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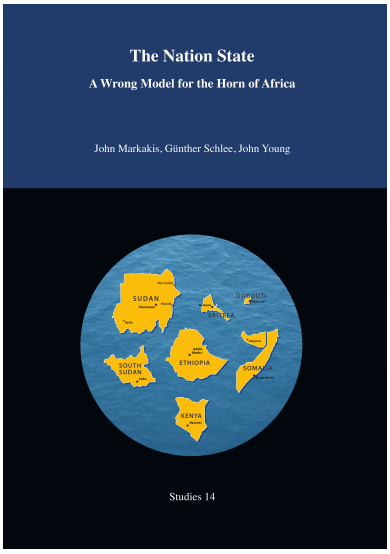

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Chapter 2
The Crisis of the State in the Horn of Africa

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).

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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, sub-Saharan 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 politically sophisticated Western-educated class, a modernizing economy based on cotton that sustained a large trader class, and a British-trained professional army. These strata comprised 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. Sectarianism 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 consequences. 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 became 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 Equatoria 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 language 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 Sudanese 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.

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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.