of the SPLA and subject to attack. Northern Sudanese labelled as Arabs also struggled against the Khartoum clique of Islamists from the riverine core of the country, but their struggles did not fit the prevailing north-south Arab-African narrative, and they were largely discounted in the West. Instead, what took hold among Western, and particularly US legislators and their publics, was the persecution of Africans—who constituted an emerging nation-state—by Arab Muslims, a conceptualization that confused rather than explained the realities of Sudan's multiple conflicts (Young 2019).

However, the SPLA could not overthrow the government in Khartoum despite widespread opposition to the NCP regime in every corner of the country, the early support of the Eastern bloc and the Ethiopian Derg, and (after the latter left the scene) support from the region and the US. As well as material support, the Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Ugandan armies trained the rebels, provided them with bases, and repeatedly captured territories along their borders with Sudan and turned them over to the SPLA or its NDA allies. Support also involved large components of the Eritrean and Ethiopian armies transiting East Africa to the battle fields of southern Sudan where they and the Ugandan army captured much of the liberated territory that the SPLA later claimed it had captured (Young 2004). But even with regional support, US money for weaponry, and US food provided through SPLA-friendly NGOs like Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA), the Islamist government was not overthrown. However, in 1998, just when these US supported collective efforts looked to be on the verge of success, Eritrea and Ethiopia went to war, thus ending the regional attempt to overthrow the Islamist government. In the wake of this failure, the US and its allies used a Western established, funded, and directed organization, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to launch a peace process.

6.4   International Peacemaking and the Creation of South Sudan

US support for John Garang was made possible by the end of the Cold War. At that time, Eastern bloc and Derg support for the SPLA was being forgotten, American lobbyists popularized the cause of the SPLA, and new notions like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the US as the "indispensable nation" became the ideological underpinning for American leadership in both regime change and peacemaking.[1] Secular lobbyists who moved in and out of government and were infatuated with John Garang and demonized the Islamist regime of al-Bashir held sway under the second Clinton presidency. When George Bush became president, former officials such as Rice moved to the think tanks where they pumped out the same message. They were replaced by evangelical Christians who were a critical component of Bush's political base and sang a similar tune but gave it a religious twist and considered the war as a biblical struggle between Muslim overlords and Christian victims.

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[1] The notion that the US is the "indispensable nation" in the resolution of conflicts was first coined by Bill Clinton's secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, in 1998. In justifying the US attack on Iraq, she said, "if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us." (See Madeleine Albright, NBC's Today Show, February 19, 1988). This notion has since been widely used by American presidents, especially Barack Obama. R2P is a quasi-legal doctrine approved by the AU in 2002 and the UN in 2006 and holds that national sovereignty can be lost and foreign intervention approved if states fail to ensure the security of their citizens. While seemingly an attractive notion, there is no agreement on when these conditions exist, who decides, and which agencies have the right to intervene. These problems give powerful states, and notably the US, the right to justify their interventions on R2P grounds.

The Bush administration threw its weight behind the IGAD peace process, but it was not there to reap the political rewards of its apparent success with the signing of the CPA. When President Barack Obama came into office, some of the same pro-SPLM officials like Susan Rice returned, which ensured continuity of US policy on Sudan and South Sudan. Her views were reinforced by Obama's UN Envoy, Samantha Power, who had gained a reputation as an academic for her espousal of notions like the R2P and was equally misinformed about the realities in southern Sudan.

In the face of competing peace processes that needed US assistance to ensure their legitimacy, the Americans opted to support IGAD, which in turn subcontracted the peacemaking to the Kenyan dictator, Daniel Arap Moi. He further pushed it down the chain to General Lazarus Sumbeiywo who was trusted by the US because he had received his university education in the US, had close relations with the CIA while in charge of Kenyan security, and had spent much of his later career devoted to keeping the aging dictator and key American ally in the region, Moi, in power (Young 2012). But this was not enough: a Troika made up of the US, the UK, and Norway was formed, which directly participated in all the IGAD-led negotiations and an IGAD support group was established by Western countries to fund these efforts.

There was a quick agreement between IGAD, the Troika, the NCP, and the SPLM to restrict negotiations to the latter two parties, and that decision amounted to accepting that the principal conflict afflicting Sudan was rooted in north-south, Arab-African, Muslim-Christian contradictions not compatible with the desired nation-state. Once these contradictions were resolved, the other conflicts in the country could readily be overcome using the same model of peacemaking, or so it was argued by the army of diplomats. The negotiations began with acceptance of a statement of principles—the Machakos Protocol—which emphasized the goodwill of the parties and a commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, national unity, and democratic transformation. In practice, there was no goodwill and both parties subsequently acknowledged that they had no intention of carrying out their commitments.

The focus of the negotiations centered on power-sharing and security arrangements and made little progress until the mediators arranged for Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and the SPLM leader, Dr. John Garang, to conduct their own secret negotiations. What was privately decided between the two men will never be known because Garang died shortly after signing the CPA in a helicopter crash and Ali Osman, who the mediators assumed to be the strong man in Khartoum, did not actually have that power. He was subsequently demoted and removed from office for putting his signature to the CPA.

The process based on a commitment to democratic transformation was itself centralized, secretive, and exclusive. It denied representation to civil society and other disaffected groups, reaffirmed the power of an Islamist military dictatorship in Khartoum, and handed over power to an armed, largely Dinka military cabal in the south. The US and its allies mistakenly concluded that these actions represented the will of the disparate peoples of southern Sudan. The SPLA only controlled a small portion of the territory it was given to rule by the international community's peace agreement and was feared and hated by a large section of the non-Dinka population. Like the Nuer, however, the Dinka can be considered a multi-tribal nation. The various components are often in tense relations with one another and only unite when they collectively face an existential threat. But by denying participation to the

SSDF in the negotiations and handing over monopoly power to the Dinka SPLA, the CPA laid the basis for future conflict in the newly born state.

The death of Garang on July 30, 2005 only postponed that war because Salva needed the Nuer of the SSDF to undermine Garang's Bor domination of the SPLA and thus reached an agreement in January 2006 with its leader, Paulino Matieb, to integrate his forces into the SPLA. Salva's agreement with Paulino—the Juba Declaration—not only secured Salva's hold on the presidency but crucially had the potential of bringing peace to much of the country. In that light, the agreement was more important than the international community-brokered CPA, which did not bring peace and instead raised the specter of an intensification of the existing war between the SPLA and the SSDF. The primary focus of the Juba Declaration was the integration of the SSDF into the SPLA, which was achieved without the international peace brigade who view themselves as indispensable in the resolution of conflicts (Young 2006b).

For a brief period, the Dinka Salva was a hero to the Nuer of the SSDF who had wanted to rejoin the SPLA after southern secession—which they nominally fought for even though allied to Khartoum—but were refused by Garang and his supporters who feared they would dominate the army. Indeed, the Juba Declaration challenged Dinka dominance in the army and integration by giving the Nuer a numerical majority in the SPLA, even though they constituted at most 25 percent of the South Sudanese population.

But if the Dinka, and particularly those from Bor, Garang's home area, could not stop the signing of the Juba Declaration, they could ensure that it was not fully implemented. Dinka-Nuer tensions came to the fore again and ended Salva's brief status as a hero among the Nuer since he did little to protect his new allies. The Nuer officers were forced to take unpaid retirements, denied training available to Dinka, were not equally promoted, and were forced to assume unpleasant tasks. Because they were constantly made aware of the Dinka character of the central state, they became increasingly radicalized. Deputy SPLA leader and head of the then disbanded SSDF, Paulino Matiep, was guarded at his house in Juba by 1700 soldiers who were nominally in the SPLA but were almost all Nuer and only loyal to him. Although Paulino was technically senior to the SPLA chief of staff, James Hoth, his advanced years, poor health, inability to communicate in either Arabic or English, and failure to make his power felt or serve the interests of the Nuer who followed him into the SPLA significantly reduced his effectiveness. He was also bitterly resented by the Garangists who, with the cooperation of Unity State governor, Taban Deng, burned down his house in Unity and killed twelve of his guards. Following this incident, the UN flew the remaining guards to Juba. Paulino's death shortly thereafter left a void that was never filled. Increasingly, the former SSDF officers lost their corporate identify, even if they did not lose their distrust of the Dinka.

The fact that the Dinka-dominated state was little more than a heavily armed agency for directing the considerable oil resources into the hands of Dinka politicians, generals, and associates that had to be bought off to maintain a modicum of stability led the former SSDF Nuer in the SPLA to demand that the Dinka be replaced by the Nuer as rulers. There was a weakly constructed narrative that held the Nuer to be more democratic and less greedy, but essentially the appeal was simply a claim that the Dinka had failed at government, so it was the turn of the Nuer to rule.

The CPA was underpinned by three assumptions that would soon prove false. First, the various peoples that made up southern Sudan constituted a nation for purposes of na-

tional self-determination and statehood. Second, the central contradiction afflicting Sudan, and thus the cause of the war, was conflict between an Arab Muslim north and an African and religiously heterogeneous south. And third, it assumed the SPLA—to whom the international mediators handed over complete power in the fledgling state—was capable of administering the territory.

The peacemakers' conclusion that southern Sudan constituted a nation followed from their conviction that the SPLA alone represented the collective will and interests of southern Sudanese and that was reflected in their refusal to permit other groups to participate in the CPA negotiations. It was also sometimes claimed that adding more participants would increase the complexity of the negotiations and undermine the secrecy that the security-minded General Sumbeiywo considered crucial. Without other voices heard in the negotiations, it proved easy to deny they existed or had legitimacy. Indeed, it was the international community and not South Sudanese who bestowed legitimacy on political and military actors. The mediators concluded that the manifold conflicts in Sudan could be resolved by overcoming the central conflict, which was held to be the result of a racial and religious divide. But conflicts were taking place all over Sudan that could not be explained in these terms because most were between groups who were both Arab and Muslim. Indeed, it is likely that more people died in the south due to conflicts between indigenous peoples than between southern and northern Sudanese armed forces. Moreover, as noted, alliances between northern and southern Sudanese to fight other northerners or southerners had long been the rule in Sudan, not the exception.

What all the parties to the negotiations—IGAD, Troika, NCP, and SPLM—agreed upon was the need to ensure that there would be no democratic participation in the process, which might threaten the power that these armed groups wanted to monopolize. In the case of the SPLM this even included their allies in the NDA, and they sided with the NCP to deny them participation in the negotiations. This was a process restricted to elites recognized by the international community and the entire exercise was designed to ensure that they, and not the people of northern and southern Sudan, would be satisfied with the outcome.

The last assumption that the SPLA was capable of governing an independent state was belied by a twenty-two-year history of the movement's inability to administer its liberated territories and its dependence on the international community for the provision of even the most basic services. Against that record, it is impossible to believe that the same organization could soon, if ever, acquire the ability to administer an independent state. The Western backed peace process set the diverse peoples of southern Sudan on the path to a statehood that could never meet their needs, and worse, was a recipe for disaster. If the internationals did not know this, it was a result of willful ignorance or because the primary objective of the peace process and the outcome was not about meeting the needs of the people of either Sudan or southern Sudan, but of responding to the needs of constituencies in the West, IGAD rulers, and the preselected indigenous elites.

On July 30, 2006, just before he was to become the president of South Sudan and vice president of Sudan under the CPA, Garang died in a helicopter crash under circumstances that have never been fully understood. Under Garang, the SPLA had fought for a united reformed Sudan as affirmed in numerous statements and party resolutions, as well as in the Machakos Protocol of the CPA. But his successor, Salva Kiir, and the SPLA leadership then directed their followers to support secession, which was achieved in an internationally supervised referendum on July 9, 2011. Secretary of State, John Kerry, was not mistaken

in claiming that the United States helped "midwife the birth of this new nation," except that people of South Sudan never constituted a nation and that would soon be made abundantly clear.

Indeed, the CPA never met any of its stated objectives of a united Sudan, democratic transformation, sustainable peace, or the later add-on (because of Thabo Mbeki's AU mediation) of viable successor states after South Sudanese opted for independence in the 2011 referendum. The independence of South Sudan served as a powerful signal to intensify fighting between the various peoples in the territory and their armed groups for control of the state and its rich resources in the otherwise poverty-stricken country. Despite growing evidence that the South Sudanese were not united under the SPLA, up until the eve of the country's civil war the US government claimed that the CPA and the establishment of the independent state was a success, represented a major foreign policy achievement, and provided evidence that the US was indeed the exceptional nation needed for the resolution of the conflict. But this would soon prove mistaken, and the US government's involvement in the tribal politics of South Sudan would negatively affect the country's trajectory.

A cynic might conclude that the Western mediators could not have been so ignorant, and their excessively loud applause for the "world's newest nation" was to position themselves so that when the whole project came crashing down—and there was no shortage of doom predictors at the time—that the failure could be attributed to the local actors and not the altruistic West that had devoted so much time, political capital, and hard cash to the realization of South Sudan's independence. But it is also possible that the Americans believed their own narrative. Perhaps the notion of the southern Sudanese collectively and bravely struggling against incredible odds and finally—with US help—achieving success, reminded Americans of their own history, or at least their idealized understanding of it.

The fantasy did not end with South Sudan's independence and the Western-dominated peacemakers went on to impose a whole set of institutions of governance transplanted from the West without modification to the alien environment of South Sudan. Following the script of an ideologically driven and Eurocentric modernization theory, the peacemakers started from a model of the nation-state that evolved in the West over hundreds of years and applied it to South Sudan. The European nation-state assumed a measure of ethnic homogeneity that was absent in multi-ethnic South Sudan where ethnic identities figure more prominently than the kind of individualism that characterizes Western societies, and there was a complete absence of a supra-ethnic South Sudanese nationalism. Indeed, the Dinka-led SPLA insurgency fostered ethnic fracturing, and the new state was more divided and less prepared for self-governance than the state bequeathed by the Addis Ababa Agreement almost four decades earlier.

And despite enormous economic and regional disparities, the CPA committed to a democracy that—befitting the dominance of neoliberalism—did not include any notions of economic justice or overcoming the inequalities that abounded in the country. It was assumed (but never stated) that, to the extent these were matters of concern, they would be resolved by the market, which South Sudanese leaders made a great show of endorsing to impress the West with their ideological soundness. But apart from a handful of farmers in Equatoria that produced for the market, most South Sudanese were largely self-sufficient peasants, herders whose animals were raised to meet traditional needs, or were supported by the international aid agencies or their relatives in the West. The market did not figure significantly in their lives and if the country was to develop, it needed an activist state. Yet, such

a state was not in the cards in an international context where the new economic orthodoxy held states to be obstacles to development.

During the six-year transitional period stipulated by the CPA and the ensuing period of independence the SPLM proved incapable of governing even with enormous financial resources based on oil, considerable international good will, the support of countless aid agencies, and the return of educated members of the diaspora. The SPLM began constructing a state in the model of Khartoum that privileged an ethnic elite who looted the country's resources and used its party-army to contain the increasing revolts and lawlessness in the peripheries, while its ruthless intelligence services identified rebels and suppressed any expressions of dissent that challenged official government narratives. With the exception of the churches, civil society was largely a foreign construct and weak and with the 2010 elections, many church leaders joined the SPLM and were elected to office in the 2010 elections. The marginalization of Sudan's periphery that the SPLA and its foreign backers loudly complained about during their war with Khartoum was soon replicated in South Sudan. Fifteen years after the CPA was signed and despite the oil wealth, the only inter-city paved road in the country was between Juba and Nimule. It had been paid for and constructed entirely by USAID and had the chief function of providing the SPLM elite a link to Uganda, the regime's chief political supporter and the source of most of the goods that the country's urban population needed to survive.

The limited unity achieved during the SPLA-led war with Khartoum quickly broke down and ethnic consciousness, rivalries, and conflict reached new heights. Continuing their pre-independence struggle for dominance, the main conflict was initially between the Dinka and Nuer elites. But conflicts between the government and its Dinka followers and the Equatorians, whose city, Juba, had become a center for land-grabbing while its farming lands were over-run by Dinka herders, ran a close second. Meanwhile, the Fertit peoples of Western Bahr al Ghazel had resisted the SPLA during Sudan's civil war, and they continued to oppose the SPLA and the Dinka who came in their wake after independence.

6.5   South Sudanese State: Divided Against Itself

The only indigenous institution that functioned in the CPA-created fledgling state and was not completely dependent on the international community was the SPLA, but it never operated as a national army (Young 2008). Its ranks were repeatedly supplemented by absorbing ethnic based militias, which still retained loyalties to their particular leaders. Even President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar surrounded themselves with guards from their own tribes. In the field, SPLA soldiers usually went to officers of their tribe to deal with their problems, and army divisions frequently had four or more generals from different tribes to ensure they could overcome internal conflicts. Instead of soldiers living in barracks where they would mix with those from other tribes, they usually resided in their own homes or settlements and thus identified with their families and hosts. Even when the barracks were shared, Nuer and Dinka usually kept apart. Going into battle posed the threat of disintegration if the tribal militia to be attacked had a large ethnic component in the ranks of the SPLA. Targeted tribal cohorts were frequently provided with illicit SPLA weaponry to defend themselves and sometimes defections to the "enemy" occured before battles took place.

Corruption was endemic in the SPLA with salaries issued in cash to commanders who grossly inflated the number of soldiers under them and creamed off the top. The problem was so bad that repeated attempts to come up with the number of soldiers in the SPLA failed. While 200,000 soldiers were on the books, as few as 100,000 were estimated to be capable of fighting, and it was not unusual to find underfed soldiers without shoes going into battle. As a result, soldiers often set up road barricades to extort tolls, sold their weapons, and carried out brigandage to supplement their incomes (or to serve as their sole source of income). Efforts by the UN to oversee an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) campaign were opposed by SPLA officers because it threatened their interests. The UN was also bedeviled by corruption within its own ranks, which led to the dismissal of a number of senior officials (Young 2010).

From its inception, the SPLA was designed to meet the needs of John Garang. It ensured that his Bor Dinka section dominated decision-making, and institution building was deliberately undermined to maintain his personal power over the army. Although Salva loyally served as Garang's chief of defense staff, he admitted that the SPLA never operated under a formal military hierarchy and that Garang often directly controlled particular officers. Defense officials in Eritrea and Ethiopia who trained SPLA units told the author that the structures they created were deliberately destroyed by Garang to ensure his personal control (Young 2012). After independence, the SPLA refused to accept southern officers who had served in the Sudanese army because of a lack of trust. Retired lieutenant general Joseph Lagu, former head of Anyanya and later a president of the autonomous southern Sudan, said these officers were superior to their southern-trained counterparts in the SPLA (Young 2010).[2] But they were marginalized and embittered. Many Nuer would go on to join the insurgency.

Government ministries were ethnically divided with each department or section bearing the imprint of its senior official. In the country's National Assembly, ethnic groups caucused across party lines. These divisions emerged at all levels of the government. Salva barely had contact with his own vice president, Riek Machar, and each had staff largely drawn from their own tribes. In contradiction to this practice and in alignment with the latest Western liberal values, the National Assembly implemented a quota that ensured 25 percent female membership and established a gender ministry. But these provisions were subverted by male politicians who ensured that their wives and female relatives took up the positions. Therefore, male domination of the government and society was never truly challenged. Other popular Western imports included a human rights commission that did nothing while the government arrested people at random, shut down newspapers, arrested and killed journalists, and viewed any public demonstration as a threat to the state and responded accordingly. An anticorruption commission was staffed with highly educated young people who were provided with the latest technology by Western countries, but despite endemic and blatant corruption it never led to any convictions.

Juba had been the capital since British times, but the Dinka-dominated governments from the first period of autonomy had made themselves so unwelcome by their bad behavior and abuse of the local Equatorian inhabitants that Garang initially wanted Rumbek in the Dinka heartland in the state of Lakes to serve as the capital. However, even that selection was problematic because Rumbek has long had a reputation for violence between competing

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[2] Interview with retired Lt.- General Joseph Lagu, September 10, 2010, Juba.

Dinka clans. In light of these circumstances, Garang reached an agreement with Major General Clement Wani, leader of the powerful Mundari militia of cattle herders and a former member of the SSDF. Clement Wani and his militia largely controlled the Juba area of Central Equatoria and that made it possible for Juba to become the capital of the fledgling state. There were, however, tensions that occasionally became violent between the Mundari and the Bari speakers who were settled farmers and made up most of the residents of Juba.

But it did not take long for the Dinka officials in the new government, the Dinka dominated SPLA officers and men who moved to the city, and all their camp followers to gain the enmity of another generation of Juba inhabitants. Apart from resentment at what the locals considered their crude rustic manners, the main area of conflict was over land-grabbing by powerful Dinka generals and politicians. With the establishment of Juba as the capital of an oil rich state—even if it turned out to only be for a short period—money flowed in and a ready market developed in illegal land claims that saw purchases made sometimes at the point of a gun. Ethnic tensions soared, but the local inhabitants were effectively powerless before the Dinka who enjoyed considerable influence in the government and SPLA.

Overnight, the small town in the bush, long ignored by Khartoum, attracted thousands of politically ambitious people who wanted to be close to the center of power. Many others came to Juba to take up jobs as builders or workers in the rapidly expanding service industry. And others just came to be near rich and powerful relatives. But the preindustrial South Sudanese were ill-equipped to meet the needs of the rapidly developing modern town being built on top of the largely tukul strewn village that constituted old Juba.

As a result, the South Sudanese usually stood aside while Ethiopians and especially Eritreans fronting for powerful Dinka (or sometimes Nuer or another group) politicians and generals built and staffed the luxury hotels and restaurants that blossomed throughout the city. Kenyans moved into banking and operated at the high end of the financial industry. They set up sales offices for SUVs and expensive vehicles that were increasingly in demand by the elite. Ugandans controlled most of the petty trade, the transport industry, and operated the *boda bodas* that served as taxis for the poor. They were also responsible for most of the imports that came from near-by Ugandan cities. Somalis controlled the important retail petroleum industry and, as in other East African countries, they owned important currency exchanges. They also dominated the supply of water pumped from the Nile and carried on trucks to the city's inhabitants—reputedly the largest private industry in the country—since the government was never able to resurrect or replace the British colonial system.

As an aside, the Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI), the explicitly political component of USAID, approached the author to lead a team of engineers to Juba and get the water and electricity system functioning quickly after the SPLM government established itself in 2005 so that it could reap the political capital. That proposal never worked out and fifteen years later, as these words are being written, Juba's water and electricity systems are as inadequate as they were then. The South Sudanese were only in government, the security services, small trade, and the low end of the building trades. Prostitutes flooded the city from neighboring countries, while more traditionally minded South Sudanese women were slow to move into this new market opportunity. But their numbers increased with the subsequent decline in the economy.

Juba was a city of rich politicians and generals, mostly Dinka, fly-by-night East African capitalists, poor Ugandans who hated the city and were frequently the subjects of attacks, and a massive presence of UN and international NGO workers who provided most of the services.

What passed for civil society were Western created agencies needed as intermediaries in the supply of goods, services, and programs. Soon a class of young, educated South Sudanese emerged, speaking an international language of NGOs comprehensible only to themselves and disconnected from their own society. In the evenings, four-wheel drives with an alphabet soup of NGO initials competed for space on Juba's few paved roads with the latest SUVs driven by SPLM politicians and SPLA generals as they flocked to the hotels, night clubs, bars, and upmarket restaurants to eat imported food, served by waiters and prepared by cooks from East Africa.

The provision for good schools, clinics, and social services was not a major concern of the government and military elites whose own families resided in East Africa, Europe, North America, and Australia. These members of the military elite were only in the country to loot the state and serve as patrons for their extended families, and multiple wives and girlfriends. At the height of the oil boom, they stole USD 4 billion, according to President Salva Kiir (Young 2012). The thefts were on such a scale that a leading member of the SPLM lobby group in the US, Ted Dagne, left his position as director of research for the US Congress to become a minister in Salva's government. In that role, he penned a letter in the president's name, which was later leaked to the public) asking 75 present and former ministers to return their ill-gotten gains to a secret bank account in Nairobi, after which their crimes would be forgotten.[3] Dagne, however, did not appreciate how dangerous the people whose praises he had been singing in Washington for many years actually were, and he was forced to flee the country in fear of his life. Indeed, appeals to decency or the seemingly sophisticated anticorruption measures pressed on the government by the West did little to reduce the graft and crime that only let up when the oil boondoggle crashed.

The state capitals, particularly those of Greater Upper Nile, experienced similar contradictory problems that beset Juba, but each reflected their distinct ethnic compositions. Thus, Bor was the largely Dinka inhabited capital of the Nuer majority state of Jonglei. Nuer felt reasonably secure in the town (until the 2013 civil war broke out) albeit aggrieved that the capital was in the area of the minority Bor Dinka with whom they had long competed. Although from an area near Bor, the Murle had tense relations with both the Nuer and especially the Dinka. They largely avoided the city and played a minimal role in the state government. Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile, was a center of ethnic competition and conflict between the three tribes that inhabited the city—Dinka, Shilluk, and Nuer—and the first two were equally vehement in claiming possession. On the eve of independence, and in the presence of President Salva Kiir and President Omar al-Bashir, these rivalries broke out between Dinka and Shilluk dancing groups, resulting in citywide rioting in which a dozen people were killed. Malakal would remain a major point of contestation during the civil war between the Shilluk and the Dinka Padang. Bentiu was the capital of Unity with 70 percent of its population belonging to the Nuer, but it too was divided, mostly between the Nuer clans and the different political alliances they formed. Some of the most vicious fighting of the entire civil war took place in Bentiu and vicinity.

Collectively these Upper Nile capitals formed a powder keg, and when war broke out in December 2013 they exploded in repeated rounds of ethnic slaughter. The legendary Nuer militia leader, Peter Gadet, concluded that the north-south fighting of Sudan's civil war was never as destructive as that between South Sudanese, often between members of the same

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[3] Alan Boswell (2012). No money was ever reported to be deposited in the Nairobi account.

tribe.[4] Not only was this an indictment of those who carried out the killings but also of those who created the political circumstances under which such people were in a position to carry out these deeds.

Tribal sensitivities may have been only marginally more acute in South Sudan than in other African countries (until the civil war broke out), but in those countries the ruling parties usually endeavored to dampen ethnic divisions and make some concessions to their countries' ethnic diversity, particularly if the ruling parties rose to power in the context of armed struggles. That was not the case with the SPLA in South Sudan and indeed ethnic based conflicts intensified with independence and fostered endemic corruption and kleptocracy that became enduring characteristics of the fledgling state. As a result, well before the civil war broke out the party had ceased to function as an instrument of governance in large parts of the country. What passed for civil administration was in practice an extension of the security apparatus. It was rare for state governors or county commissioners not to also hold an army or police rank and collect salaries from both positions. As befitting their backgrounds, these officials were not concerned with developing the country, providing services, dispensing justice, or engaging in what could be called nation-building. Instead, they had been appointed to ensure security, and in practice they usually spent most of their time pursuing private interests. In South Sudan, however, the greater the emphasis on security, the more insecurity became endemic because the security organs were the principal cause of violence, social dislocation, and ethnic tensions.

6.6   Count-Down to War

On the eve of the secession referendum and out of a desire to build unity, the SPLM promised the opposition parties a major role in the formulation of the transitional constitution and post-referendum government. Significantly, however, this did not apply to southern Sudanese living in the north and fearing NCP manipulation the SPLM pressed to deny them a vote (Young 2012). The fact that the SPLM endorsement of separation amounted to a refutation of its long-held commitment to a united reformed Sudan was of little concern in a party where ideological issues were never a major interest. In an indicative example, the SPLM passed almost seamlessly from parroting the slogans of Soviet state socialism to the liberal democratic rhetoric of its new American patrons and the powerful lobbyists linked to the Clinton and Obama presidencies. Under the Derg, SPLM leaders were atheists but became devout Christians as a means to reach out to the evangelicals that formed an important component of President George Bush's constituency.

The massive vote in favor of South Sudanese secession was considered by observers to be evidence that the people had overcome their many ethnic divides and were constructing a nation-state. They also saw it as an endorsement of the SPLM. Both conclusions were mistaken. The vote was an affirmation of the people's African character in a Sudanese state that gave primacy to Arabism. But in no way did the vote represent any overcoming of ethnic identities. Indeed, the SPLM remained an object of hatred in much of the non-Dinka inhabited areas of the country and it only made common cause with the masses over the issue of secession. If the SPLM could have fulfilled the people's aspirations, then attitudes might have changed. But the leopard could not change its spots. In any case, it is highly unlikely the ruling party could have constructed a viable state in the hostile environment of South

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[4] Author interview with Lt.-Gen. Peter Gadet, Khartoum, May 23, 2017.

Sudan. Instead of establishing a liberal democratic state, the SPLM set about constructing a Dinka ethnocracy.

This development was not a surprise to scholars of the SPLA and those familiar with conditions in South Sudan, but it was a shock to the American sponsors of the project who imagined a liberal democratic regime taking form in a preindustrial society rife with ethnic based conflicts and overseen by the SPLA. Likewise, Salva's use of tribalism to maintain power cannot be a surprise since what passed for politics in southern Sudan was always tribal and survival depended on how well the game was played. The game did not suddenly conform to Western precepts and values just because politicians made lofty commitments to democracy and introduced Western institutions of governance. Although not a highly educated man, Salva was better at tribal politics than his opponent, Riek Machar, who held a Western PhD and would eventually become the opposition leader. While Riek could never decide whether he was a tribal chief or a politician in the Western sense, a model that could never fit in South Sudan, Salva garnered much support through his adeptness in tribal politics.

The experience bears comparison with Eritrea where, fourteen years earlier, Western supporters celebrated what they assumed to be the emergence of a liberal democratic government and an "African Singapore." However, the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) were evident long before it assumed power (indeed, the highly effective EPLF security organization had eliminated any potential dissidents before Asmara was opened to the international community) and liberalism was hardly the byword upon which the ruling party hung its legitimacy. No matter, Western liberals are always looking for African heroes and applauded the election of EPLF champion Isias Aferworki in the wake of the 99.99 percent vote for secession in 1993, as witnessed by the author. Although neither Singapore nor liberal democracy were on Eritrea's horizon, the EPLF came to power with significant advantages: it had gained valuable experience in administration during the long insurgency, Eritrea had acquired many material advances from Italian and British colonialism, it had a rudimentary infrastructure and some industrialization, and the EPLF had carried out wide-ranging mobilization. South Sudan had none of the advantages of Eritrea and all its disadvantages. Its experience of colonialism was one of benign neglect and there was almost no infrastructure or industrial development, even in the capital Juba. What passed for mobilization under the SPLA served to intensify ethnic conflicts. The SPLA was authoritarian and focused on military pursuits and left matters of administration to the international community, thus ensuring its incompetence once it was catapulted into power by the international community.

South Sudan also had another major disadvantage: oil. Eritrea did not have a valuable commodity over which its politicians and generals could fight and corrupt themselves. Instead, Eritrea extracted capital from the meager surplus of the peasants through close administration, the use of army conscripts as a party labor force, and taxing their nationals abroad. In South Sudan, the ruling elite saw the demand for development and services as an obstacle to pocketing oil rents upon which the state depended for 95 percent of its revenues. With few in the country participating in a modern economy, the only people who could be taxed were the wealthy urban elite and as friends of the government or members of the government they were ignored. Party leaders and generals concentrated on looting the state, filling government positions with relatives and tribesmen, and directing the rest

of the country's surplus to the security services to protect their ill-gotten gains, fight other rent-seekers, and keep the country in a high state of alert for fear of an invasion from Sudan.

The collapse of the state into warring factions broadly corresponded with the decline of the international oil market although the trend toward war was evident long before. It was even precipitated by the decision to stop oil production to pressure Khartoum to reduce the transit fees. That gambit failed, Juba backed down, and its limited reserves were all but depleted. In the face of the country's impending collapse, the foreign backers of the SPLM launched a campaign to shift the blame to the US, which was accused of not providing sufficient support to the government. In fact, the state was nothing more than a shell bequeathed by the international community and even the powerful United States did not have the capacity to stop the belligerents from going to war or, as events would prove, end the self-destructive conflict.

It was not a surprise that the state split on ethnic lines between the Dinka and Nuer, but it was a surprise that the Dinka leadership would use the crisis to launch an attack on the Nuer civilian population of Juba. This attack, carried out between December 15–18, 2013, precipitated the insurgency by Nuer youth. It was not merely a competition of elites that the international peacemakers claimed was the cause. Instead of standing above the fray, closely analyzing conditions in the country and recognizing that the conflict had its origins in granting the disparate peoples of southern Sudan national self-determination, some of the IGAD peacemakers became active participants. Meanwhile, the organization exacerbated the conflict by assuming it could be resolved by ignoring the structural contradictions and concentrating on elite power-sharing. This approach served to increase elite demands in a zero-sum context. It also encouraged other ethnic communities who feared a carve up of the state between the Dinka and Nuer to launch their own insurgencies as they understood that an uprising would be the only way to gain a place at the negotiating table.

While the international community regularly preached that war was not the answer to South Sudan's problems, not taking up arms was a sure way to be ignored. In any case, for the martially minded leaders of the Dinka and Nuer the first response to political grievances was war and that produced tit-for-tat ethnic killings in Greater Upper Nile that were later to be replicated in Equatoria and Western Bahr al Ghazal. But despite their considerably larger numbers, the Dinka government might well have fallen to the Nuer were it not for the timely arrival of the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) of President Yoweri Museveni, almost certainly with the approval of his patron, the US.

Museveni did not like either Salva or Riek, but the latter—as per the narrative ascribed to by the Americans as well—was the cat's paw for his Islamist enemies in Khartoum. He was further accused of aiding the Lord's Resistance Army, when he oversaw a process that had the objective of reconciling the LRA and the Ugandan government. The governments of Museveni and Salva were also the funders of armed groups in Sudan, the SPLA-North and the Justice and Equality Movement, who were likewise employed to fight the rebel SPLM-IO (In Opposition) of Dr. Riek Machar. But with the defection of more than half of the SPLA soldiers to the rebels, Salva and his chief of defense staff, Paul Malong, also developed and utilized tribal militias from their home areas. While better at abusing civilians and looting than actually fighting, they nonetheless had the advantage of loyalty.

Meanwhile, Riek was initially dependent on a Nuer youth white army over which he had little control. Furthermore, he did not want to be closely associated with them because they abused Dinka civilians. Although SSDF generals and their forces aligned with the SPLM-

IO distrusted him and strongly opposed the SPLM which Riek still claimed to be loyal. He might still have excelled if he had a ready supply of weapons, but almost his only source was Khartoum and it just provided enough to ensure he was not defeated. While the US permitted the UPDF to serve as the backbone for the weak government in Juba, Khartoum suffered sanctions from Washington. Given the weak state of the Sudanese economy, made weaker by the substantial allocation of the national budget to security, it was only permitted to provide the most meager support for the rebels.[5] Meanwhile, Riek had limited political abilities and the only thing that saved the SPLM-IO from total defeat was the growing dissent in the country with the government's brutality and opposition to Dinka hegemony.

But the government's conclusion that it stood to gain more from war than a peace agreement meant that while it was pressured to sign the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) in August 2015, it had no intention of implementing the agreement. Shortly thereafter, they realized the peacemakers lacked any force to implement it. Instead, the US pressured Riek to return to Juba and assume his peace agreement designated position as first vice president even though the government was in flagrant violation of the security arrangements of the agreement, did not accept the ten state arrangement provided in the agreement and the entire process was only one small spark away from an explosion and collapse. These efforts were thoroughly endorsed by the US, particularly Secretary of State John Kerry, who told Riek he would be taken before the International Criminal Court if he did not return to Juba. The imminent explosion occurred when Salva and Riek met in the Presidential Palace on July 8, 2016, to discuss the growing number of their respective soldiers killed at SPLA check points in the capital. As was the case in December 2013, the SPLA and militia forces loyal to Salva attacked Nuer civilians and forced the vastly outnumbered SPLM-IO forces to leave the city. They continued to attack them over the next month as they fled to sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To any rational observer, these events marked the collapse of the peace process, but the international community pretended otherwise. Under the influence of the US, they recognized the bogus election of Riek's dissident lieutenant, Taban Deng Gai, as leader of the SPLM-IO and his subsequent appointment by Salva as the country's first vice president to replace Riek. By blackmailing Khartoum with promises to ease Washington's sanctions and bringing pressure to bear on Ethiopia, the US managed to keep him out of the region. Meanwhile, after visiting South Africa for health reasons Riek was placed under house detention, apparently in the belief that his marginalization would bring peace to South Sudan. Suffice to say, that assumption proved false, the war spread, famine developed, fear was increasingly expressed that much of the country's population might become refugees in neighboring states. Meanwhile, Taban never gained national legitimacy and Riek continued to serve as leader of the SPLM-IO, which remained the premier rebel force in the country. Although the US took the initiative in accepting Taban's appointment and marginalizing Riek, the Obama administration took no further action and the incoming Trump administration took little interest in South Sudan and its deepening humanitarian crisis.

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[5] In the final days of his presidency in 2017, Barack Obama issued a presidential order to end economic sanctions against Sudan in six months, but did not end Sudan's designation as a terrorist state. He insisted, however, that Sudan continue to cooperate with the US in fighting terrorism as defined by the US and that it not support South Sudanese rebels. Having bent over backwards for many years to end US sanctions, the regime of President Omar Al-Bashir quickly ended its limited support for the rebels.

6.7 Conclusion

US interest in Sudan developed in the context of the Cold War. It counted on Jafaar Nimeiri to do its bidding in the region, support Israel, and stand up to the Derg, as well as assist in efforts to overthrow the Gadaffi regime, which it eventually accomplished in 2014. There was little concern with the welfare of the southern Sudanese who would later garner considerable attention of three American presidents. The democratically elected government of Sadig Al-Mahdi was viewed as an obstacle to the pursuit of US Cold War interests and thus Washington indicated it would not oppose a military coup. This facilitated the rise to power of the NCP, which became a thorn in the side of the US for the next three decades.

The end of the Cold War, US triumphalism, and the conviction that the US had the responsibility and even right to intervene in the affairs of virtually all countries that did not have the capacity to protect themselves, together with a hypocritical moral high-mindedness that has always figured in American foreign policy, laid the basis for the deepening and destructive engagement in Sudan and later South Sudan by presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama. This engagement led to the conviction that southern Sudan could only overcome its problem by the establishment of an independent nation-state in similar fashion and with a similar design as that of the West. But the state bequeathed to the peoples of South Sudan could never meet their needs and instead set them on a path to destruction. Moreover, the political party the Americans placed its faith in—the SPLM—never corresponded to their unrealistic and saintly-like conceptions.

A consideration of solutions for the South Sudan tragedy is beyond the scope of this chapter, but they must begin with the people of the country in whose name the state was created and for whom the peace processes were conducted. The views of the people were never determined and never figured in the decision-making of either the domestic or international power brokers. An initial and admittedly cursory attempt to determine the views of a small sample of eastern Nuer civilian residents and refugees in Gambella, Ethiopia, in December 2016 on issues such as war, peace, and leadership reached the conclusion that in the wake of its failures at peacemaking and peace implementation the stature of the international community has been radically diminished. Although there was no consensus on the way forward or how South Sudan should be administered, the people interviewed were clear that they did not want those decisions to again be made by outsiders or unaccountable indigenous elites. Western engagement in countries like South Sudan proceeded from the assumed lack of agency of Africans, but the cooperation almost exclusively with elites by Western-led peacemakers ensured that the voices of ordinary people were not heard and their interests not represented directly.

The peacemakers' response to the collapse of their peace process was to conclude that it was not due to any fault of the peace agreement, the exclusion of the South Sudanese from the peace process, or the fact that South Sudan could not be expected to conform to the stipulations of a peace process designed for a functioning nation-state, which it was clearly not. Instead, the peacemakers concluded that the failures were due to a lack of pressure brought to bear on the belligerents. And thus, the number of international mediators was vastly increased. Because the war had spread, more rebel groups were brought to the table, largely at the expense of the SPLM-IO. These efforts proved successful, if success is understood to mean the acceptance of the agreement by the government in 2018. By late 2019, the conflict had dissipated, yet Riek Machar had not returned to Juba to take up his position as first vice

president, cantonment centers had not been established for the opposition forces, and there was no settlement on the number of states as pursuant to the agreement. As a result, there were increasing fears that this impasse could continue for a long time.

The first step in sorting out the conundrum that is South Sudan today must begin with giving a voice to its citizens, and not just its elites. In both the Naivasha peace process that resulted in the CPA and the Addis Ababa process to end the war in southern Sudan that produced ARCSS, the primary focus was on gaining the approval of internationally selected elites to various forms of power-sharing. This emphasis assumed that the problems of Sudan and then South Sudan could be equated with the concerns of these elites who could then build a peaceful nation-state. From the perspective of the international community, the highlight of the Naivasha process, was the behind-closed-doors talks between SPLM leader John Garang and Sudan's Vice President Ali Osman Taha. Meanwhile, the backers of the South Sudan peace process understood the conflict to be between opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir, and almost all the negotiations were concerned with how much power each should hold in the post-conflict government. This assumed that not only were these two individuals in complete control of their respective organizations, but also that they reflected the interests of the principal groups in society and neither of those assumptions were true. Riek did not organize, control, or lead the Nuer white army, which was the major armed group in opposition to the government during the first phase of the war. Likewise, Salva did not control the misnamed national army he claimed at crucial times, and as a result he relied on tribal militias. Legitimizing elites and permitting them to dominate internationally led peace negotiations or threatening to have them removed or marginalized when they do not act according to the dictates of their sponsor—as was the case with Riek—demonstrates the peace-makers' power over the actors. However, even when the international community can dictate the terms of the peace agreement—as they did in South Sudan—they cannot ensure sustainable peace, much less make an ungovernable country governable.

As well as exerting their economic power through financial institutions and trade agreements, war and the threat of war, peacemaking has become a favored instrument by which the US led West ensures its interests are protected. These peace processes are informed by neoliberal precepts and are sometimes led by the West, but more often are pursued through regional development-security organizations that are funded, supplied, and dominated by the West, such as IGAD, which was the West's chosen vehicle to pursue peace processes in Sudan and South Sudan.

However, instead of such institutions being instruments to realize African solutions to African problems—as is claimed—they deepen the role of the West in the continent, undermine the sovereignty of the weak states of Africa, and increasingly make them dependent on the West. And as the peacemaking efforts in Sudan and South Sudan demonstrate, they have proven to be not only failures, but have exacerbated the conflicts. In Alejandro Bendaña's analyses of supposedly successful internationally led peace processes in Central America (that is, they stopped the wars), the weak and disenfranchised majorities frequently gained little and often lost significantly from processes that did not address, much less overcome, the social injustices that produced the insurrections in the first place (Bendaña 2003). While internationally sponsored peace agreements in Central America changed the forms in which the poor experienced violence, they did not end the violence and instead produced states better equipped to withstand demands from below. In Sudan and South Sudan, peace agreements did not even end the overt forms of violence associated with negative peace. Instead,

by affirming the rule of oppressive and dysfunctional elites the culmination of one peace process produced the conditions for further violence and the need for more peacemaking.

While the West and its human rights advocates contend that weak or predatory African states alone produce conditions that necessitate international interventions, it was precisely the failures of the CPA that shaped South Sudan's civil war, or as the subtitle of my book on that peace process would have it—"consequences of a flawed peace process." But in a context where no lessons are learned from past failures, the failures themselves are held as providing evidence of the need for further and intensified interventions.

6.8   Addendum, December 30, 2020

Under the 2005 CPA the international community handed over power to the SPLM and set the stage for the establishment of the South Sudanese state in 2011 and the ensuing disasters. Two years later that state was at war with itself and the international community responded with more peace-making and the signing of a peace agreement in 2015. When that agreement collapsed the international community oversaw a 'revitalized' peace agreement that was signed by the government of Salva Kiir and most of the rebel groups in September 2018. More than two years later when this is being written the security situation in South Sudan has marginally improved but fighting continues between the holdout National Salvation Front and government forces in Central Equatoria while inter and intra-communal fighting is endemic. The fact that communal conflicts are not addressed by the peace process speaks powerfully of its inadequacy and the failure of the present forms of governance that are a product of the peace process.

Since 1983 various components of the international community have been involved in trying to bring peace, defined negatively as the absence of war, to the territory. But each failed peace-making effort led to further peace-making by an ever-changing international community on the one hand and local elites that showed remarkable continuity on the other. The approach to peace-making and the models employed have not changed and nor has there been any consideration whether the state that the international community and the local elites are committed to can meet the needs of the people of South Sudan for security and development.

The debate on whether South Sudan should be placed under a trusteeship has largely withered. Not because state capacity has improved or because the government has demonstrated an interest in the welfare of its people. But because the international community led by the UN has moved beyond the provision of humanitarian assistance and is increasingly delivering basic government services. A powerful argument against the imposition of an international trusteeship was that it breached South Sudan's sovereignty, but in daily practice the UN and a host of other agencies do precisely that. Nonetheless, the West and the African Union want to preserve the illusion that a dysfunctional South Sudan state is a sovereign unit of the so-called international global order.

South Sudan was created to free itself from Sudanese overlordship and its SPLM government endeavored to replace its extensive ties with Sudan with those of its East African neighbors. But the government is finding that the historical, cultural, linguistic, geographical, and familial links with Sudan are stronger than was imagined and in the wake of the coming to power of the post-Al-Bashir transitional government in 2019 the establishment of formal linkages between the two countries cannot be discounted. Also driving renewed ties

to the motherland is the failure of the secessionist project and refusal of the Salva Kiir to devolve powers which has replicated the centralized administration that southern nationalists fought against in the old Sudan.

Unlike other parts of Africa where wars of liberation sometimes served to unify the various ethnic communities, in South Sudan the conflicts exacerbated existing antagonisms. Likewise, the efforts of the international community over 37 years have not succeeded in overcoming the divisions between the 80+ ethnic communities that reside in the territory. To the frustration of the West the South Sudanese state remains not only a threat to the security of its own people but endangers the security of client states in the region, and despite an abundance of natural resources it has not become an investment destination for Western capital. These were precisely the reasons the US and its allies first became involved in Sudan peace-making. Constrained by the West's neo-colonial and Eurocentric conviction that all states must bend to its model of the nation-state, South Sudan continues to be dysfunctional, only elites linked to the artificial state benefit, and its peoples suffer untold miseries.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

John Markakis, Günther Schlee, and John Young

The principal concern of this book has been the international factors and modes of engagement that have shaped and distorted contemporary states in the Horn of Africa. In a region in which scarcity, endemic poverty, uneven development, and the repeated involvement of outside powers have produced and exacerbated a host of armed struggles, the establishment of two independent states and with the outbreak of war in Tigray in November 2020 possibly more in the offing, and the highest numbers of refugees and internally displaced people in the world, it is important to emphasize the link between these problems and a failed model of statehood adopted, imposed, and directed by the West.

Since its domination by the West in the nineteenth century, Africa has served as an experimental laboratory for metropole notions of economic and political development from imperialism through Keynesian notions of state-led development, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism, but in each case power was ultimately held by people and organizations outside the continent and aid projects were designed to meet their needs. The drive for independence in the 1960s was a high point in the effort of Africans to control their destinies even if power was turned over to a self-serving comprador elite who ensured that the interests of the former colonial powers were paramount. As pointed out by Frantz Fanon and Walter Rodney, the ruling bourgeois classes in the West had gained economic power before gaining state power, and thus could relinquish power through elections and be assured that their interests would be protected. In contrast, the petty bourgeois rulers in Africa had their origins in the state, had no independent economic basis, and clung to political power, which has regularly precipitated conflict. Although basking in the legitimacy of self-proclaimed democracies, Western policies in Africa over many years have been designed to separate the rulers from the people, make these rulers accountable to the West and not their own people, and thus preclude the possibility of democracy taking form in the continent.

The Cold War was a mixed blessing for Africans. On the one hand, it involved the capitalist West and the socialist East demanding that its allies conform to their economic and political conditionalities, while on the other it provided a measure of political space and the possibility of playing off the two super-powers. In addition, the Cold War permitted a proliferation of anti-imperialism, neo-colonialism, dependency, and world systems theories that provided critiques of the state in the developing world and its relations to the developed West.

While the West's victory in the Cold War ended the great ideological confrontations that loomed large in the Horn of Africa, it also gave rise to new demands that states follow the dictates of the new international order, which further undermined African sovereignty. It also reinforced the intellectual hegemony of the West and fostered an environment in which the critical theories that informed much analysis are now only studied only at the margins

of universities and are rejected outright by mainstream economics and the powers that be. However, such acts of theorizing remain building blocks to understanding the inability of the African state to meet the needs of the people and the inequitable relationship of Africa to the West. It is also key to bring Africans to their rightful role in the international community.

The transition of the OAU to the AU was supposedly based on the advance of African states, but the new organization followed its predecessor and did the bidding of the West, including implementing the precepts of neoliberalism and working to ensure the maintenance of the Western-dominated global state architecture. By the end of the Cold War, hopes that African and Asian states might collectively come together and avoid entanglement with the superpowers and achieve autonomous development as aspired by the 1955 Non-Aligned Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, had all but evaporated. The West has further constrained the development of independent policies in Africa by establishing a formidable network of economic and security institutions and treaties that bind the continent to the developed world. IGAD was one such regional organization that was initially established under Western impetus to pursue development objectives and serve as an interlocutor between the Horn of Africa and Western donor states. Later, at the encouragement of the West it moved into peacemaking, and were the region not so internally divided it would have assumed a security role as well.

African governments have largely accepted the role of their states in the international economy to be one of supplying raw materials to the West (i.e. their supposed comparative advantage) and increasingly to China and other Asian powers. While China's rapid development served to undermine Africa's fledgling manufacturing base, it is also providing infrastructure that may eventually help the continent escape from its marginalized position in the international economy. Furthermore, it gives developing countries opportunities for realizing alternative approaches to development, and in the case of Ethiopia until recently it was assisting in the rapid expansion of the country's textile industry but even before the 2020 war internal strife had slowed the country's economic boom.

While continuous Western efforts to impose neoliberalism is lowering living standards, producing uneven development, fostering conflict between governments beholden to the West and a welfare seeking population, societal tensions, and in some areas is providing an environment in which jihadist and other extremist views can take hold, Africans are also engaged in a growing global campaign of resistance. Given the present balance of international power, it is unrealistic to imagine that Africa will assume a leading role in the fight back. With this in mind, the case of Ethiopia is instructive.

The EPRDF was committed to a socialist transformationand it had the enormous advantage of coming to power without being beholden to foreign powers. Nevertheless, the Front felt compelled to embrace capitalism, bend to the demands of the Bretton Woods agencies, and align its foreign policy to that of the West. This decision came from the realistic perspective that pursuing the EPRDF's initial programs would likely be defeated by a reinvigorated and triumphalist West in 1991 and thus pose a threat to its existence. If the EPRDF with its many advantages compared to other ruling parties in Africa at the time did not have the capacity to pursue an independent program, there was little hope of success elsewhere on the continent. Those states had already been captured by elites beholden to the West.

But that was then, and the present situation is very different. The uncontested Western hegemony of 1991 is being undermined and challenged on multiple fronts. The most significant event in turning around these realities may have been the economic crisis of 2008.

The implications are still felt, and include continuous but sluggish growth, historically high rates of unemployment, and increasing inequality. Modern circumstances have also been changed by the emergence of a politically and militarily confident Russia which is able to block Western initiatives in various parts of the world, the growth of China as an economic giant, and the inability of the West to escape from a never-ending GWOT. Hegemony is also undermined by multiple cracks in the Western alliance that has served as the bedrock of the global order since the end of World War II, in particular, the impending withdrawal of the UK from the EU and growing tensions between the EU and the US. This division is also manifest in the election of the American nationalist president, Donald Trump, and the proliferation of right-wing parties in Europe on the one hand, versus the electoral successes of Bernie Sanders in the US and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK, espousing socialist ideas thought to have been relegated to history's dustbin with the defeat of the Soviet Union on the other hand.

As a result, the ideological environment is opening and the political space is expanding so that countries on the periphery, or what used to be called the weak links to global capitalism, now have a measure of maneuverability that has not been the case since the height of the Cold War. But the growing conflict between the US led West and China, and to a lesser extent Russia, means that more pressure is being placed on African governments to fall in line with their former colonial masters and the US. In both Sudan and Ethiopia one can also observe the key role played by client states of the US in their internal affairs. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE both shaped the course of the popular uprising against the Al-Bashir regime in 2019 and are continuing to influence the course of the transition. Meanwhile, the UAE from its base in Assab, Eritrea has become a party to the war by Abiy Ahmed and Isias Afwerki against the TPLF insurgency. In addition, Egypt is trying to use this conflict as a means to press its demands regarding Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam. And at the macro-level countries in the Gulf and Turkey are increasingly militarizing the Red Sea.

African governments, which are typically more responsive to Western demands than to those of their own constituents, cannot be expected to use this freedom to press for more than marginal changes. But among the people of the Horn, new horizons are opening up and nowhere is this more apparent than in South Sudan.

South Sudan owes its existence to the US. When it collapsed into civil war in December 2013, the US led the peace process and propped up the government. However, not only is US state building now recognized as a failure, so are its peacemaking efforts, as is the mechanism that the US and its Western allies used to pursue their efforts and which it created, funds, and directs—IGAD. Moreover, the US-backed SPLM and its leader, Dr. John Garang, who was publicized as an African hero, has been irrevocably tarnished by the ruling party's maladministration, endemic corruption, and responsibility for sparking civil war in 2013. As a result, the US, the West, and broadly the international community, which had been held in high esteem by South Sudanese only a few years ago, are now viewed with distain by many in the country.

Although conditions in South Sudan favor the emergence of political forces to challenge the West's inappropriate models of governance and the economy and alternatives have been proposed, change is sadly not happening. Instead, both the government and rebels are clinging to outworn models that their own experience proves do not work and are increasingly subject to attack in the West. This also appears to be the case in other countries examined in this study. Whether this represents a time lag in which new political formations will catch

up with new conditions is not known. Africa may be entering a stage described by Gramsci a century ago when he wrote, "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (Gramsci 1971).

White men have repeatedly promised to lead Africans to a better future and repeatedly failed to do so, and it is not our intent to follow in those footsteps. The objective of this book has been to expose the falsehoods, illusions, and sometimes outright lies upon which the Western modeled state has been constructed in the Horn of Africa.

At the end of this exercise it might be good to come back to its beginning and to examine what we have set out to do. Already the title of the book states that the nation-state is the wrong model for the Horn of Africa. This statement can be read in two different ways, depending on whether we understand "model" in a normative or in a descriptive way.

Evidence abounds, in this book and elsewhere, that the nation-state as a descriptive model does not fit the Horn of Africa. It simply does not describe what we see there. According to the Weberian model of the nation-state, it should have a state territory that it fills with its sovereign power. What we find in the northeast African reality is power at the center that peters out as we move towards the margins. Instead of the monopoly of violence held by the ideal nation-state, we find armed counter powers. Instead of or in addition to a bureaucracy following rules, we find personalized forms of power, networks of patronage, and markets of violence. Instead of universal citizens and a government at the service of the entire citizenry who is responsible for its welfare, we find the expectation that leaders help their own people first and the idea that a leader who does not first help his own people cannot be a good leader.

Thus, the hypothesis expressed in the title, namely that the nation-state is a wrong model for the Horn of Africa, has been corroborated beyond doubt if we understand model as a descriptive model. What we find in Africa is at great variance with it. But how about model in the normative sense? As a model *for* with an emphasis on the for (rather than a model *of*)? Would the problems of the Horn of Africa be solved if we managed to establish nation-states according to the Western model there?

In the preface, we vowed not to fall back into the old habit of telling Africans what to do. This book therefore does not end with a list of explicit proposals, apart from the recommendation to listen to Africans and for students of African politics to work to expose Eurocentrism. In several of the chapters we have noted the lack of inclusivity of peace processes, of economic policies, of resource sharing, of politics in general. Western sponsored post-conflict reconstruction programs (misnamed so because they often take place during conflicts and sometimes are a cause of their prolongation) often "marginalize local institutions and alienate local citizens from the state-building process" (Englebert and Tull 2008, 138).

By pointing out some incongruences, like the disjointedness between the nation-state model and African realities, between what states pretend to be and what they really are, we hope—in a small way and within our limited purview—to lift the veil and encourage the emergence of an intellectual environment in which old and failed Western conceptions of statehood can be challenged and new formulations developed.

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