Secessionism on the islands of Bioko and Annobón
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Abstract

The cultural diversity that distinguishes the African states observes special consideration even when it does not serve to strengthen their self esteem or their political systems. The traumatic experiences suffered by many ethnic groups in the past did not prevent the eventual establishment of ethnic or tribal states (or governments). These newly established states were strongly centralized, ruled by tyrannical governments, with ¨lifetime¨ posts and patronage systems given to some groups at the expense of others, depending on the government of the country under which it was colonized.

I am convinced that the issue of secessionism in Africa is fairly extended across the continent, because of the colonial oppressions and divisions among Black ethnic groups, which were never reconciled, where a single government was created. Bioko and Annobón (in Equatorial Guinea) were no exception. First, there were atrocities and tragedies historically experienced during the cultural collision between Black and White Guineans that weakened Black self-determination for minority groups, such as the Bubis. Second, that conflict was at odds with finding a singular identity, necessitating the reconsideration and the reassertion of the psychological, ethno-cultural and historical dimensions, which distinguish the majority and minority ethnic groups. Third, the minority Blacks asked to engage in a dialogue and negotiation for secession with the colonist and post-colonist government at the time, with the option, either to create a single state again with the intent to guarantee everybody's participation and involvement, without any discrimination based on ethnic, historical and political reasons, or, separating and creating two states, both of which were rejected. In the end, a single state was created, excluding the minority groups, allowing the ruling government to persecute them. These and other topics will be explored along the theme of secessionism on Bioko and Annobón (Equatorial Guinea).

1.- A very short description of the Bubis and the Annobonese.

In this chapter, it is necessary to refer to Equatorial Guinea as a state in which the given islands are located. Therefore, we have to say that the issue of secessionism in Equatorial Guinea focuses on two specific geographically well-defined groups. These are the Bubis and the Annobonese. The inhabitants of the first one are natives of the Bioko island (the largest island of Equatorial Guinea), and former island of Fernando Poo. The latter, in turn, are Annobón's island, so distant from Bioko and Rio Muni (mainland of Equatorial Guinea). Both islands were part of the Spanish Guinea, since Portugal exchanged its domains of the Gulf of Guinea in 1778 by Spanish domains in South America. The Spanish possessions in black Africa were organized administratively into two provinces. This is according to the Spanish Law of July 30, 1959, which has developed the Decree of August 21, 1956, organising the territory of the colony (BUALE B., E. 1988: 125). The first province was Fernando Poo, together with the island of Annobón, both separated by about 700 km. The second province was Rio Muni and the tiny islands of Corisco, Great and Little Elobey and Mbañe. As it has been said before, the bartering between Spain and Portugal in 1778 allowed the first country, which had not been interested in black Africa, to become the administrator of these territories. The two provinces had been governed separately as two states-nations each of them with its regional government. The following chapter will focus on what can be called secessionist talk after the Spanish colonialism, although we need to consider its background in order to understand its failure. This secessionist talk was silently claimed by the Bubi and the Annobonese peoples, and quickly perceived as a threat, and harshly combated by the Government.

But before any depth study about the secessionist topic on Bioko and Annobón, we have to take into account the location of both islands, as well as the distance between the territories. By calculating the kilometers between them and other places, (see the box below), many questions arise about this duty: why Spain had created a unitary state between lands so far from each others?. What criteria did Spain follow to integrate all these territories in the same geopolitical space?. Why the protests of the Bubis and Annobonese representatives were ignored when they refused to take part in the independence unit project promoted by the then Spanish Foreign Minister, D. Fernando Maria Castiella y Maíz., who defended and endorsed his project before the Committee of the 24 representatives of the United Nations Organization, which was responsible for the study of the decolonization request of the Spanish territories of the Gulf of Guinea?.

Annobón ----- Bioko:	700 Km.
Annobón ----- Río Muni:	400 Km.
Annobón ----- Santo Tomé:	150 Km.
Annobón ----- Gabonese coast:	350 Km.
Bioko ------- Río Muni:	350 Km.
Bioko ----- -- Cameroonian coast:	32 Km.
Bioko ----- -- Nigerian coast:	150 Km.
Corisco ----- Gabonese coast:	40 Km.
Elobeyes -----Gabonese coast:	15 Km.

According to the chronicles, when Fernan do Po "discovered" the island which he named *Flor Formosa* (it was later named Fernando Poo as was the wish of the Spanish) and Juan de Santarem and Manuel Escobar "discovered" the island which they named Anno Bon (or Annobón), the first one was already inhabited by the Bubis four thousand years BC, while the second was vacant, as earlier noted, according to European chroniclers. The present inhabitants of this second island were brought there, by Luis Almeida as slaves to farm the lands, and became later on in history local inhabitants, because they fled to the island by themselves from Santo Tomé, or from the African coast.

2.- Identities, colonisation and anti-colonialism.

The island of Bioko, like Annobón's island, has no land borders with any African state, neither any of the ethnic groups of Equatorial Guinea's state. The intangibles and sacred boundaries inherited by the Africans from colonization, as it has been recognized by the Organization of the African Union, and have never been challenged by post-independence African powers, condemn many African ethnic groups to suffer horrific violations of their rights to preserve and express their identities as they like, whether in or outside the territory inherited.

In regards to Bioko and Annobón, the first one with 2017 sq. km., and the second one with 17'4 sq. km., two well defined Nations-Islands, a separate colonization was required from Spain. At the time, some educated and skilled Bubi leaders technically advised and assisted, and based on their purchasing power (the high production of cocoa and coffee), they outlined the reasons for a different colonization. These and other factors justified their hope to support the political and economic separation of the island [of Fernando Poo] from the rest of Guinea (HERRERO de MIÑÓN, M. 1993: 34). The current analysis of this past situation gives us two points of view about the decolonization of "the Spanish territories of the Gulf of Guinea." Firstly, due to the Spanish colonizers pressure, it was envisaged to grant independence to each of those areas. To justify this possibility, the Bubi leaders of the 1960s, always technically assisted by the Spanish, compared the size of Bioko's island (then Fernando Poo) with the extensions of the Seychelles, with 455 sq. km., to that of Santo Tome and Principe, with 1001 sq. km.", etc., and demanded the drastic and complete political separation of the island of Fernando Poo. Secondly, if the unitary independence was inevitable without both islands, ethno-cultural relationship could be developed among other African territories: probably the Bubis with the West-Cameroonians of Limbé (the Bakuere group, which territory is 32 km. from the island of Bioko) and the Annobonese with Santo Tome and Principe (with which they share a language and they are geographically close).

This quick commentary about Fernando Poo and its secessionism in the 1960s and particularly, between 1964 and 1968, leads us to realize that Fernando Poo and Annobón, as part of the same administrative province, were politically unified without taking into account their different and distant territories (about 700 km. from one to other), everyone with its own language (Bantu language in the case of the Bubis and Creole language in the case of the Annobonese) and its culture, with a different view of

the reality. Their common experience under the Spanish colonizers has forced them to be part of the political and territorial project of Equatorial Guinea.

There is no doubt that after this brief presentation, the difference between these two people has been proved in every way. And despite having talked of secession from its raw historical realities, it has been worth while trying to deal with this topic from an individual perspective of each group.

2.1. The anti-colonialism on Bioko's island.

First, we need to see Bubi anti-colonialism as the necessary reaffirmation of an ethno-cultural identity against the Spanish colonial policy about the integral assimilation and homogenization practiced with all colonized people, in this case, the Bubis. "The real structural state cohesion [as is the case of Equatorial Guinea] of a territory [or space] in which the population did not have a real connection" (PEÑAS MARTINEZ, L 2010: 2-3), as well as the demographic invasion policy of the island of Fernando Poo practiced by the Spanish colonizers against the traditional powers, made the Bubis feel threatened by the Spanish occupation, and had to react and defend their invaded historical territory, by using their traditional and deterrent strategies, or their rudimentary weapons when facing their enemies. Apart from these methods implemented by the Spanish colonizers, we can also add other colonialist strategies. On the one hand, the creation of "confinement" centres held by the missionaries for the Bubi children's forced training, and which aim was to rapidly colonize the minds of these future generations, compelled against their will to leave in the "missions" ruled by the mentioned churchmen (mainly by the Claretian missionaries). On the other hand, the practices of Nigerian labourers working in the Spanish cocoa plantations, which were to offer gifts and goods to the Bubi women for the purpose to go and live with them, creating conflicts in the homes and settlement disorders (GARCÍA CANTÚS., L. 2008: 14). With these actions practiced and allowed by the Spanish, we can understand the reason why the Bubis were not getting along with the colonizers. These well encouraged women by seeing the reaction of their husbands and their neighbours, fled in search of protection in the missions. This was the response expected. Before this provocation, it was hoped that the traditional Bubi powers would provoke their populations in order to fight their external aggressors. The policy of Bubi reduction settlements led by Spain, which was the concentration of all the neighbours in the same space, including the construction of military camps at the entrance of these new settlements, also intensified the Bubi rejection attitude. These and many others are some of the reasons why aroused the anti-colonialist feelings of some eminent Bubi leaders, such as the King Esáasi Eweera, the chiefs Bötúkku Lubá and Riokaló Bobótapa, etc. Even King Malabo Löpèlo Melaka, in the beginning considered pro-Spanish, expressed his anti-Spanish thoughts and the consequence was his torture, spending his last years in colonial jails until his death in 1937, same as Esáasi Eweera in 1904 (BOLEKIA B., J. 2007: 49). All the actions implemented by the Spanish colonialism had as objectives, among others, to eradicate the Bubi rebellion, to control and exploit the people, their conversion to Catholicism, the assimilation of Spanish culture, and so on. The reaction of the Bubis, as it was expected, was to avoid their cultural annihilation and to implement their rights of ownership. It is a must to make reference to the secret society *Hijas de Bisila* (Bisila's Daughters), created in 1943 by a group of Bubis who fought against the Spanish presence in the island of Fernando Poo, and specially to avoid the

proclamation of the General Governor Mariano Alonso Alonso (appointed to the Spanish's territories from May 1941 to October 1943) as King of the Bubis. The members of this secret society were detained and deported to Annobón (LINIGER-GOUMAZ, M. 1989: 65).

2.2. The anti-colonialism on the island of Annobón.

Annobón anti-colonialism must be placed in the social setting period of the former slaves, who were brought to the island for it repopulation around 1565. Until the island's effective and official occupation by the Spanish (1905), its inhabitants often expressed their opposition to the White who wanted to live in Annobón. However, they had more sympathy with the Portuguese because their presence in the island discouraged other Europeans in their intention to occupy it. This is one of the reasons why the Annobonese did not willing to accept the Spanish presence in their territory, because, as stated by Arlindo Manuel CALDEIRA (2009: 298) Anno Bon's [Annobón] experience in terms of previous occupations of the island, was a great distrust of the island's inhabitants, specially if we take into account a series of initiatives implemented to reduce the inhabitants to a state of subjection lived at that time.

The Spanish anti-colonialism exhibited by the people of Annobón was due to the good relationships they had with other Europeans, above all with those who protected them from capture, torture and slavery. To some extent, this is an anti-colonialism which is responding to the preservation of the old manners and the freedom wishes of the islanders. Some of the misdeeds committed by the Spanish colonialism, such as the destruction of the islanders' houses, the prohibition of the polygamy, the physical punishment like a beating, protection to the widowed women against the old habits, etc. (NERÍN ABAD, Gustau 1998: 192-193), provoked the reaction and rejection of the adult population against the Spanish presence in the island. This defence and protection of the manners had justified the defence of the Annobón national unity and cultural identity. In short, the Annobonese neglected their struggle claims, by focusing on their traditional education and socio-cultural cohesion, (MUAKUKU RONDO, I. 2006: 133). This lack of political demand transmitted by traditional power, prevented Annobón to generate an island separatist movement. The island of Annobón, whose first attempt of repopulation took place between 1543 and 1565 (CALDEIRA, A.-M. 2009: 293) had many experiences with the colonizers. Among them we can mention the Portuguese (1471-1604, 1606-1659, 1665-etc.), the Dutch (1605 and 1660-1664) and the Spanish (1777-1968), although in latter case, Spain did not send an official representative until 1905, when churchmen (the Claretian missionaries) became the representatives of the General Governor of the Spanish territories in the Gulf of Guinea. We can then state that the colonisation of Annobón had Claretian missionaries as the unique guardians and fighters of the Spanish morality, and also the transmitters of the Spanish manners in this distant corner of their Black Spanish "territory". In other words, one hundred and twenty-eight years after the signing of the Treaty of Pardo between Spain and Portugal, Annobón began to lose its traditional autonomy and suffered the worse violence and outrage to its customs and manners.

The reports prepared by the colonial authorities proved that both, the Bubis and the Annobonese, had never accepted the presence of the invaders of their vital space. The rebelliousness of the natives gave rise to the violent incursions practised by the colonizers churchmen. In the specific case of Annobón, their rebellious attitude against

the White was seen as an outrage, because of the former condition of the Annobonese, as it has been indicated: "the Black, who were earlier slaves, are now masters of the island" (CAIDEIRA, A.-M. 2009: 296).

2.3. The Bubi and Annobonese counter-colonialism as identity reassertion

Let me still have a look to the past in order to understand why the Bubis and the Annobonese had an attitude against those people who tried to seize their sovereignties. Due to the lack of published writing work sources by the colonised people, we have to torn some times to the Orality to base on part of what can be said in this chapter. As Jacint Creus has pointed out:

> "En el cas de les societats africanes, que en general no han comptat amb el suport de l'escriptura, els textos pertanyents a la literatura oral són fonamentals per permetre'ns una interpretació de la seva evolució i de la seva Història" (1994: 485)[1].

For the past centuries, even before the arrival of the White men, the Bubis were already organised as a society with social structures, such as a matriarchy (family under the leadership of a woman), villages led by chiefs (men or women) who were assisted by an old men council, traditional and current rites under the watchfulness of the master of ceremonies, the *bilotyí* (people who possessed a spirit of prophesy called *bötéribbo* – intermediate force between the living and the ancestors-) and de *Abba Mööte* (the high figure of the Bubi traditional religion), etc. At the top of these socio-political structures were the King (or Queen), also assisted by his/her cabinet and his/her viceroy/vice queen in many areas of the island.

Concerning the Ámbö (Annobonese) people, we have to underline that their social organisation does not allow us to think of a society well defined politically, with a central power concentrated in a person. This lack of a personified power did not affect the organisation of their society around specific cores. The Annobonese's core powers were defined by the age of their members. We are talking about the socio-institutional groups known as *viyil ngaándy*[2] (for the elders or people up to 50 years), *viyil josólo* (for the men about 40-50 years old), *viyil basu jaándy* (for the men of 30-40 years old) and *viyil sèngui mód* (for the young people). The members of the first *viyil* are the older persons, and it was a real dignitary assembly, with political and judicial functions. Among its members were the sacristan-major or *sanguita gueza ngaándy*, the school-master or *metiscolo* and the captain-major or *governor*. Their presence and attendance were essential and compulsory (CALDEIRA, A.-M. 2009: 303).

Until the nineteenth century, Bubi population had no regular contact with the Europeans because of the traumatic experiences endured by the self-called "batyö" (persons) during the slavery period. Today, we know that many Bubis were kidnapped by slave traders thanks to the DNA test results used by the geneticists to let some interested Afro-Americans and others know about their African roots. This provides many of them with a departure point, at least, for some of their Black ancestors. We agree with Ibrahim Sundiata that the DNA tests may not be the key to the discovering of African ancestry (2009: 140). Nevertheless, it could be a vital component. Coming back

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[1] Concerning the African societies, which did not generally taking into account the writing support, the texts belonging to the oral literature become fundamentals in the interpretation of their history evolution.
[2] The sound of the graphs *dy* is a stop alveolar voiced consonant phonetically represented as dɢ.

to our topic, the Bubi leaders forbade any contact with foreigners, and gave a clear view of the rejection attitude of the people toward any White outsider.

The case of the Annobonese is quite different for the following reasons. First, their tiny island (17'4 sq. km.). Second, Annobón was a provisioning point of the passing ships. Third, the barter system practiced by the Annobonese with the crews of the ships allowed the former slaves to procure those products that they needed, like clothes, shoes, weapons, nails, etc. As we have said before, it was Luis de Almeida who took some slaves from Santo Tome to Annobón. These slaves were led by emancipated "Criollos" and some Portuguese (WULF, V. de 1998: 7) and managed to become "independents" and they developed a society in which there was no slavery.

However, things changed with the arrival of the Claretian missionaries on the island of Annobón, especially since the island's residents rejected the training dispensed by those churchmen. In order to achieve their purposes of evangelization, the Claretian missionaries made use of physical violence. A way of ending this practice got the General Governor Mr. Jose de la Puente Basabe involved, and in 1895, he banned corporal punishment or sticks (WULF, V. 1998: 46-47) by an edict publication.

Without being a scientist in animal behaviour, I can state that people usually act as animals in their way of behaving. For instance, when animals feel threatened in their living space or in their *marking territory*, they react with early warning signs. These signs are used to express the innate aggressiveness of any animal, just like a barking of a dog, a flutter of a hen protecting its chicks, the blows given by the gorilla on its chest, etc. With similar reactions it could be known that no animal can interact with others without any previous act of rejection.

In a particular instance of some Africans, secession may be a solution when the power seizes the ancestor's right for a people to have and live peacefully in their own homeland. Beside that, we need to remember how the Europeans changed the course of African history when they imposed artificial boundaries and the breakage of families and ethnic groups. The new African states were built artificially and were the mixing of people historically, linguistically and psychologically different. Therefore, when these people are forced to share the same territory, and when they were under the government of another ethnic group, the unsuitable distribution of power can provoke the reappearance of their historical rivalries and end into a separation of a part of a state from the rest of its territory (TRZCINSKI, K. 2004: 208).

When the White arrived at Fernando Po in the nineteen century, they met the people downright organized and ruled by the chiefs of the villages. The Bubis had also a king or Queen at the top of their political organization. So, the Spanish colonizers tried to reach to the people by convincing the king about their good purposes. The distrust and repulse of the Bubi society forced the use of violent methods by the Spanish. The Bubis resisted the new system and fought hardly against their invaders. Among these fighters was King Esáasi Eweera, who refused to deal with the White foreigners and asked the Spanish invaders to abandon the Bubi territory. Having said that, and to forbid his people to avoid any alliance with the Spanish missionaries, King Esáasi Eweera was arrested, tortured and killed by the Spanish colonizers in 1904. Six years later, Bötúkku (chief) Lubá, who was the leader of the land of San Carlos (South of Fernando Poo's island, and named West Bay by the British), rouse up against the Spanish colonial

soldiers. He had the same tragic end as his King Esáasi Eweera. In Baney, the northern part of the island, Bötúkku (chief) Riokaló Bobótapa manifested his attitude against the White men in his land. He was arrested, punished and imprisoned for a long time. All this facts angered the Spanish colonizers and increased the violence and punishment towards the Bubis, because the islanders were not willing to renounce their sovereignty.

These historical events marked the beginning of the end of the Bubi period as a nation-state. But we need to know one important thing. The imbalance between the Bubis and the Spanish in the military domain did accelerate the decrease on the number of islanders. The Spanish colonizers carried out many violent actions and concentred the Bubis in new villages around the Catholic missions held by the Claretian missionaries. They also built many camps in the entrance of the main villages in order to exert a larger control on the countrymen. The soldiers of these repression and vigilance centres were foreigners ruled by Spanish officers who came flooding into Fernando Poo as labourers.

During the reign of King Malabo Löpèlo Mëlaka, who succeeded King Esáasi Eweera, the Spanish colonizers gained more power, because the new King became a hostage in his territory and lost any political or military influence upon his people. Seeing that, he manifested his Bubi anti-colonialism believes and fought against the Spanish. As it has been said earlier, he was detained, tortured and taken to prison. He stayed there until his death.

Concerning the island of Annobón, many researchers agree that its people were taking there by the slave traders, especially those who fought for the slaves' liberation. But we also need to remember that the group of Africans coming from Santo Tomé and Príncipe were brought to the island by Luis de Almeida for its repopulation and cotton work. As it has been said, this tiny island was uninhabited before its discovery by the Portuguese. The language used by the Annobón people (with a high percentage of words in Portuguese) can suggest us their approximate starting point -just like Ghana (ZAMORA S., A. 2009: 86) o Angola (CALDEIRA, A. M. 2009: 293)- and can also indicate their contact with the White men. Annobonese people had no nominal chief, and when the White arrived, they thought that the "governor" was the chief of the island. But the disrespect full behaviour of the neighbours towards this so called "governor" was different from the one they might have given to whom is in charge of the people's ruling.

The Spanish regime, represented by many general governors like Mr. José de Ibarra y Aután (appointed to the period 1902-1905), José Castaño Anchorena (appointed to the period 1908-1910), Manuel de Mendivil y Elío (appointed to the period 1936-1937), Juan Fontán y Lobé (appointed to the period 1937-1941), etc., in the Spanish territories of the Golf of Guinea, achieved the so called "pacification" of the lands by using violent methods and strategies. We can mention the following among others: the kidnapping of children and women, the imposition of hard labour, the set of many villages on fire and burning of the ancestors building, the compulsory purchase of many lands, the battering of a Bubi who from San Carlos (knowing today as Lubá) by the missionaries when he asked if his woman was in the mission, etc. All these actions have been done in the two islands (Bioko and Annobón) by the Spanish colonizers during the occupation period.

3.- The Bubis and the Formation of Equatorial Guinea.

The atrocities committed by the colonial regime against the Bubis increased their liberation desires. The reason was the preservation of their culture and traditional institutions, and also for not to put at risk their native identities in the new political systems imposed in Spanish Guinea. Let us say one thing before proceeding. The political and dictatorial system of General Francisco Franco (who ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975) implemented an autonomous regime in its Black African territories in an attempt, perhaps, to ensure the future ethno-cultural diversity of Equatorial Guinea. It was not a new experience in Spain. Before the Spanish Civil War, some Spanish regions such as Catalonia, Basque Country and Galicia enjoyed a far-reaching autonomies regime.

The configuration of Equatorial Guinea, or the conversion of Spanish Guinea in what we know today, was due to the wave of the African independences. Obviously, Spain tried to avoid this process when it turned into Spanish provinces overseas (Fernando Poo and Rio Muni), with equal rights to the "natives" or "indigenous[3]" as Spanish citizens (some of this Black Spanish citizens were members of the Spanish Assembly during the *provincialization* period). In the 50s and 60s, the Bubis became the most advanced group in term of their economic position, despite the three categories of persons in the whole Spanish black territories: the state-fellows (the White), the state and assimilated subjects (the Black emancipated because of their Spanish education) and the indigenous fellows (the whole childish Black).

But the Spanish farmers and loggers, fearful of losing their possessions in Fernando Poo, relied on the sensitivity and in the interest of Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, then Vice-President of the Spanish Government and Minister of the Presidency, department in charge of the Spanish overseas territories, decided to ask for his assistance and to prevent the carrying out of the project of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Fernando Maria Castiella, and which is based on the guarantee of unitary independence of the two Spanish Guinea provinces. But some of the colonizers came close the Bubis in their hope to separate politically and administratively Fernando Poo from Rio Muni. The African independence movements had deeply penetrated in many Black Guinean-Spanish leaders. The independence's process was unstoppable and irreversible. The future of these Spanish provinces as a geopolitical entity would not take into account the ethnic design of both territories.

During the independence process, and after the concession of the Autonomy of the Spanish territories, all the chiefs of the villages on the island of Fernando Poo met in Santiago de Baney's village on August 27, 1964. In the minutes issued for that meeting, the Bubis stated (BUALE B., E. 1989: 81):

> "In accordance with the mentioned legal bodies, we unanimously request from our Mother Country, the total separation of both provinces [Fernando Poo and Rio Muni], each of which shall be ruled by its own government ..."

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[3] It must be understood as a pre-colonial community, people or nation with historical continuity and previous of the invasion. It is developed on its territories and is different from other societies established in those territories. Indigenous people constitute a non-dominant social sector (JAMES ANAYA, S. 2009: 39).

The minutes was ratified on April 6, 1967 in the village of West Basupú and presented as a working paper on the Constitutional Conference held in Madrid (Spain) on April 7 of that year. But this separation must be understood from three perspectives. First, these secessionist sentiments became a scream for help. Second, the Bubi "separation" was the only key for this ethnic group to accede to its independence separately because of the personality and distinguished identities of each province. Third, the Bubi secessionist writing must be seen as anticipation and avoidance of many approaching events, and which were not other than the systematic violation of all the Bubis' rights, something that neither the Spanish government nor the politicians wanted to prevent. And with regard to this interested Spanish blindness, the spokesperson and main exponent of this Bubi claim, Mr. Edmundo Bosió Dioco, speaking to the Committee of the Twenty (delegates of the countries involved in studying the request for independence of the Spanish territories of the Gulf of Guinea) of the UN on July 17, 1968, stated as follow, with emphasis on the content of the minutes of Baney and West-Basupú (BUALE B., E. 1988: 130):

> "Why, then, this eagerness and obsession to force us, the Bubis of Fernando Poo and the "Pamues" of Rio Muni, to form a unique state? Why this wish for the Bubis of Fernando Poo to not rule themselves by their self-determination?..."

The granting of a unitary independence to the Bubis, Fangs, Annobonese, Ndowès and Fernandian by Spain was not an imposition of the United Nations. It was a wish of the then Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs. This Spanish imposition achieved its objective which was not other than the end of the Bubis separatist claims. These requests were also related to the aspirations of the Spanish farmers and loggers. It was also the request of the Bubi small landholders. Ones and others would pay largely their courage to the new powerful owners of the recent state. The first ones (the Spanish) were attacked and expelled from the country in March 1969, five months after the independence, while the latter, mostly the small landowners, political leaders, Bubis socially and intellectually distinguished, etc., were killed by the new regime. In response to these atrocities, two youths from the village of Basakato de la Sagrada Familia, many of whose women suffered humiliation, rape, torture and imprisonment, distributed some pamphlets demanding respect for the Bubis' ethno-cultural uniqueness. The regime's reaction was swift. The torture and violence unleashed against the Bubis in the village forced the youth to surrender and suffer the regime's reprisals in the sinister prison of Blay Beach (today known as Black Beach).

The 20th article of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted the 27 June 1981 by the Organization of the African Union, and entered into force the 21 October 1986, said:

> Point 1: All peoples shall have the right to existence. They shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen.
> Point 2: Colonized or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognized by the international community.

In August 18, 1986, Equatorial Guinea signed and ratified the Charter mentioned above. But nothing has changed within the Bubi peoples, because they are still

screaming for help and looking for their virtual hope, due to the sequestration of the whole countries' revenues by the government.

The Bubi separatist leaders' position during the independence process did not raise the people's awareness, neither led to secessionist demonstrations, apart from some episodic concentration during the process mentioned. This risky Bubi separatist request, or rather this dialectical and intellectual secessionism not empowered either economically or socially, skipped the normal processes of social awareness, exhaustive involvement of the Bubis' traditional institutions, the presentation of the claim, the exhibition and well-argued defence of this separation, and of course, a lack of public popular reaction to this claim. By confining the scope to indigenous and private context, the secessionist speech did not promote the emergence of a radical separatist movement. The Vice-President Edmundo Bosió Dioco, a teacher appointed to Rio Muni in the colonial period, and a landowner interested in the performance of his cocoa plantations, ended any Bubi claim, and not only because he got the vice-presidency post of the new state, but also, before this personal and political success, in the new Constitution (which was approved by 72 458 votes, all from Rio Muni, and rejected by 40 197 votes from the Bubis of Fernando Poo), the autonomy of both country's provinces (Fernando Poo and Rio Muni) was collected on with regional governments. The public promise of the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs calmed the Bubi leaders because it saved and ensured preferential treatment to Fernando Poo's personality.

When Spain classified Equatorial Guinea's questions as "confidential matter" in 1971, and banned the media from publishing any information about the deadly events that happened in the African country, Equatorial Guinea's regime had free way to pursue its aggression policy, demographic flood (the Fang people were flocked to Bioko by the Spanish for economic and military reasons), ethno-cultural weakening and progressive extermination of the Bubis and the Annobonese. The reasons of this extermination must be found nowadays in the control of the Bubi and Annobonese homelands, the exploitation of their natural resources, and also to look for a new homeland on behalf of the Fangs.

4.- The Annobonese and the Formation of Equatorial Guinea.

In contrast to the Bubis, the Annobonese did not have a political representative force during the independence process in Equatorial Guinea. Its administrative inclusion in the province of Fernando Poo meant, firstly, that it joint the claims of that province, and secondly, it also meant that the leaders of Fernando Poo should become the spokesmen of their wishes, even if it was not really so, since no document showed that the Bubis and the Annobonese had been met to design an agreed strategy. The absence of traditional institutions to rule the people impeded any approach to other traditional forces, with the purpose to transfer jointly to the Spanish authorities their rejection of this imposed unitary independence.

In fact, neither the Bubis, as much as the Fangs, no one of them worried about the Annobonese request, whose distant homeland imposed them an isolation since the Spanish colonial period. However, the chronicles of the colonial history point out that the Annobonese have had more contact with the White in every way, and their society, built to never leave the slave experience, had "invented" a system with a rotating power. This is what we can define as "con-societal" or "socialized democracy". Despite the

absence of traditional power, Annobón's society had developed several control systems, basing on the different *viyils* (councils) in which any neighbour should be involved according to his age.

None of these evidences were taken into account by the independence fighters of the occupied territories. Moreover, the demographic weakness of Annobón in the whole Spanish Guinea, as well as its economic and political insignificance, prevent from been taken into consideration their effective participation in the independence process. It is essential to realize that the lack of a politically and relevant movement, or the fail of the design of a consent strategy with the representatives of Fernando Poo, condemn the message of the Annobonese reporters to fell on stony ground. In conclusion, we must understand their non effective participation in that independence process as a exclusion imposed by their colonizers, or their separation request from the rest of the Spanish Guinea.

Anyway, those people who were the really actors of this independence's design of the Spanish territories of the Gulf of Guinea were the Spanish themselves for many reasons: they were the ones who drew up the draft Constitution with which the country's destiny would built on October 1968.

5.- The Bubi and Annobonese secessionism between the independence process and the fall of Macias Nguema.

The Spanish challenge during the decolonization process that took place at Santa Cruz Palace in Madrid, home of the Spanish Foreign Ministry, was the creation of a national unitary government where all the "Black Spanish" could fit in. In two Constitutional Conferences, the representatives of the future country expressed their views among the two official positions of Franco's regime: the one of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Fernando Maria Castiella (granting the independence in the Spanish Guinea in order to transform Franco's regime and to align it to international relations), and on the one of the Admiral and Vice-President Mr. Luis Carrero Blanco, Minister of the Presidency (contrary to the transformation of Franco's regime). Apart from these two positions, there were two others. On one hand, the one defended by the Bubis, based on a separate self-determination, according to Minister Fernando Maria Castiella (FERNÁNDEZ, R. 1976: 458), or in a separate or postponed independence, at least for Fernando Poo, (sustained by Bubis and Fernandian) and opposing the general principle setting out the independence of the Spanish territories of the Gulf of Guinea. On the other hand, the position defended by the Fang (whole independence for all the Spanish Guinean territories). In his speech, during the opening session of the second Constitutional Conference held on April 17, 1968, to ease the four positions by searching a political settlement and, above all, to ensure the autonomy of Fernando Poo, the Minister Fernando María Castiella, and on behalf of his government, said: "The Spanish government confirm today its purpose to grant in 1968, and in a earliest possible date, the Equatorial Guinea's independence as a political unit, without been detrimental to the protection of Fernando Poo's individuality "(FERNÁNDEZ, R. 1976: 461). The candidate of the first presidential elections in Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Atanasio Ndongo Miyone, afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs in the new government, during the meeting of the Fourth NU Commission held in New York on 13 December, 1967, stated that "minority groups will be respected, including the Spanish" (PINIÉS, J. 2001: 396). In the draft Constitution promoted by Spain, the protection of

the provinces' autonomy (Article I) were guaranteed. However, the granting of independence proved to be a trap in which all Equatorial Guinea ethnic minorities fell into, because an inter-ethnic coexistence were not yet developed in the new state regime, neither in a space characterized by the peace and the speech freedom of the identities shaped in the new country. In addition, the manipulation of the ethnic phenomenon, including the imperialist contradictions for the control of the country's resources (ALVAREZ, A., Maria E. y MASEDA, U., M ª del C. 2006: 198-199) served to use the colonialist discourse differentiation between the two biggest ethnic groups contemptuous of the future country: the Bubis (among the minorities) and the Fang, the unique majority. The new country became a place full of human rights rape and ethnic hatred. It was one of the strategies used by England in Nigeria (attempt of secession and subsequent Biafra's war from 1967 to 1970, with Odumegwu Ojukwu as the leader and head of the secessionist state), Belgium in the Democratic Republic of Congo (attempt of secession of Katanga province from 1960 to 1963, with Moïse Tshombe in the front of the secessionist state), France in Senegal (attempt of secession of Casamance's region), Portugal in Angola (attempt of secession of the Cabinda's enclave, which became part of Angola by the Treaty of Alvor in 1975, without taking into account either the opinion of the political organizations of the region, such as the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda, a region that has borders only with the two Congolese Republics, etc.) and by Spain in Equatorial Guinea (attempt of the secession of Bioko and Annobón islands).

This situation could be skilfully used by the hunting instinct of the politician and Equatorial Guinea's first president Francisco Macias Nguema, supported and advised by the lawyer and notary Antonio García-Trevijano y Forte. Macías Nguema, been abandoned by his Spanish Mother Country, and as witness of the tricks of the colonial farmers of cocoa and coffee in Spanish Guinea, in regard to the technical support extended to the Bubis when they start demanding the separation of their island (Fernando Poo), saw that the time had came to express his un-Spanishness and deploy his multi-ethnic hatred against these complainant minorities as well as against those who defended Spanish-Guinean independence separately. The reprisals of the Bubi separatist purposes during the independence period had its negative consequences, because the new state was unable to negotiate and assess or accommodate the diversity of its peoples.

Macias Nguema assumes all the branches of the government, and by the Decree No. 115 of May 7, 1971, he repealed several articles of the Constitution of Equatorial Guinea's Republic, taking on all the mean powers of the Nation (FERNÁNDEZ, R. 1976: 246). But curiously, the first article that refers to the safeguarding of the autonomy of the provinces was not repealed by the state Decree, although yes the fourteenth article: "The Vice-President will be a Minister appointed by the President from among a province other than the one he come from". Concerning the sustainers of the separation of Fernando Poo's island, the Law 1/1971, 18 October, which regulated the penalties for crimes against the President of the Republic-Head of State chosen by the people, its government and the territorial integrity, in its Article 12, says as follow:

> "The simple secessionist or separatist, and also its leaders and supporters will be imposed a sentence from twenty to thirty years of imprisonment."

But there were no arrests or trials of the Bubi separatists with the minimal safeguard procedural. There was neither imprisonment for twenty or thirty years, because the Bubi detained leaders who had expressed their separatist wishes during the constituent period, were tortured and killed by the security and other official or allowed forces. The same thing happened with many supporters of the Bubi separatist position, women or men.

This article (12th of the 1971's Law) means the official recognition of the Bubi secessionist or separatist claims. But the new rulers, instead of negotiating with the Bubis, they decide to implement whatever actions to prevent the alteration of the new African state boundaries. This was the commitment of the signatories of the founding charter of the African Union Organization, proclaiming the sanctity and the inviolability of the territorial boundaries.

While all this was happening in Equatorial Guinea, by the Decree of January 30, 1971, the Spanish authorities declared as "confidential matter" all information referring to the young country. The reasons for this resolution must be find, on the one hand, in the constitutional commitments of the Spanish authorities concerning the protection of Fernando Poo's personality, and on the other hand, in the political or academic activities of the two Spanish protagonists of Spanish Guinea's decolonization: the Vice-Admiral of the Spanish government, D. Luis Carrero Blanco, also chairman of the government (06/09/1973 to 12/20/1973), and the former Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Fernando Maria Castiella y Maíz, dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid until his death in 1976, the year of the Decree's repeal (January 30, 1971) concerning the Press Law which declared as "confidential matter" any information relating to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. We have to remember that at that time, in Spain, the publication of any event related to the situation of the Bubis and the Fernandian as victims of the extraordinary cruelty of the new regime, could put the Spanish government in a serious trouble, especially because the authors of this commitment were continued to exert political activities as members of the government.

When the political regime of Francisco Macías Nguema killed all those Bubis and Fernandian who demanded the separation of Fernando Poo, as were Pastor Toraó Sikara, Gustavo Watson Bueko, Edmundo Bosio Dioco, Gaspar Muebake Copariate, Enrique Gori Molubela, Ricardo Bolopá Esape, Aurelio Nicolás Itoha Creda, Román Boricó Toichoa, Expedito-Rafael Momo Bokara, etc., the Bubi society was politically weakened and socially decapitated.

As a result of the violence exercised by the Equatorial Guinea's government, the Bubi separation came up again. However, the precedent of this situation was in the Bubi popular demonstrations and people's sovereignty during the first half of the twentieth century. The cases of Bötúkku Lubá, Riokaló Bobótapa and others will determine the future of the Bubi relationships between the Spanish colonizers and the Black Guineoequatorian rulers who replaced the White.

The signs of self-determination that the Bubis and the Annobonese exhibited in the mid-nineties of the twenty century were due to blatant discriminatory reasons, and also to the ethnic or tribal influence of the Equatorial Guinea's government. The ruling class of the majority group implemented some strategies in order to accelerate their state

monopolization: the process of the state tribalization and the weakening of the liberation wishes of these ethnic and minority groups historically ill-treated. If both peoples dragged the consequences of their freedom of speech during the independence period, neither the first nor the second Nguemism[4] (term referring to the surname of the two presidents: Macías *Nguema* and Obiang *Nguema*) regime showed any respect concerning the identities of Bioko and Annobón. The culmination of this disdain was the fact that the Head of State took away from the Bubis the post of Prime Minister, even when it was only and purely a honorary post, because, since the creation of this power and the nomination of its highest figure, we can not refer to a Prime Minister as a true head of government The members of the government headed by Macías Nguema or Teodoro Obiang Nguema were puppet without no say nor vote. The table bellow shows the Bubi participation in the Nguemist governments, but only as honorary figures.

The Bubi's quote of power through the Equatorial Guinea contemporary history:

Personalities	*Period*	*Years*	*Post*	*Situation today*
Enrique Gori Molubela	Colonisation and Autonomy	1964-1968	Vice-President of the Parliament	Death by murdering
Pastor Torao Sikara	Colonisation and Autonomy	1964-1968	President of the National Assembly	Death by murdering
Edmundo Bosió Dioco	Independence	1968-1975	Vice-President	Death by murdering
Eulogio Oyó Riquesa	Independence	1979-1981	General Governor of Bioko Island	Presidential Adviser
Cristino Seriche Bioko	Independence	1982-1992	Prime Minister	President of the High Court
Silvestre Siale Bileka	Independence	1992-1996	Prime Minister	Presidential Adviser
Ángel-Serafín Seriché Dougan	Independence	1996-2001	Prime Minister	President of the Parliament
Cándido Muatetema Rivas	Independence	2001-2004	Prime Minister	Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea in Germany
Miguel Abia Biteo Borico	Independence	2004-2006	Prime Minister	Presidential Adviser

As it can be seen, since 2006, the political regime of Equatorial Guinea has wrested the post of Prime Minister from the Bubi ethnic group, and has proceed to apply its political system based on its demographic majority:

Personalities	*Period*	*Years*	*Post*	*Situation today*
Ricardo Obama Nfubea	Independence	2006-2008	Prime Minister	Un-known
Ignacio Milam	Independence	2008-….	Prime	Prime Minister

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[4] Term proposed by Max Liniger Goumaz (1988: 144, 149) as a synonym of the afro-fascism.

Tang			Minister	

Since the independence of Equatorial Guinea, no Annobón citizen has occupied the post of Prime Minister, nor Vice-Prime Minister or Vice-President. The only posts occupied by Annobón people were as Representative in Spain of the Autonomous Government during the Autonomy period (1964-1968), a post of General Director in the first government (1968-1973), and as Ministers (only three) and Vice-Minister (only one) since 1979.

This exclusion in the management of the Equatorial Guinea public affairs is a consequence of the state's ethnic monopolization. If we add to it the other acts committed with impunity by the government, such as the violation of the Bubis and Annobonese Human Rights, the military violence practised in areas traditionally occupied and ruled by the Bubis or the Annobonese, the lack of political will-power to deal with the minority claims, etc., it seems, up to a point, logical that both, the Bubis and the Annobonese, fight for the self-determination of each one, giving utility to Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' of June 1981, signed and ratified by Equatorial Guinea in 1986, and which recognize the right to secede for any oppressed group.

6.- The construction of a separatist mentality in colonial and postcolonial time.

The causes of secessionism -as the most radical form of separation (KELLER, E. 2007: 2)- in other parts of Africa, just like Cabinda (in Angola), Casamance (in Senegal), the Niger Delta (in Nigeria), Darfur (in Sudan), etc., can not generally extrapolated to the field of the Bubi "secessionism" stimulated by the Spanish colonizers. The seizure of power by one ethnic group and/or region, the poor distribution of the benefits from the exploitation of the country's natural resources, the historical inter-ethnic conflicts revived by the colonizers, etc., could be some of these causes. The insularity of the Bubis and the Annobonese, which islands did not share a border land with none of the ethnic groups in Equatorial Guinea, as well as the distance between each island (Bioko and Annobón) with Rio Muni, or the fear of losing their cultural identities because of the state tribalization and demographic flood, appeared as some of the reasons of their claims. But the must important reason is the fact that the Bubis and the Annobonese lost their empowerment twice: first, with the White colonizers, and second, with the Black neo-colonizers (the Fangs), due to the imposed political africanization. Political opportunity does not exist for the minority groups, because the goal of these two occupants was to break up the traditional institutions and replace them with the central government figures.

Equatorial Guinea is a faithful reproduction of what had been done in other colonized countries. The borders inherited from colonization should be respected in an obligatory and institutional way, and the power of the new country should be irradiated from the capital, a place where all colonial power was concentrated, and from where the entire colony was controlled. The territory of Equatorial Guinea was unreal, artificial and fictitious, as it is in all the African states. This artificiality is clashing with the reality of the delimited spaces of the ethnic-nations as were (and are) the cases of Bioko and Annobón. The only similar case found in the African secessionism is the enclave of Cabinda (in Angola's "territory"), which is very rich in oil fields, and which has no land boundaries with the rest of Angola's unrealistic state.

If we add a linguistic feature (the Bubi language of the historical owners of Bioko island and the Annobonese or *Fa d'Ambo* for those of Annobón) or a cultural peculiarity (with specific identifying elements of each realities, as it can be seen in the box below), or an historical singularity (when the Portuguese navigator "discovered" the island of the Bubis, these were there for many thousands of years; when they discovered Annobón, this island was uninhabited) to the full definition and the territorial delimitation of both islands, and in both cases, the contact with other ethnic groups, particularly the Fang ethnic group, was imposed by the Spanish colonizers. We need to remember that the Fang were taken to Fernando Poo's island as labourers by Spanish colonizers in the 1920s decade of the twenty century):

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Annobonese:
1. Council: Viyil.
2. Cultural expressions: Mamae, Kumbe.
3. Ethnic language: Fa d'Ambo.
4. Leadership: the viyil *Ngaándy* members.
5. Religiousness: Naxiol (God).

Bubis:
6. Council: Tyóbbo Ériia.
7. Leadership: Böhítáari, Bötúkku, etc.
8. Cultural expressions: Katyá, Bölëbó, Sihíri.
9. Religiousness: Ruppé (God), Abba Mööte (high priest), Mörímò (intermediary between the living and the dead, expert, folk healer), Tyiántyo (witch doctor).
10. Ethnic language: Ëtyö, Ëböbéë.

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The ethno-cultural singularity and Bubi richness is due to historical reasons. This contrasts clearly with the Annobonese ethno-cultural limitation, as the result of the group's creolization. As we are talking about the cultural uniqueness of the Bubis and the Annobonese, it is needless worth to compare all this with the uniqueness of the other two ethnic country's groups. In regard to this, the table shown bellow illustrates these differences, and it can also be used to justify the Bubis cultural self-determination claim, or the right of the people-nation to learn and speak their native language in public and private context (MUAKUKU RONDO, I. 2006: 108):

Ethnic groups	Leadership	Power center	Religious figures	Cultural expressions	Language
BUBI	Böhítáari, Bötúkku.	Tyóbbo Eriia.	Ruppé (God), Abba Mööte (high priest), etc.	Katyá, Bölëbó, Sihíri.	Ëtyö, Ëböbéë
ANNOBONESE	Sanguita guesa ngaándy, metiscolo, governor, etc.	Viyil ngaándy	Naxiol (God)	Mamae, Kumbe.	Fa d'Ambo
FANG	Nkúkúmá	Abaá	Nzama (God),	Ndongmba,	Fang

			Nguendáng (Folk healer), Mesamélúgu (Witch doctor).	Mokom.	
NDOWÈ	Mpóló	Njoe	Añambe (God), Nganga (Fol. healer), Ndondye (Witch doctor).	Mebongo, Mekuyo, Mbaya.	Ndowè.

In the documents wrote by the Spanish colonizers we can find out some of the strategies used to promote the Bubi secessionist mind. In this respect, the first scholar was the English Baptist missionary John Clarke, who referred to the Bubi language as "Fernandian tongue". Later, the works of the Claretian missionaries Joaquín Juanola (1890), Antonio Aymemí (1928) and Isidoro Abad (1928) appeared and talked about the Bubi language and it division into dialects. This stated that the Bubis from different villages had difficulties to understand themselves when they use their native language, because of the so called unintelligible dialects.

Other Claretian missionary, as is the case of the Anthropologist Amador Martín del Molino (1958), which article "The nominal prefixes in the Bubi language" in the magazine *La Guinea Española* (The Spanish Guinea: www.raimonland.net), did not speak about prefixes according to the "dialects" imposed by his fellows Claretians. But both groups of scholars have created what we can define as a "linguistic secessionism". The aim of this was to break the ethnic and linguistic unity of this people, to prevent the understanding of the future generations in the Bubi language, to impose the Spanish language, etc.

In the eighties of the twentieth century, Germán de Granda Gutiérrez (1985: 29) came back to the topic of what we have called linguistic secessionism imposed by the groups of missionaries mentioned above. He quotes that "...there are six mutually intelligible variants within the North zone ... and there are mutually unintelligible dialects between the North and the South of the island". Another scholar, in this case, Ibrahim Sundiata (2009: 133), also quotes that "There are four principal Bubi dialects and various secondary ones, which in some cases are not mutually intelligible. The fundamental linguistic division can be drawn between the dialects in the North and those in the South".

Apart from this promoted linguistic secessionism, there is also an imposed ethno-cultural secessionism between the ethnic groups in the Spanish Guinea and nowadays called Equatorial Guinea. Some authors, such as Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide (1904?), Eladio López Vilches (1901), Valérie de Wulf (1998), etc., or the Governor Ángel Barrera –quoted by Gustau Nerín Abad (2008: 21)- collect in their books many pejorative and humiliating expressions used for the building and classification of the natives into advanced and backward groups, according to the colonialist point of view, as it has listed below:

> "[The Fang] ... are disobedient people, windbag and inhospitable, strongly built, almost athletic ... They do not have any religion or belief ... they are extremely suspicious, astute and intelligent ..." (LOPEZ VILCHES 1901: 20) ... The Great Pamue [Fang] race, by its characteristics, could be a derivation of the crossing of

an Arab ancestry with some of the black African races ... "(LÓPEZ VILCHES, E. 1901: 21).

"It is certain that the Pamúe are really wilds, but they are intelligent and worthy of interest because they are a virgin race…the Pamúe [Fang] will become what we hope for them…" (NERÍN ABAD, G. 2008: 21).

"... We have said that the Bubi was a stunted person, lazy and useless ... and, therefore, the Bubi are working, the Bubi are degenerated, yes, but they work more and better than European colonizers ..." (LÓPEZ VILCHES, E. 1901: 30). "We must attract the Bubi people, look for them and civilize them, making them part of our life, familiarized with our feelings, making them become Spanish ..." (LÓPEZ VILCHES, E. 1901: 31).

"Unlike other colonizers, who considered the Annobonese 'lazy, dirty, drinkers and immoral' ..."…"the islanders [Annobonese] are pious, naive, quiet, docile and very addicted to the Catholic religion "(WULF, V. 1998: 40).

During the Equatorial Guinea's independence period, it has been a political secessionism induced by the Spanish colonizers with strong interests in the future state. There was a "separation" policy for the Bubis, or the future exclusion of those who advocated a separate independence. By accessing to the independence on October 12, 1968, the elected president of the new country took a new turn and almost three years later (1971), he started a policy persecution, arrest, torture and murder of all those leaders (or not) who had exhibited their separation purpose. The Bubi society was targeted by the new tribalized government and suffered many ill-treatment and racialization. The names of different location suffered changes. For instance, Fernando Poo was called Macias Nguema (1973) and became Bioko (since 1979), Santa Isabel (the capital) was changed to Malabo (since 1973), and the same as San Carlos, was replaced with Luba (since 1973), the district of San Fernando changed to Ela Nguema (since 1973), the island of Annobón was replaced with Pa Galu "cock" (1973), because it was the symbol of Francisco Macias Nguema, etc. However, this racialization did not affect the spaces of the other ethnicities.

Apart from the earlier mentioned in terms of linguistic, ethno-cultural and political secessionism, the regime of Obiang Nguema (today Head of State in Equatorial Guinea) had practiced a territorial separatism, dividing the island of Bioko in two regions, and appointed two provincial governors. The North and the South, so referred by the colonizers in the building of a linguistic secessionism, served the regime of Teodoro Obiang Nguema to split the Bubis geographically.

The case of Annobón did not differ from the situation in Fernando Poo concerning the creation of a separatist imaginary promoted by the colonizers, or by the Equatoguinean rulers. This island, so far from the rest of the territory of Equatorial Guinea, suffered a strong racialization and a long isolation, as much as during or after the colonization. First, the White authorities' negligence allowed some Annobonese autonomy life until Claretian missionaries arrived and became the Governor General's delegates posted in Santa Isabel, and then became the only power in Annobón. These Claretian missionaries were very anxious to convert all Annobonese into Catholics, and imposed a harsh repression, such as the destruction of the villages of Annobón, or the concentration of the forced faith and believes near the missions, a public flogging of the

polygamists, a change of the Annobonese names to Spanish cities names just like Valencia, Alicante, Burgos, Zamora, Sabadell, etc. (NERÍN A., G. 2009: 313).

Second, during and after Macías Nguema's period (1979-2010), the Bubi and the Annobón peoples have remained reduced by the inherited power of the majority Fang ethnic group since the time of colonization. This power has been kept with Macias Nguema and became an inheritance with Teodoro Obiang Nguema. The military coup led by the second did not mean the recovery of the abducted rights of the historically oppressed peoples (during and after colonization). Even when successive governments included certain Bubis and Annobonese (as it was already indicated on previous pages and tables), it is certain that they were purely decorative figures with no decision power. They were closely watched and they found difficult to accede to top hierarchy position, decided by the unique and deified leader Teodoro Obiang Nguema. The oil boom did not even improve the socio-economic situation of the Bubis and the Annobonese. This and other issues made, on one hand, the creation (in 1993) of the Bubi Movement for the Self-Determination of the Island of Bioko (MAIB). The Representative Council of this organization, composed of six elderly people, delivered a Manifesto to the Head of State Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema through his Prime Minister Mr. Silvestre Siale Bileká. Moreover, the Annobonese, tired of been victims of a political isolation (from the colonial era), seeing that their habitat has become a dumping ground of radioactive toxic waste, as well as suffering the continued aggression of the Fang militaries posted to Annobón. They then created a Council of Elders of Annobón (CANAN), in 1993, whose political claims can be reading in the text offered by Iñaki Gorozpe (1995).

The reading of the Manifesto by the regime of Teodoro Obiang Nguema rose the phobia of the Bubi separatism movement (understood as the breakdown of the state inherited from the Spanish colonization), especially after the oil extraction (1992) on Bioko. However, as it can be read in the Manifesto, the Bubis were claming the opening of negotiations to ask for their right to self-determination without breaking the State of Equatorial Guinea. In this case, the self-determination should be understood as decentralization and regional autonomy. It becomes a need to preserve the cultural, political, linguistic and economic identities:

> **MANIFESTO ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA, HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. TEODORO OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO.**
>
> We, the "**MOVEMENT FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF BIOKO ISLAND**", on behalf of the people of Bioko Island, aware of the dramatic situation suffering by this ethnic group, and knowing that Your Illustrious person represents the highest authority of this entity called Equatorial Guinea, with all honour and respect, we write Your Excellency through this Manifesto.
>
> Whereas the situation of Bioko island with Rio Muni mainland, with more than three hundred (300) nautical miles, as a justification of the different realities and identities of each ethnic groups of the Equatorial Guinea's Republic.
>
> Whereas that since the provincialism of the Spanish colonial territories located in the sub-Saharan African region, until the moment of accession to independence, the people of Bioko island through their representatives, expressed clearly and forcefully their strong will to **SELF-DETERMINATION**.

Whereas the Bubi people's will was expressed and elevated to the highest authorities to its verification, in Spain, metropolis country, and at the United Nations Organization, the highest body representing the nations of the world.

Whereas, in spite of the protests and the scream for help of this people before Spain and the International Community, it desire was not taken into account and, therefore, Spain satisfied the will of the mainland which was to proclaim a unitary independence.

Given that after the coup of "freedom" led by Your Illustrious person, despite knowing and living deeply the uneasiness of the Bubi people, and despite their active participation for the successful culmination of the coup, H. E. had not the spirit of justice to review the agreements signed during the process of accession to independence, preferring to continue the policy begun by his predecessor.

Given that with the Macias' regime and the current system, the Bubi person is always under the regime's invisibility, finding him some supposedly important posts in the government (Vice-President, Prime Minister, Ministers, etc..), where he is simply act as a remote control for the unique purpose to simulate the ethno-socio-political problems that have existed, exist and will always exist between the two parts (continental and insular region).

Given that despite the wave of democratization in Africa and more specifically in Equatorial Guinea, the state determine not to be involved by putting in danger its colonial hegemony, its prohibits the Bubi people to constitute their own political parties, what completely exclude us from the political scene.

Taking into account that since the accession to independence until today, the Guinean State has practiced a policy against the Bubi with the aim of destroying the agricultural sector as a source of income of the people of Bioko's island, and therefore, today we are fully immersed in misery and poverty.

Bearing in mind that whenever the people of the island of Bioko has arisen and demanded their right to self-determination, the response of the Equatorial Guinea's state has been to detain, torture and kill the representatives and spokesmen of our peoples' claim, using a series of inhuman methods such as massive repressions, controls and public executions in order to cause panic and silence the population, thereby increasing the reality of subjugation of the people of Bioko's island.

Given that the right to self-determination is an inalienable right granted by the Charter of the United Nations and the Organization of African Union to all peoples who are yet colonized or neo-colonized in the world.

For all the foregoing, and given that the ethno-socio-political problem is getting more and more hot, the people of Bioko's island, driven by our strong unanimous decision, and going with all honour and respect to H. E. say as follow:

FIRST: We, the people of Bioko's island, we understand by democracy, when we can freely and democratically exercise our right to the **SELF-DETERMINATION** recognized for all peoples by the United Nations and the Organization of African Union.

SECOND: According to what has been said above, we see the need to engage in conversation between the government of Equatorial Guinea and the Bubi people under the auspices of Spain and the United Nations, to discuss the political future

of the island of Bioko, and these negotiations will culminate in the holding of a referendum on self-determination for the native peoples of the island.

THIRD: The two parts involved in this case, the state of Equatorial Guinea and the Bubi people, must sign an agreement committing to respect and obey the will and desire shown by the people of the island of Bioko, freely and democratically.

FOURTH: The physical wellbeing of the members of the "**MOVEMENT FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF BIOKO ISLAND**", including the messengers of this document, the leaders of the villages of the island, and also the Bubi population in general, are under your responsibility as the Supreme Authority of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

FIFTH: The people of Bioko's island recognize the "**MOVEMENT FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF BIOKO ISLAND**" as the only political organization which looks after and safeguards the interests of the people of the island of Bioko. Therefore, all negotiations should be carried through this Movement as representative of the Bubis, and any statement made by a Bubi arbitrarily chosen and who is not a direct emissary of the people of Bioko island, will not be taking into account.

SIXTH: The people of Bioko's island are fully ready to fight for their right cause by peaceful methods through dialogue and pact, until there is a consensus that leads to the **SELF-DETERMINATION** of the Bioko's island. Therefore, the Bubi people will not participate in the upcoming legislative elections called by the Government of H. E. for the 21st November this year, or in any electoral process in the framework of the so called "Equatorial Guinea's democratization", considering that it will not contribute to create the conditions to negotiate the inevitable question of the self-determination of the Bubi people.

The people of Bioko's island make use of this opportunity to renew their highest consideration to His Excellency.

Malabo, October 1993.

(The **Manifesto** is signed by the **MAIB**'s Representative Council and others)

In short, there is a parallel action in regard to the protests and claims of the Bubi and the Annobón people, as it can be seeing in the following table:

Regions	Government's behaviour	Victims reactions
BIOKO	- Wrongful arrest. - Physical abuses. -Military barriers and controls. - Murders. - Undercapitalized society. - Isolation of the Rebola village (public transport can not take people who are from this village). - Etc.	* Creation of the Movement for the Self-Determination of the Bioko Island (MAIB) as a pressure group. * Delivery of the MAIB's Manifesto to the Government. * Rebellion of some small young Bubi people. * The raise of the Bubi flag. * Call for not to participate on the list of registered voters. * Call for not to participate in the presidential rigged

		elections of 1992.
ANNOBÓN	Isolation of the island. Hard labour. Military repression. Physical abuses. Delivery of dangerous prisoners. Rape of women and young girls. Wrongful arrest. Murders. Military occupation and island blockade.	* Riot and protest of the population (August, 1993). The Annobonese kidnapped the Governor (1993). * Claim of the island's Spanishness. *Reinforcement of the social unity of the Annobonese. *Secessionist desire and independence claim. *No any affiliation to political parties and boycott to the presidential rigged elections 1992.

7.- **The redesign of Equatorial Guinea from the Bioko and Annobón's secessionism**.

Bioko and Annobón are two entities that are not a state. Their leaders were ahead of time and wanted to avoid the abuses that their peoples would have lived under by requiring a separate independence from Rio Muni. However, the issue of the administrative and political entity of Fernando Poo was monopolized by the Bubis, and their rights of ownerships did not include the Annobonese requests, neither the ones of the Fernandian group.

The causes of secessionism in other parts of Africa, as in Cabinda (Angola), in Casamance (Senegal), in Darfur (Sudan), etc., should not been completely extrapolated on the field of the felt secessionism supported by Spanish colonizers with the creation of the unitary state of Equatorial Guinea. Some of the reasons noted below, as the seizure of power by an ethnic group or region, a virulent financial crisis in some regions (those who was excluded by the power) more than in others (the powerful owners and state-fellows), a troubled neighbourhood as a result of an unresolved dispute (space occupation, inclusion in a state without ethnic ties), inter-ethnic collision due to an historical antipathy motivated by religious practices, fragrant discrimination due to ethnic reasons, etc.- could easily serve as triggers for Bubi and Annobonese secessionism.

The repressive methods practised by the two presidents of Equatorial Guinea have not calmed the secessionist sentiments of the islands of Bioko and Annobón. The permanent violation of the minorities' human rights in the country, the military occupation of the areas mentioned, the military checkpoints to control these peoples politically and economically absorbed, the impunity of the security forces and bodies, the demographic flood (military flocked to Annobón and to Bioko villages), the Bubi villages whose highest authorities (government representatives and many chiefs) are Fang, the police repression in response to the Bubis and Annobonese complaints, etc., only serve to increase the secessionists desires.

To call a halt to this problem and to control this secessionist ghost that so worries the rulers (because they have only three meaning of the word secession, which are "self-determination", "independence" and "state-breaking"), it would be necessary to develop, on one hand, a decentralization policy and a con-societal or participatory democracy, with governments and institutions really ethno-representative; on the other hand, the implementation of the article 20 of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, signed and ratified by the Equatorial Guinea Government in 1986, with the actual Head of State, Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema, knowing that self-determination did not only means secession and building of a new state, "but a capacity to choose, to negotiate and to be recognized as a valid political and legal representative who is able to formulate its claims on the base of the law" (ÁLVAREZ MOLINERO, N. 2009: 216).

When the newly independent regime (in October, 1968) and today hereditary and police regime of Guinea Equatorial denied and confiscated the Bubi identity, when it seized the sovereignty of the Annobonese, it left the way open to the secessionist claims of these two peoples. Within the strategies of the Equatorial Guinea's government, among which we can quote that "the trivialization or invisibilization of the indigenous people, or the presentation of the indigenous discourse as unfeasible and incompatible with the current legislation" (ÁLVAREZ MOLINERO, N. 2009: 226), the government avoids the use of peaceful methods in the search of the negotiated solution so clamed by the Bubis and the Annobonese, concerning their problem within the state of Equatorial Guinea.

As it has been said, the motives of this secessionism of the Bubi actors were the protection of their sovereignty during the Spanish colonisation, and when the new rulers turned the Bubis into hostages in their territory, they then thought of their sovereignty in the past and asked themselves if they have to leave the humiliation of the new "squatters" (occupying forces and rulers). Anyway, the methods implemented by these foreigner actors were similar. On the Spanish side, the process was occupation (with confrontation and violence), expropriation or compulsory purchase and possession. On the Fang side, the process was forced displacement to the island (promoted by the colonizers), power transferred to the displaced Fang, forced expropriation or compulsory purchase of the Bubi and Annobonese ownership right, possession of lands and goods, and creation of a new homeland.

What we have called Bubi secessionism has five categories: the secessionist sentiments, talks (during the constitutional conferences), writing (minutes), movement (the creation of the Movement for the Self-Determination of Bioko Island and the delivery of the Manifesto in 1993) and actions (the Bubi reaction in 1998).

To end this chapter, let me refer to some main documents or treaties signed and ratified by the governments of president Teodoro Obiang Nguema, like the Constitutive Act of the African Union (in the year 2000), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (in the year 1986), the Declaration of the Indigenous People's Rights (in the year 2007), and the accession of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in the year 1987), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in the year 1987), etc. Many articles of these official documents include the right to the self-determination of the indigenous people in the context of the state inherited from the colonizers. But the implementation of what has been wrote needs a political will. Equatorial Guinea rulers has not yet signed the African Cultural Charter,

very important for the recognition and defence of the cultural diversity in the country, nor signed the two international covenants some of which articles refer explicitly to the self-determination of the peoples oppressed by others. As responsible of many atrocities against the Bubis and the Annobonese, the Guineoequatorian politicians should recognize their terrible injustices and promote a repairing system, because the victims of these mistakes have a right to be compensated for all what they had to live. The building of Equatorial Guinea must be done from the reconciliation of the aggressor ethnic group and their victims, broken the breach between the state-fellows and the so called indigenous and dominated peoples.

8.- Sources.

We point out here two types of sources: the traditional books and the texts that we met in Internet.

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8.2. Webography:

Even when it is very risky and uncertain to consult some web pages where there is some information about the issue of secession, the fact is that more and more readers and researchers are using this medium to access to a wide range of information. That is why we also use this medium to have an actual information concerning African secessionism.

*http://antropologia-online.blogspot.com/2007/10/jefaturas-reinado-y-poder-colonial.html

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Secessionism on the islands of Bioko and Annobón

Good morning. I am very glad to be here this morning. Before my intervention, I would like to thank the organisers of this meeting, especially Mr. Jordi Thomas, the one who had contact me for the writing of the Bubi and Annobonese secessionism in Guinea Equatorial.

I will focus my intervention on three points. On the first hand, I will talk about the beginning of Bioko and Annobón secessionist mentality. On the second hand, I will refer to the colonial and post-colonial Authorities' reaction against this mental secessionism. On the third hand, I will present the proposal made by the secessionist actors or groups.

But, first of all we need to display the location of the islands that we are going to talk about.

1.- SECESSIONIST SENTIMENTS

The origins and demonstration of the Bubis and the Annobonese secessionist sentiments must be related to the colonialist and post-colonialist political systems. The violation of the Bubis and the Annobonese marking territories had an effect on their whole ways of life. For example:

Concerning the Cultural domain, the Bubis and Annobonese perceive that their culture is under threat because it is not respected by the invaders (Spanish and Riomunians) during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

We can also say the same in the Linguistic sphere where the Bubi language has no guarantee to survive. It has suffered many pressures according to the foreign language users, such as the Pidgin-english, the Spanish and the Fang. The state's transformation in a mono-ethnic institution ruled by the Fang, and the fact that power incites people to imitate the powerful society provoke the rise of the Fang language.

In the Economic domain, the purchasing power of the Bubis and Annobonese was destroyed by the new class power (during the post-colonial period).

With regard to the Political field, the non-recognition of the state's ethnic diversity is due to the transformation of the "father state" in a mono-ethnic state. The Bubi traditional power has been dismantled and replaced by institutions which aim is to watch and seize the Bubi power.

We can say the same in a Social domain, where the Spanish colonizers classified the indigenous as "emancipated" (with a recognized purchasing power) and "non-emancipated" (without nor civil recognition). Days before the independence, and according to the incomes of the two regions (Fernando Poo and Rio Muni) we could classify the inhabitants as advanced (the Bubi or Fernandian) and backward (the Fang) groups. After the colonisation, we could classify the Guineoequatorian people with two words: the rich and the poor. The Bubis are suffering discrimination, inequalities, insecure, etc., because their rights are not respected by the government and the people who are closely related to the rulers.

That goes without saying that the Military designers made good use of the Fang majority to exclude the other ethnic groups in the armed forces. Nowadays, there are nine General, and all of them are Fang. The Fang militaries are watching and aggress permanently the Bubis and the Annobonese people.

2.- DEMOGRAPHIC FLOOD POLICY

By economic reasons, the Spanish authorities decided to sign many agreements with other African colonies authorities to overcome with the need of workers in the cocoa plantations, because the Bubis refused to become labourers. We can then mention two proceedings:

a.- Foreigners flocked to Bioko island
A-1: During the colonial period
* Spanish administrators, missionaries, militaries, workers, etc.
* Nigerian (Ghana, Sierra Leona, etc.) labourers (in the cocoa plantations)
* Fang labourers (in the cocoa plantations and as colonial forces) with settlement in the village of Sácriba (near the Capital).

A-2: During the post-colonial period
1.- Regular Riomunians (Fang) flocked to Bioko island
* The Capital (Santa Isabel/Malabo)
* The villages
* The former Spanish courtyards

b.- Foreigners flocked to Annobón island
A-1: During the colonial period
* Spanish administrators (missionaries, militaries)
A-2: During the post-colonial period
1.- Irregular Riomunians (Fang militaries) flocked to Annobón island

> **The Bubis and the Annobonese felt that their invaders were violating their marking territory.**

3.- THE SELF-DETERMINATION ATTITUDE

During the colonial period: 1778-1968. The Bubis and the Annobonese fought against the Spanish for their sovereignty defence.

During the first post-colonial period (1968-1979) and the second post-colonial period (1979-2011), we can mention a "closed secessionism" on Bioko's island because it had not rely on outsiders, neither had a sustainers among the other ethnic groups. The islands became a deadly trap for the Bubis and the Annobonese self-determination fighters. The Bubis and Annobonese claimed a far-reaching autonomy or a decentralized state.

After what have being said, we can briefly resume our intervention by using the following words:

With the colonial and post-colonial systems, our Traditional Sovereignty had been seized by the Spanish and Riomunian people. So, the Bubis started their struggle and claims by themselves. In the year 1904, King Esáasi Eweera fought against the Spanish established in Fernando Poo, as well as the chiefs Lubá (in San Carlos land) and Riokaló Botótapa (in Baney land) in the year 1910, and also King Malabo Löpèlo Mëlaka (during his last two years lifetime: 1936 and 1937).

The Spanish authorities' response was their military expeditions and punishment through the island. They also use a Demographic flood to weak the Bubi's struggle. During the 40s, the Bubis created the *Hijas de Bisila* (Bisila's Daughters) organisation which aims were, firstly, to boycott the enthronement of the Spanish Governor as King of the Bubis (in 1943) and, secondly, to look for their independence. They did the same in the 90s, but instead to claim their independence, they then ask for a self-determination policy within the state's boundaries.

Briefly, we can state that the rise of Secessionist and Separatist sentiments, talks and writing was one of the ways to exteriorise the Bubis Independence sentiments during the colonial and post-colonial period. The participation of the Bubis in the Guinea Equatorial independence process led them to accept the father state created by the Spanish authorities. So, instead to insist in their independence struggle, they chose the Self-Determination in order to obtain a Far-reaching Autonomy of Bioko island, as it had been said in the Guinea Equatorial first Constitution (1968). This can be defined as the rise of a Bubi Nationalism without state.

The aim and the reason of this claims and struggles is not the state's breakage, neither to question the boundaries inherited. The rulers of the today state failure can not last out much longer and will be forced to negotiate with other ethnic groups in the state management. Negotiation must be carried out within the state boundaries, according to the United Nations Indigenous People's Right Statement. The recognition of the Bubi and Annobonese personalities by the rulers should help to straighten out the problems of both ethnic groups.

To end our intervention, let us remember the places in Africa were secessionism has emerged, even when many of them are not well known, neither dealt in the media:

Angola (Cabinda)
Camerún (Meridional)
Congo, R. D. (Katanga y Ruwanzururu)
Etiopía (Eritrea)
Marruecos (Sahara Occidental)
Namibia (Caprivi)
Níger (los Tuaregs)
Nigeria (Sur/Delta)
Senegal (Casamance)
Somalia (Somaliland)
Sudán (Darfur)
Uganda (Ruwanzururu)

Zambia (Barotseland)

Obviously, the cases of Bioko and Annobón islands join the other African cases of secessionism. We then have fourteen states with secessionism matter. This number represents 25.74%, a high percentage.

In Guinea Equatorial we have the cases of the Bubis and the Annobonese people, everyone with its land. Others cases could arouse due to the atrocities committed by the government in collusion with the International Community. In January 2010, four Guineaequatorian refugees were kidnapped from African countries. These four refugees were jailed, tortured and executed on the 21st August by the government of the called president and bloody dictator Teodoro Obiang Nguema without any legal aid. The four executed refugees were related from the majority Fang ethnic group. Let peace be on them!. May they rest in peace!

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Time Space Africa: Reconnecting the Continent

Nordic Africa Days 2010 - Åbo/Turku 30.9-1.10.2010

Panel: Secessionism in Africa

'We didn't fight for this': the twilight of the EPLF/ PFDJ's political project of state and nation building for Eritrea[1]

Alexandra M. Dias

On May 24, 2010 Eritrea celebrated its 19th anniversary of independence. President Isaias Afewerki claimed that Eritrea continued to follow a policy of ''constructive engagement'' (Shabait, May 2010). The President's speeches have continued to focus on domestic, regional and global issues.

Although Eritrea was internationally recognized as a sovereign state after the April 1993 referendum, it gained de facto independence on May 1991 upon the overthrow of the *Derg* regime by the combined forces of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front/ Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (TPLF/EPRDF) (Styan, 1996, p. 80). The alliance between the Eritrean and Ethiopian insurgents against a common enemy and their successful final offensive against the Derg resulted in their victorious take-over of Asmara (the Eritrean capital) and Addis Ababa (the Ethiopian capital). This alliance although based upon tactical and pragmatic considerations (Young, 1996) assured that once in power the EPRDF, as the new ruling party in the predecessor state (Ethiopia), would not pose further obstacles to the successor state's (Eritrea) formal path towards independent statehood.

Failure to recognize the correctness of Eritrea's claim to self-determination at the time of African independences resulted in the three-decade war for independence

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which led to 65,000 military (Pool, 1998, p. 19) and between 150,000-250,000 civilian (Jacquin-Berdal & Aida Mengistu, 2006, p. 97) deaths on Eritrea's side.

This paper will first look at secession in Africa in order to understand the international response vis-à-vis Eritrea's claim for self-determination and independent statehood. The paper will then focus on the war for independence and at the success of Eritrea's separatist insurgency in order to understand the legacy of this period to the process of state and nation formation in Eritrea. In the second part, the paper will focus on the ruling party, the EPLF/PFDJ's political project of state and nation building for Eritrea after independence. The final section will analyse Eritrea's isolation in the regional and global political arenas. The paper will argue that the EPLF/PFDJ political project has led to an erosion of its domestic legitimacy. Despite the President's rhetoric of constructive engagement, the increasingly authoritarian path and the mutation of the principle of self-reliance after independence have led to the isolation of the EPLF/PFDJ in the domestic, regional and global political arenas.

Short Summary

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Secession in Africa and International actors' response vis-à-vis Eritrea's claim for self-determination and independent statehood

The Organization of African Unity's (OUA) (now the African Union) consensus on the respect to the existing boundaries at the time of independence prevented irredentist and separatist claims for self-determination, along lines other than decolonization, from gathering legitimacy and recognition in the regional political arena.

Until after World War II two types of war prevailed in which borders were directly at stake: wars of annexation and of secession. However, the practice of resorting to force to settle territorial disputes was gradually outlawed from international society, particularly since World War II (Dias, 2008, p. 134).

From 1963 to the present less than a dozen of the conflicts had their immediate point of origin in border disputes resulting from colonial partition. When it comes to intra- state conflicts that involve secession, claims still persist and some scholars would argue that there is evidence to suggest that in years these claims could evolve into a significant pattern.[2] Clapham claims that the idea that viable states can be constructed throughout Africa on the basis of the territorial units established by colonial rule has now reached the end of the road (2001, p. 6). Despite the ongoing debate, the low frequency of cases of secession from existing states has characterized the African political arena since the first wave of independences (Clapham, 2007, p. 226; Englebert, 2007, p. 55).

The first was Katanga's attempt to secede from Congo-Kinshasa in 1960. The second was the self- proclamation of Biafra as a Republic in 1967.

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[2] Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, lecture on Warfare in Africa, LSE, December 3, 2003.

Other cases qualify as separatist insurgencies, that is, 'that seek to represent the aspirations and identities of particular ethnicities or regions within an existing state, either by seceding from that state altogether, or else by pressing for some special autonomous status' (Clapham, 1998, p. 6). The examples of such insurgencies in the Horn of Africa were Southern Sudan, Eritrea and the Somali irredentist movements against Ethiopia and Kenya. The original Front de Liberation Nationale (Frolinat) resistance to the Tombalbaye government in Chad and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) opposition to the Derg in Ethiopia also qualified (Clapham, 1998, p. 6). In the case of the TPLF the claims to an Independent Tigray were abandoned during the civil war against the *Derg* regime in Ethiopia.

Unlike other liberation insurgencies Eritrea's quest for independence was not from colonial or minority rule (Clapham, 1998, p. 6). After the Allied defeated Italy in the Horn of Africa the five-year occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1941) came to an end. Ethiopia skillfully presented its claims over Eritrea and ultimately the Federal dispensation prevailed. Ethiopia's later abrogation of the Federation could not nullify the legacy of colonialism in Eritrea, as the section on Eritrea's trajectory and process of state formation will elucidate. Eritrea's insurgency qualified as a separatist insurgency (ibid) for it sought to have its right to self-determination recognized after the abrogation of the Ethio-Eritrean Federation (1952-1962). Eritrea's incorporation as the fourteenth Governorate of Ethiopia triggered dissent and armed opposition in Eritrea.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations (UN) silence and acquiescence with Ethiopia's policy vis-à-vis Eritrea isolated Eritrea in the regional and global political arenas (Iyob, 1995, p. 17).

As Iyob claims:

'This isolation had benefits as well as costs for Eritrean nationalists. One benefit was Eritrea's emphasis on self-reliance and popular mobilization' which was necessitated by its relative marginalization in international and regional communities; the primary cost was the subsequent absence of regional and international legitimacy, exacerbated by Ethiopia's diplomatic effectiveness in isolating the conflict (Iyob, 1995, p. 17).

As a consequence, Ethiopia's policy of 'reunification with Eritrea' coupled with its standing in Africa obstructed the continental organization's pattern of recognizing independence following colonial rule (Pool, 1979, 45).

Moreover, Eritrea's case shows the limitations in the OAU's definition of the right to self-determination. Indeed, African nationalism equated the principle of self-determination with freedom from European colonialism (Mayall, 1990 quoted in Iyob, 1995, p. 55). Eritrea's claim for independence rather than presenting a challenge to *uti possidetis* norm, that is, the continental respect for the borders inherited from colonialism reinforced the norm. Indeed, the separatist insurgency asserted the legitimacy of Eritrea's claim to self-determination on the basis of its past as an Italian colony (1890-1941) (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 86). Eritrea claimed that its right to self-determination should be recognized on the same basis as that of other ex-African colonies (ibid). However, in comparison with other African ex-colonies, Eritrea's trajectory was *sui generis* because the country from which it had been divided remained independent throughout the colonial period in Africa (Halliday and Molyneux 1981 cited in Dias, 2008, p. 115). Eritrea's colonial boundaries had separated it from ethnically contiguous areas, reflecting what had happened elsewhere during the colonial partition of Africa. As Ethiopia was not the object of colonial rule its territorial claim over Eritrea was not obliterated (Prunier, 2007).

The alliance between the EPLF and the TPLF/EPRDF against the Derg was important on Eritrea's final steps towards international recognition. The successor state's prompt recognition of Eritrea's claim for independent statehood facilitated the process of international recognition (Pool, 1998, p. 19).

In the aftermath of the Cold War, both Eritrea and Somaliland declared their independence which implied secession from the Ethiopian[3] and Somali states[4], respectively. However, only Eritrea was granted international recognition as a sovereign state becoming the only case of successful secession in Africa (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p.1). Indeed, during the Cold War the only case of secession was the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 (ibid). What is interesting and perhaps determinant in Eritrea's international recognition was the EPLF's successful argument and insistence that Eritrea's case did not qualify as a case of secession. The Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) in 1991 sent a memorandum to the United

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[3] In the aftermath of the Cold War, the Derg regime in Ethiopia fell under the combined assault of the EPLF and TPLF/EPRDF. The dismemberment of the Soviet Union deprived the Derg regime of its main external patron. Indeed, the Soviet military and financial support for the Derg was critical for its victories and survival during the Cold War. Both in the inter-state war with Somalia (1977-78) and in the intra-state war with the aforementioned movements, the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) emerged as the most powerful army in Africa (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, pp. 79-80).

[4] The overthrow of Siyad Barre's regime was followed by the collapse/disintegration of the Somali state.

Nations in order to avoid repetition of past mistakes recalling that: "The Eritrean case was a just struggle conducted against a coercive incorporation and not a case of secession" (cited in Iyob, 1995, p. 139).

Eritrea's insurgency stood out as one of the most disciplined and effective African insurgencies (Clapham, 1998, p. 6). Its success stands in stark contrast to other separatist insurgencies in the Horn of Africa, namely in Southern Sudan/ Sudan and in Somaliland/ Somalia whose claims for self-determination and independent statehood remain unfulfilled. Somaliland's unilateral declaration of independence has remained hostage of the disintegration of Somalia and of the absence of a government at the helm of the state willing to acknowledge Somaliland's claim on the basis of its colonial past as a British Protectorate. But under what conditions did the Eritrean separatist insurgency emerge and how did it succeed when other insurgencies with similar aims have failed? These questions will be the focus of the next section.

The trajectory of Eritrea as a separate entity

The process of state formation: the colonial legacy

Ethiopia and Eritrea were both part of the Abyssinian Empire thus sharing a common history, among other traits[5], until Italy colonized Eritrea (1890-1941). However, as Jacquin-Berdal rightly claims (quoting Halliday and Molyneux) ' neither ' Eritrea' nor Ethiopia as presently constituted existed in the pre-colonial period' (Halliday and Molyneux cited in Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 85). When Ethiopia defeated the invading Italian Army at the historical battle of Adwa (1896) and Italy was forced to shelve its plan to expand further south of the Mereb river (the river between Eritrea and Ethiopia) the two countries followed divergent trajectories. However, the groups north and south of the Mereb, especially the ones based in the Ethiopian region of Tigray continued to cross the border to inter-marry, to visit relatives, to attend weddings and funerals, to worship, to seek for job opportunities beyond agriculture, to trade and to search for pasture and water (Alemseged Abbay, 1997). In summary, the creation of the Italian colony did not prevent groups who were separated by the border (which similarly to

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[5] Although Eritrea's coastal regions were subjected to several external influences throughout the centuries, Eritrea's highlands were closely bound to Ethiopia's Tigray. Indeed, the Eritrean Tigrinya are ethnically linked to the Ethiopian Tigrayans. The leaders of the EPLF and the TPLF, who hold currently the positions of Heads of States, President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, are both Tigrayans. The Eritrean Tigrinya and the Ethiopian Tigrayans speak the same language- Tigrinya-, follow the same religious allegiance- Orthodox Christianity- among other features. (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, pp. 82-83).

other ex-colonies in Africa remained porous) from continuing with their daily lives among their kin across the border. But the period of Italian colonial rule did transform Eritrean society and contributed to the creation of a sense of difference among groups within Eritrea with regard to the southern neighbouring country.

According to Jacquin-Berdal, whilst the Italian colonial authorities left a minimal form of education, the numerous missions of various Christian denominations may have contributed to the creation of a sense of 'Eritrean-ness'. The learning of history played an important role in this respect. The textbooks used by Catholic missions in Eritrea depicted it as a cohesive entity. Moreover, Eritreans educated in the missions acquired a unitary conception of Eritrea and of its particular history, distinct from other countries in the region. These textbooks contained maps of Eritrea which provided the necessary visual support to the formation of an imagined community (Jacquin-Berdal, 2000, p. 59).

Italy also introduced important changes in the economic sector. This meant that opportunities beyond the traditional sector of agriculture were available with important consequences in terms of the previous semi-feudal relations[6]; which had characterized the socio-economic organization of the society, particularly in the highlands. For those lowland groups subordinated to a master[7] (namely the Beni Amer, among others) the development of a cash economy, the availability of alternative economic opportunities and the new forms of production associated with colonialism, in both Eritrea and Sudan, contributed to their process of emancipation. This process is valuable in understanding their resistance to re-unification with Ethiopia (Pool, 2001, p. 45).[8]

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[6] The semi-feudal relations comprised the complex social differentiation on the one hand within the peasantry with regard to the highly complex and mixed land tenure system in the highlands (*kebessa*) and on the other hand between the peasantry, merchants, pastoralists and agro-pastoralists of the lowlands (*metahit*) The peasantry was divided into two classes: land owners and/or those entitled to inherit land (*restenyat*) and those who did not own land (*makalai ailat*). The latter were generally late comers to the villages and were allocated land for cultivation purposes when available (Pool, 2001, pp. 14-15).

[7] The relationship between masters and serfs refers to the distinction in the lowland between a ruling group of migrant conquerors (shumagulle) and indigenous conquered (tigre), respectively . Depending on whether the tigre were pastoralists or agriculturalists, in addition to rendering services to the shumagulle, they paid tribute in milk, animals and portions of slaughtered animals or a share of the crop(Pool, 2001, pp. 17-24). In the case of the Beni Amer, the different systems of classification applied by the Italian colonial authorities and the British Military administration (while the former privileged the language criterion, the latter privileged religion) led to the identification of this group with two different ethnic groups: the Tigre and the Beja. Despite differences in classifications the Tigre were commonly known as serfs (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 89). Indeed, despite different systems of classifications all agree on the identification of the following ethnic groups within Eritrea: Tigrinyans, the Tigre, the Saho, the Afar and the Kunama (ibid, p.88).

[8] For most of the twentieth century the peasants from neighbouring Ethiopia, mainly from Tigray, also migrated North (to Eritrea and especially to the capital, Asmara) when in need of supplementary income (Young, 1997, p. 72)

Italian investment in the industrial sector in Eritrea did transform the predominantly rural and traditionally based society; leading to the emergence of a significant urban and industrial component (Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu, 2006, p. 90).

Between 1935 and 1941, when Italy invaded and occupied Ethiopia, although Addis Ababa was the capital of the Italian East African Empire, Eritrea remained the main commercial and economic centre. Indeed, by 1940, 54,8 percent of the industrial firms of the Italian Empire were located in Eritrea, while 30,6 percent were located in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces ('Shewa, Harar, Amara and Oromo & Sidamo') and the remaining 14,6 percent were located in Somalia's Italian colony. With regard to commercial firms Eritrea's economic prominence within the Italian East African Empire was again undisputable: 56,2 percent of the firms were located in Eritrea, with 30 percent in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces and 13,8 percent in Somalia. Bearing in mind the population proportions in each of the Provinces of the Italian East African Empire, Eritrea's privileged economic status within the Italian East African Empire was indeed very significant (Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, 2000, p. 41).

The Eritreans who joined the colonial army ('ascaris') also participated in Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. It seems no coincidence that Eritrea's participation in the invasion of Ethiopia remained largely silenced in Ethiopia until Eritrea's independence and the 1998-2000 border war between the two states.

With Italy's defeat during World War II, Britain administered the ex-Italian colony until Eritrea's future was determined.

The period of British Administration (1941-1952) triggered the politicisation of Eritreans around a nationalist project.

The British Administration enhanced the educational system and established political parties (Jacquin- Berdal 2002, p. 98). Under the British Administration, at the primary school level, all the course books were in Tigrinya. From this period remains a great wealth of literature in Tigrinya. Alongside Tigrinya, Arabic text-books were obtained from Egypt and Sudan. However, Arabic was never so widespread as to become a second official language (Jacquin-Berdal, 2000, p. 61). According to Pool, this period was accompanied by a politicization of religion, as the section on the emergency of political parties and the war for independence will discuss in further detail (Pool, 2001, p. 39).

Paradoxically, it was the British later plan to partition Eritrea between Sudan and Ethiopia (the Bervin-Sforza plan[9]) that unified the new political elite in the preservation of Eritrea's territorial integrity (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 63; Pool, 2001, p. 39).

Ultimately, the destiny of Eritrea was fixed by the United Nations Resolution 390 A (V) of 1952 which established its status as an autonomous region within the Federation with Ethiopia. However, the progressive deterioration of the federal arrangements and Ethiopia's final abrogation of the Federation sparked dissent and contributed to the emergency of the armed struggle. But as we shall see, at this stage the nationalist aspirations were mostly articulated by Eritrea's educated elites (Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu, 2006, p. 91).

The mobilization of support across various groups became the main challenge and aim of the insurgent movements during the war for independence. Ethiopia's forceful reaction to the insurgency and the targeting of civilians both in the lowlands and in the highlands during the war for independence played a decisive role in the acceptance and legitimacy of the insurgency among large sections of the society (ibid, p. 91).

The war for independence as a catalyst for nation building

This section will look into the insurgency trajectory and to the insurgents' divergent strategies with regard to the common aim of attaining independence.

The movements defined their political projects reflecting the main cleavages that permeated Eritrean society. This section will reflect on how these social divisions influenced and conditioned the mobilization of support for each political party and movement. These cleavages would, in turn, condition their divergent trajectories. But in order to understand the trajectory of the insurgent movements, the next section will start with a brief overview of the emergence of political parties during the period of British administration. The separatist insurgency within the territory in its emergency phase mobilized support around the main lines of cleavage in Eritrea's society.

Religious, ethnic, regional and other cleavages during the emergency of political parties and the war for independence

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[9] The Bervin-Sforza plan was the result of an Agreement between British Foreign Secretary Bevin and Italian Foreign Minister Sforza concluded in May 1949 regarding all of Italy's former possessions (Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, p. 106).

Islam in Eritrea played a role in the articulation of nationalist aspirations. The period of British Administration was crucial for the emergency of political parties, namely with an islamist orientation. As Miran contended:

> The foundation of the pro-Independence Muslim League (1946) in Keren rallied many ethnically and linguistically diverse Eritrean Muslim under the banner of Islam, making religious identity an essential component of nationalist aspirations' (Miran, 2005, p. 204).

The Muslim League opposed re-unification with Ethiopia (Pool, 2001, p. 39). It emerged in opposition to the Unionist movement. The Unionists had emerged as the outcome of the alliance between Ethiopian nationalist groups with influence in Eritrea and the Orthodox church's leadership in Eritrea; the latter rallied support around the religious banner of Orthodox Christianity (ibid). However, during this period other non-Muslim political parties, namely the Liberal Progressive Party, favoured independence over union with Ethiopia. Interestingly, Muslim groups joined the unionists as well. This pattern confirms that religion alone does not explain the alignment with the unionists or with pro-independence movements.

By 1958 the deterioration of the Federation triggered the creation of the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) by a group of exiled Eritreans (including students) in Sudan (Prunier, 2007, p. 339; Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu, 2006, p. 91). However, the movement would not thrive. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was created in Egypt in 1960. In 1961, ELF combatants carried the first demonstrations of forceful resistance to the Ethiopian presence in Eritrea. Although the ELF was more organized than the ELM it rallied support along religious and ethnic cleavages and it was supported by the Muslims groups of the lowlands. According to Prunier, in 1966 Orthodox Christians joined the separatist insurgency. However, the ELF continued to follow sectarian politics and presented itself and the Eritrean fight as an Arab cause, namely one of its leaders: Osman Saleh Sabe (ibid, p. 340; Pool, 2001, p. 21). Between 1969 and 1970 the ELF was marred by internal strife. Moreover, Prunier claims that the old central core of the ELF carried out a policy of eliminating young Christian recruits (ibid). Others have claimed that the ELF factions targeted Afar combatants who joined their ranks (Adou quoted in Yasin, 2008, p. 57). Both Christian and Muslim combatants who disapproved of this policy left the ELF and created the splintering faction known as the ELF-Popular Liberation Forces. However, tension did not subside. On the contrary, tension between the ELF factions culminated in the ELF's February 1972 attack to the ELF-PLF. In 1973 took place the most serious

crisis within the separatist insurgency and its legacy still resonates after independence. After the merger of two of the splintering factions of the ELF, the People's Party 1 & 2, Isaias Afewerki assumed command. In 1973 the leadership was faced with opposition from within its ranks: from the *menqa* faction (ultra- leftist former university students) and *yamin* (right wing). During the crisis within the ranks of the future EPLF (which was allegedly only officially formed at the First Congress in 1977), one of the dissenting factions led by Solomon Woldemariam claimed to represent the fighters from the Akele Guzai province and was aimed at overcoming the lack of representation of this province within the new leadership (which was dominated by fighters originally from Hamasien) (Pool, 2001, p. 76). This regionally-based grievance was on a clear collision route with the leadership's focus on the need to overcome any ethnic and/or regional- based divisions. The current Eritrean President is originally from Hamasien region. President Isaias Afewerki, among others, had fiercely opposed ethnic, regional and/or religious based affiliations and, instead, focused on the subordination of all sub- nationalities to the overarching cause of Eritrea's plight for self- determination and independence. The decision to eliminate by force the opposition factions during the 1973 crisis is still a controversial matter which resonates in Eritrean politics since Independence (Iyob, 1995, pp. 116-17; Pool, 2001, p. 76 & 86; Connell, 2001, pp. 352-53 and Connell, 2005, pp. 85-90).[10] The internal strife between the factions lasted until 1974. This was a critical moment and the internal strife almost compromised the insurgency's ultimate aim. The ELF second Congress in 1975 led to reconciliation between the factions. In 1977 took place the significant Congress which led to the creation of the EPLF. This Congress is significant because it resulted in the creation of the movement which would predominate and would succeed in sustaining the insurgency against the *Derg* until independence was obtained.

The greatest challenge to the separatist insurgency in Eritrea happened in the aftermath of the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. In the aftermath of this inter-state war the victorious Ethiopian National Defence Forces were better equipped with Soviet armaments and intensified the counter-insurgency operations in Northern Ethiopia (Tigray) and Eritrea. The ELF and the EPLF were forced to withdraw; the ELF combatants went into Sudan and the EPLF sought for refuge within Eritrea in the Sahel.

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[10] Although the information on the 1973 crisis is sparse Eritrea's scholars allude to its significance both in understanding the formation of the EPLF and domestic politics since Eritrea's independence.

The rivalry and mutual attacks between the ELF and the EPLF resulted in the former's expulsion from Eritrea. The alliance between the EPLF and the TPLF (although permeated by tension) played a role as well in the prominence of the EPLF within Eritrea (Participant observation at a meeting in London, 2005).

During this period, among Muslim groups allegiance was diversified. The ELF leadership was dominated by Western Muslims which contributed to alienate combatants from minority ethnic groups who had joined the movement (Yasin, 2008, p. 57). A case in point was the combatants identified with the ethnic group Afar (from eastern Eritrea). The Afar, like the Beni Amer (from western Eritrea) follow Islam, however after initial support for the ELF their exclusion from leadership positions by the Beni Amer and conflicts with the Tigre lowlanders led them to defect from the separatist insurgency.

In addition to the Afar (eastern Eritrea), other groups which were artificially divided from their brethren in neighbouring countries when Eritrea became an Italian colony were at odds with the separatist insurgency's aims. The Saho (central Eritrea) and the Kunama (western Eritrea) are part of borderland groups who generally did not embrace the war for independence as their own cause.

Quite significantly, the Afar case they did not embrace independence as their main aim because for them the borders have no meaning and Afar are based in three states in the Horn of Africa: Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti (Dias, 2008, pp. 77-82).

The Kunama[11], especially those from Ilit and Sokoda, joined the ELF from the very beginning of the movement (Alexander Naty, 2002). However, the ELF, whose leadership was dominated by the Beni Amer, Tigre and to a lesser extent the Nara mistreated the Kunama. The ELF actions included burning their villages and the killing of elders in some localities. As a consequence, these actions alienated the Kunama from the separatist insurgency (ibid, p. 572). Moreover, the Kunama remember Idris Awate, who is celebrated as a national hero for having opened hostilities against Ethiopia in 1961, as the ringleader of their prosecution between 1943 and 1949; (Lussier, 1997, p. 442).

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[11] The Kunama have traditionally been based in the Gash Setit area, one of the most fertile regions of Eritrea. After independence this region's name was changed to Gash Barka. As Jacquin-Berdal notes although most Kunama kept some features of their traditional religion, many through the workings of the Franciscans converted to Christianity (Catholicism), but only few to Islam (2002, p. 87).

The internal strife between the movements suggests that while religion played a role in the emergence of the nationalist movement a more nuanced understanding is needed beyond the divide between Muslims and Christians (Pool, 2001, p. 53). Indeed, ethnic and regional allegiances at times superseded religious solidarity and particularly the emerging national solidarity.

The support for the war for independence was significant both domestically and transnationally. Quite significantly, throughout the war for independence the diaspora's contribution was key in sustaining the separatist insurgency. The diaspora contributed with 2 per cent of their annual income for the EPLF during the war for independence (Bernal, 2004, p. 11). ELF supporters claim to have contributed, as well, even after the EPLF forcibly expelled the ELF from Eritrea in the 1980s.

In conclusion, the separatist insurgency's main challenge was to submit religion, ethnicity and regionalism to nationalism. The EPLF succeeded and achieved prominence within the insurgency because of its emphasis on unity, secularism and reform (Pool, 2001, p. 38). Indeed, the central aim of the EPLF political project was to supplant all sub-national sources of allegiance.

The pitfalls of the EPLF/PFDJ political project of state and nation building for Eritrea

Upon independence, the EPLF had to put to the test its nationalist credentials and bring into implementation its long withheld claims that Eritrea was a viable political and economic independent unit. In 1994 at the EPLF Congress the leadership in its bid to transform the movement into a political party changed the name to the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ).

The EPLF/PFDJ perceived religious, ethnic and/or regional solidarity as a hindrance to state and nation building. The ruling party recognizes freedom of religion, however in practice the trend has been to restrict this right for all but the four government approved religions--Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics, and the Evangelical Church of Eritrea.[12]

Eritrea is a multiethnic society. Since independence the ruling party recognizes officially nine ethnic groups: the Afar, the Bilen, the Hadareb, the Kunama, the Nara,

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[12] Minority religious groups have often been prosecuted, namely the Jehovah Witnesses because of their objection on religious principles to the compulsory military service.

the Rashaida, the Saho and the Tigre (Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu, 2006, pp. 88-89).

The Eritrean government diminished the saliency of all solidarities at the sub-state level and subordinated them to the overarching national identity. But who is an Eritrean citizen? The next section will open with an overview of the criteria for acquiring Eritrean citizenship. This part will provide an analysis of the EPLF/PFDJ's political project of state and nation building since independence.

The domestic political arena

The citizenship rules defined in the first Proclamation of citizenship by the provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) in 1992 aimed to embrace a population dispersed territorially, attributing Eritrean nationality via matrilineal and / or patriarchal descent (*ius sanguinis*) or naturalisation. Those who registered to vote for the Referendum (both within Eritrea and abroad) were issued with identity cards, which ascribed them the right to vote for or against independence (Iyob, 2000, p. 663). The criteria for acquiring Eritrean citizenship were birth, naturalisation and/or adoption. Indeed, 'any person born to a father or mother of Eritrean origin in Eritrea or abroad' was entitled to become an Eritrean citizen and to acquire voting rights, regardless of the country of residence (ibid, p. 671). This conception of nationhood granted equal rights to those living in Eritrea and outside. If the host country allowed dual nationality, the Eritrean conception of nationhood posed no problems. However, this definition had the potential to create an ambiguous status for those who qualified to acquire Eritrean citizenship but who had acquired the citizenship of states in which only a single nationality was permitted; as was the case with those citizens of Eritrean origin living in Ethiopia. The PGE's conception created a Pan-Eritrean identity with a transnational component (Iyob, 2000, p. 664). This policy was followed in order to re-enforce the diaspora's links to the homeland. However, the outbreak of hostilities in 1998 led to the expulsion of 60,000- 75,000 Ethiopians of Eritrean origin and Eritreans from Ethiopia (Koser, 2003, p. 112). Despite these problems brought into the fore by the 1998-2000 war, the PFDJ's policy on recognizing dual nationality contributes, in part, to the continued attractiveness of holding onto Eritrean citizenship for those who have never

lived in Eritrea and who may never do so.[13]But domestically, other PFDJ's policies have undermined the attractiveness of Eritrea's citizenship, as the remaining part of this section will elucidate.

Along with the Eritrean definition of nationalism in terms of colonial territoriality (Clapham, 2006, p. 235), the PFDJ also implemented its own conception of Eritrean statehood which led to a redrawing of the administrative units. The regional boundaries were redrawn to form the new administrative units (*zobas)* which cut across old regional units. As Conrad highlights, the PFDJ state- building project was aimed at '(….) erasing regional identities, i.e. loyalty to one's region (*awraja)* and the village (*adi*) (Conrad, 2006, p. 261).'

The creation of multi- ethnic administrative regions was pursued in order to prevent the emergence of territorially based ethnic opposition (Fouad Makki, 1996, p. 484). However, as Conrad claims, this attempt to erase regional identities created resentment and seems to have '(…) contributed to a growing disengagement from the national project and reinforced deep-seated local and regional affiliations.' (2006, p. 261).[14]

The EPLF/PFDJ political project of state and nation building has been characterized both by continuities with patterns already present during the war for independence and by critical ruptures with the features that had determined its success in securing domestic support from significant sections of Eritrean society during the same period.

With regard to ruptures, the mutation of the principle of self-reliance (res'kha me'khaal) has had wider domestic and regional implications. This section will analyse what has changed in the application of self-reliance. It will do so by comparing its application during the war for independence and since Eritrea's admission into the international society of sovereign states.

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[13] With Independence it was common for those who had spent most of their adult lives or who had been brought up in the diaspora to make plans of going back and (re-) starting their life in Eritrea. However, the government requirements of completion of the national military service to set up businesses (or for any other dealing with the state administration) and other constraints to any entrepreneurial undertakings in the private sector discouraged many from effectively settling in Eritrea. Interviews in London, May 2007.

[14] Historically some regions within Eritrea, such as Akele Guzai, had closer links to Tigray, than with other *kebesa* within Eritrea, such as the districts of Seraye and Hamasien. According to Alemseged Abbay the trans-Mereb ties (i.e. across the river which separates Eritrea from Tigray) were still alluded to after Eritrea's independence (Alemseged Abbay, 1997, pp. 324- 25).

To a certain extent the current isolationist path reflects a transposition into foreign policy making of one of the cornerstone principles of the separatist insurgency. The principle and strategy of self-reliance was one of the central pillars of the war for independence. Despite continuities in the PFDJ's rhetoric the application of self-reliance has mutated and as Pool rightly claims the principle has been transposed to the national-sphere (Pool, 2001, p. 165).

During the war for independence, the principle of self-reliance, as well as the mobilization of vast sections of Eritrean society (especially in the liberated areas), were the cornerstones of the EPLF's success in developing strong local control based on local legitimacy (Englebert, 2007, p. 59). Indeed, in the absence of international recognition and faced with relative marginalization in the regional and global political arenas, the EPLF was successful in mobilizing the support of Eritrea's society, both internally (the rural groups) and transnationally (the Eritrean diaspora).

The application of self-reliance had tangible and practical effects in the liberated areas. Through its organizational efficiency and discipline the EPLF was able to deliver social services among the rural groups in the areas under its effective territorial control (Iyob, 1995, p. 119). The EPLF started the land system's reform with community leaders; established learning centres; organized public sessions in order to inform the population of its goals and intentions and, quite significantly, the EPLF established medical units in order to guarantee the provision of medical care in the areas under its control (ibid; Pool, 2001, p. 81). In contrast to the previous period, since independence the disproportion between public expenditure in health provision as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in relation to expenditure in the defence sector further confirms the critical rupture of the PFDJ with previous policies of social services' delivery. According to the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), the Global Militarization Index classifies Eritrea as the most militarized country in the world. While the government spends 20 percent of its GDP on the armed forces, only a meager 3,7 percent of government's resources are spent on public health services (Heinke, 2009, p. 20).

The EPLF's practice of organizing public sessions to mobilize the support of the groups among which it operated in the ''liberated areas'' has been abandoned and any debate or criticism to the PFDJ's political project is equated with dissent and

treason to the state. In contradistinction to the previous practice of organizing public sessions, and especially after the two-year border war with Ethiopia and the 2001 crisis, the closing of any public space for discussion has been the norm. During 2001, a group of politicians (ex-combatants) close to the President voiced, in a public letter, their disapproval and criticism over domestic and foreign policy matters. The bones of contention were the delay in the implementation of the Constitution and the conduct of the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia. As a result of the public letter they were imprisoned and have been held incommunicado ever since (Connell, 2005).

Furthermore, any opposition to the PFDJ's political project of state and nation building or to President Isaias Afewerki are equated with treason to the Eritrean state and result in detention and imprisonment without trial. In Eritrea prisoners are held incommunicado over unlimited periods (Connell, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2009; Rawlence, 2009). This feature rather than a complete rupture with past practices derives from the EPLF's past failure to accommodate peaceful changes of leadership, as the previous section has shown.

Moreover, in Eritrea the state builders' dominant concern has been dominated by the project of remaking the citizenry. Education and the compulsory military service have become central in the PFDJ's political project of nation building.

Throughout the war for independence the EPLF developed an underground primary level education system which transmitted to the fighters and local communities in the newly liberated territories the idea of an Eritrean nation (Jacquin-Berdal, 2000, p. 65). The EPLF, after its victory in 1991, imposed its own definition of Eritrean national identity '(…) one in which the war for independence had become the founding myth (ibid., p. 67).' The teaching and learning of languages and history seem to confirm the state's monopoly of the educational system and its central role in the PFDJ state and nation building project. The PFDJ's political project is in continuity with its orientation towards education during the previous period however opposition to the PFDJ's narrative of the war for independence has intensified, particularly after the 1998-2000 war. While the PFDJ had defined the 20th June as a public holiday to pay tribute to the Martyrs of the state of Eritrea, the former ELF (RC) celebrate Martyr's Day on the 1st December (Conrad, 2006, p. 260).

On June 20, 2009 during the ceremonies on the occasion of Martyrs' Day President Isaias Afewerki re-enforced appeals to the new generations of Eritrea to

bear their responsibilities in building ''Eritrea into a homeland where they lead a secure and prosperous life'' (Shabait, June 2009). The President referred to the people and generations of Eritreans 'worthy of the legacy of the Martyrs' on the following terms:

> 'the ones that value and honor their freedom and sovereignty; as well as those that recognize the meaning of sacrifice and the values that it embodies. (…) People and generations that champion the values of '' selflessness and giving priority to the people above anything else, and pursue long term goals''- in the same manner as our martyrs had demonstrated in exemplary deeds (ibid).

But what is the President's message appeal to the generation of Eritreans who have not participated in the war for independence? The next part will elucidate how Eritreans within the age group of military service (and part of whom have participated in the 1998-2000 border war) have tended to react to the PFDJ's political project of state and nation building, namely to its component of compulsory military service.

In 1994 the government of Eritrea promulgated a national service proclamation (National Service Proclamation, 1991), which was mandatory (and still is at the time of writing) on all citizens between the ages 18 and 40. The national service proclamation mandates an eighteen-month period of service. Six months of service consist of military training in a training camp in Eritrea's western lowland: in Sawa. After military training, the National Service trainees are dispatched to different parts of the country and serve for 12 months.

The state's continuous demand for extended conscription has contributed to the widening of the generational divide between those ex- combatants from the war for independence and those who fought in the 1998- 2000 war (Reid, 2005, p. 474) . At the time of writing, those who fought in the border war are either still serving in the military or at civilian jobs on a pecuniary wage (Dorman, 2005, p. 211).

During the border war any divergence from the PJDF narrative of the war for independence and the historical obligation to defend this hard- won achievement was viewed as an act of treason; Conrad suggests that this perception was shared both domestically and among the diaspora communities (Conrad, 2006, p. 251). This should be understood against the backdrop of the government's trend to conflate 'the identity of the nationalist movement and its political manifestation, the PFDJ' to a point that they 'are near indistinguishable from that of the state (Dorman, 2005, p. 207).'

Furthermore, the national service conscripts tend to be engaged in development work within the *warsay- yikealo*[15] initiative (ibid, p. 214). This initiative aims to bring together the *warsay* (those recruited to the new Eritrean army after Independence) (Conrad, 2006, p. 260) and *Yikealo (*the ex- combatants from the liberation war) (ibid, p. 267).

In addition, those undergoing the compulsory military service were used in PFDJ-linked corporations; this practice brought undeniable benefits to the party-owned corporations through the use of 'conscript workers' as cheap labour. This policy and the open-ended military service have generated much political discontent among youth (Dorman, 2005, p. 214).

From the government's perspective, Sawa should be understood as the military training centre *par excellence* and also as the 'national finishing school (Reid, 2005, p. 479).' The national military centre has contributed to the construction of a new myth of the Sawa Tigers, in distinction to the draft- dodgers portrayed as the 'Coca- Cola generation' for their lack of willingness to sacrifice for the nation and for their poor display of patriotism (Conrad, 2006, p. 267).[16]

The lack of appeal of President Isaias' message to Eritreans on Martyr's Day and the decreasing attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship are corroborated by the higher number of citizens seeking international protection, namely as asylum seekers. As the figure below shows an ever widening proportion of Eritreans are choosing the exit option from the ''homeland''.
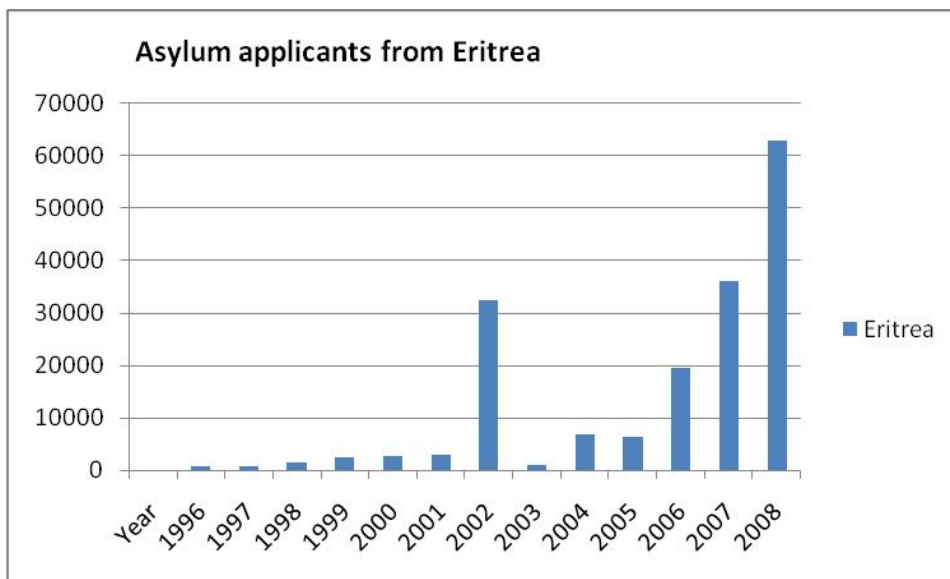
Figure 1: Asylum applicants from Eritrea[17]

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[15] This expression, as all the expressions in italics correspond to the transliteration into roman alphabet of the Tigrigna expression written in fidal, the ancient Ge'ez script; which is used in Amharic and Tigre languages, as well.

[16] This label is the one used by President Isaias Afeworky to characterise the lack of patriotism displayed by those who have either evaded compulsory conscription and/or who have fled the country without fulfilling their military service obligations.

[17] Figure 1 was adapted from Dias, 2008, p. 198 and updated with data from UNHCR 2007, p. 10; UNHCR 2008, p. 9; UNHCR, 2009, p. 16.

Asylum applicants from Eritrea

As the figure shows between 1998 and 2000 (while the border war with Ethiopia was ongoing) despite the increase in asylum applications originating from Eritrea, it was not as significant as between 2004 and 2008. The peak in 2002 was due to the UNHCR's announcement that Eritrean refugees in Sudan would no longer benefit from refugee status after December 31, 2002 (Dias, 2008, p. 198). Moreover since 2000, only 29,000 of the Eritrean refugees in Sudan from the thirty-year war for independence have decided to return to Eritrea; 270,000 declined to return when the UNHCR conducted the major repatriation in the 1990s (Bascom, 2005, p. 179).

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports on global trends of new individual asylum applications confirms that a growing number of Eritreans are fleeing the country. By nationality, Eritrea ranked second with the highest number of new filled asylum claims in 2008, with a total of 62,700 new applicants (UNHCR, 2009, p.16). In the previous year, Eritrea had ranked third among countries producing the highest numbers of asylum applicants, with a total of 36,000 new claims originating from Eritrean citizens (UNHCR, 2007, p. 9). In 2006, Eritrea had ranked fourth among the top countries producing asylum-seekers, with a total of 19,400 Eritreans lodging new claims in other countries (UNHCR, 2006, p.10).

In the United Kingdom, the number of Eritreans lodging claims of asylum has been rising and Eritrea is among the top five asylum producing countries. Since the end of 2008, Eritrea has ranked third with a total of 705 new claims in the last quarter

of 2008 and 480 in the first quarter of 2009 (Home Office, 2008 & 2009).[18] These examples suggest that a growing proportion of Eritreans have decided for the exile option in face of the increasingly authoritarian path pursued by the PFDJ.

The exit option confirms the scholarly findings claiming that as the government's legitimacy continues to erode proportionally to its authoritarian leanings, repressive measures. The citizens are forced to seek asylum abroad (Bascom 2005; Connell 2005; Conrad, 2006; Dorman, 2005; Jacquin-Berdal & Aida Mengistu 2006; Reid 2005). Indeed, the PFDJ's political project of nation building lacks to mobilize support as it is more life denying, than life affirming. The authoritarian leanings of the regime have not resulted in passive resistance. Indeed, Bozzini's research findings suggest that those within the compulsory military service age-group who remain in Eritrea have developed subtle ways of voicing their dissatisfaction and dissent, namely through jokes (Bozzini, 2009).

Both the war for independence and the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia seem to confirm that warfare has played a central role in the EPLF/PFDJ's political project of nation and state building. However, as the data in the figure above suggest this project has exhausted its mobilizing appeal and is fiercely resisted. The sharp rise in the numbers of those seeking to exit the country further confirms the law of limited return of war making in relation to nation and state building.

Eritrea's isolation in the regional and global political arenas

The regional political arena

The PFDJ's engagement in border disputes and conflicts with all of its contiguous neighbours (including with its maritime neighbour Yemen) has had wider implications in the domestic (as discussed in the previous section) and in the regional political arenas.

After independence Eritrea has been involved in border disputes with Sudan (1994); Yemen (1995); Djibouti (1996); in the border dispute with Ethiopia which escalated into full-scale war (1998-2000) and, more recently, in the border dispute with Djibouti (2008).

Eritrea's foreign policy vis-à-vis its contiguous neighbours, specifically the trend

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[18] For the first quarter of 2009, Zimbabwe ranked first with a total of 2925 new claims and Afghanistan ranked second with a total of 1055 new asylum claims lodged in the UK (Home Office, 2009).

to resort to force in order to settle territorial disputes came as a surprise. However, this trend rather than erratic has reflected Eritrea's perception of being threatened within the volatile Horn of Africa region and has reinforced its isolation in the regional political arena. As Reid puts it:

> 'Eritrea does not trust anyone; and the powerful concept of 'historical betrayal' permeates the nation's image of itself. (…) The concept of 'Eritrea alone against the world', misunderstood and abused, now forms a core component of the moral code with which Eritrea deals with close neighbours and the 'international community' alike (Reid, 2005, p. 483)'.

However, the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia was a critical turning point in the PFDJ's political project of state and nation building with domestic and regional ramifications.

As the previous section has shown, the ramifications of the 1998-200 war and its aftermath in the domestic political arena suggest that the citizens' assessment of their national government's failure to vindicate its democratic credentials through open and fair elections has taken priority over its nationalist credentials vindicated on the battlefield.

The war impacted upon the regional alliances and had spillover effects and repercussions for ongoing conflicts (in Sudan and in Somalia). Eritrea and Ethiopia submitted their foreign policies towards the region to power politics; well captured in the motto: 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. Ethiopia supported Eritrean armed opposition movements based in Sudan or in Ethiopia. Eritrea, in a tit-for-tat tactic, supported Ethiopian armed opposition movements based in Somalia, Kenya or in its territory (Cliffe, 2005). The interference of Eritrea in Somalia's internal affairs, since the rise of the Islamic Courts Union in 2006, can only be understood against this background. The crisis in Somalia (2006-2009) and, particularly, Ethiopia's forceful intervention in support for the Transitional Federal Government (December 2006-January 2009) led Eritrea to provide support for the opposing side to the one Ethiopia was supporting.

On April 2007, upon its own initiative Eritrea suspended membership from the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) justifying its foreign policy towards the regional organization on the basis that IGAD had endorsed Ethiopia's forceful occupation of Somalia (Sudan Tribune, April 2007; Eritrea Ministry of Information, April 2007). After the dismemberment of the Islamic Courts Union by the

combined offensive of the Ethiopia-backed Transitional Federal Government, Eritrea offered exile to the former ICU members, namely to the Chairman of the Shura Council (Consultative Council): Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Hassan Dahir Aweys is in the US list of terrorists since November 2001 and was designated a terrorist under UNSC Resolution 1267 (US Department of State 2008). He remained in exile in Asmara until April 2009. During exile he was among the founding members of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS); which was formed on September 14, 2007 in the Eritrean capital: Asmara.

Furthermore, Eritrea's defiance of the TFG's legitimacy and support for former members of the ICU and alleged support, including arms, for al-Shabaab (the militant islamist group al-Shabaab figures in the US list of terrorists) came close to its inclusion in the US List of states sponsoring terrorism in 2008 (The Telegraph, April 2009).

Not in an unprecedented fashion, Eritrea resorted to force to settle a territorial dispute with Djibouti. The military buildup along the common border resulted in skirmishes that opposed the armed forces of the two states in June 2008. To date Eritrea has failed to comply with the UNSC Resolution 1862 (2009) which ordered the parties to withdraw to the positions held before 10 June 2008. The coincidence of the border skirmishes with the UN-led Djibouti political process for Somalia placed Eritrea at odds with international actors' priorities for the Horn of Africa region. IGAD, the AU and the UN were all involved in reaching an all inclusive agreement between the TFG and former members of the ICU in order to bring the insurgency in Somalia to an halt. The UN-led Djibouti political process took place in Djibouti and reached an important agreement over a cease-fire on June 9, 2008 between moderate islamists, led by the current President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and the former TFG members.

The outcome of the 2008 border skirmishes between Eritrea and Djibouti has further eroded the former's legitimacy in the regional and global political arenas. The UNSC classified Eritrea's position of 'utter intransigence'. Eritrea justifies its position by stating that it is not occupying Djibouti's national territory and links its position to Ethiopia's failure to comply with the EEBC Decision; arguing that Ethiopia is still occupying Eritrea's sovereign territory without any international reprisals (Eritrea Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 15, 2009).

The IGAD member-states and the AU have all converged in criticizing Eritrea's support for the militant islamist insurgency in Somalia. Allegedly Eritrea's support to

al-shabaab has allowed the insurgency to continue unabated, namely at critical moments when the group was more vulnerable. The African consensus on Eritrea's counterproductive role in the Somalia crisis since December 2006 has culminated with an unprecedented move.   Through the AU Peace and Security Council AU member-states unanimously requested the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on Eritrea for its support for the militant islamist insurgency in Somalia; arguing that Eritrea's foreign policy vis-à-vis Somalia was compromising both the legitimate government and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and was contributing to further destabilization in the Horn of Africa.

The global political arena

In the global political arena, in the aftermath of the Cold War Eritrea's President Isaias Afewerki , along with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the President of Uganda, were lauded as part of a promising generation of new African leaders. The former insurgents were referred to as part of the 'African Renaissance leaders'. The 'Renaissance leaders' axis was one of the central pillars of US foreign policy towards the region. The axis was forged through the alliance between Isaias Afewerki, Meles Zenawi and Yoweri Museveni, placing Asmara, Addis Ababa and Kampala in a similar orbit to Washington's interests in the region. The common denominator was the containment of the rise of Islamist movements in the region (Kidane Mengisteab, Okbazghi Yohannes, 2005, pp. 164-92; Woodward, 2006).

The pillar of US foreign policy towards the region faltered when Isaias Afewerki and Meles Zenawi started a conventional war in 1998. The two-year border war was not only a major setback for the US but, perhaps, more significantly, the war led to a major watershed in the region (de Waal, 2004, p. 211).

On the run up to the establishment of the US Combined Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) Eritrea and Djibouti were in competition to guarantee having a US base on its coast. Eritrea even contracted the services of a US firm to become the key partner in the region in the 'war against terrorism' (Abrahamsen, 2004; Kidane Mengisteab, Okbazghi Yohannes, 2005, p. 186).

However, since 2006 Eritrea's interference in Somalia's internal affairs has almost earned it a place in the US list of States Sponsors of Terrorism. During 2008 the US warned Eritrea that failure to halt its support in armaments for *al-shabaab*

led-insurgency in Somalia would inevitably lead to that outcome (The Telegraph).

CONCLUSION

The EPLF's success, as well as its failures after independence, should be understood against the domestic, regional and global political arenas. With hindsight the sources of the deepening crisis of Eritrea's political trajectories of state and nation building, as embodied by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), are to be found on the trajectory of the insurgent movements during the war for independence. Indeed, the insurgency was not united either in relation to strategy or to the political projects of state and nation building for Eritrea. Only after the civil war between the major insurgent movements -the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the EPLF- did the latter appear as the dominant separatist insurgent movement in Eritrea. Moreover, as the analysis of the trajectory of the insurgency has shown the highly centralized authority within the EPLF did not accommodate dissent or peaceful changes of leadership. These features would become more pronounced once the aim of independence was no longer a justification for curtailing domestic challenges to the EPLF leadership's political project of nation and state building.

With hindsight the scholarly work about Eritrea's war for independence and successful secession already enunciated some of the elements which came to characterise the EPLF/ PFDJ's political project of state and nation building after independence. However, the setbacks of the EPLF/PFDJ's political project in both the domestic, regional and global political arenas have significantly eroded the domestic and international legitimacy the movement had enjoyed at the time of independence.

This chapter shows how one of the most disciplined, efficient and highly organised separatist movements in Africa has undermined its domestic and international legitimacy. Eritrea's admission into the international society of sovereign states was long due however the ruling party's domestic and foreign policies have eroded its domestic legitimacy and have isolated Eritrea in the regional and global political arenas.

In addition the chapter has argued that the PFDJ has exhausted its political project of state and nation building for Eritrea both domestically and internationally. Its hold to power is only sustained through the mechanisms at the disposal of an authoritarian regime. Benefiting from international recognition and from the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states the PFDJ holds to a

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political project lacking in domestic legitimacy. The citizens bear the brunt of the increasingly authoritarian leanings of the regime. The critical failure in the transformation of the guerrilla fighters into state builders and of the separatist insurgency into a political party have eroded the domestic legitimacy the EPLF had enjoyed and earned through the war for independence.

Furthermore, the mutation and the rupture with the cornerstone principles which had determined the EPLF's success during the war for independence confirm the twilight of the EPLF/PFDJ's political project. It is unlikely that the PFDJ will introduce any meaningful changes that might enhance its domestic legitimacy and create public space for any peaceful change of leadership to occur. In face of the severe constraints placed upon the citizens who remain in Eritrea, opposition in diaspora formations although flourishing has not been able to influence or to have a say on domestic politics, namely on the trajectory of the state since independence.

In the light of the factors analysed in this chapter it is no wonder that the exit option has been increasing steadily, especially in the aftermath of the two-year border war with Ethiopia. Indeed, Eritrea stands among the top countries producing asylum seekers. Although allegiance to Eritrean national identity does not seem to have waned, Eritrean citizenship lacks in attractiveness. Furthermore, while it may well be argued that the civil war had a positive impact in the consolidation of a sense of 'Eritreaness', the cost of the 1998- 2000 war and the continuous militarism of the ruling party have undermined the legitimacy of the regime and decrease the attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship, especially for those within the age group of compulsory military service. As a consequence, national identity may start to unravel.

As Eritreans who are able to voice their discontent claimed: 'We didn't fight for this' (Group interview, London, May 2007).

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Secession – from what exactly?
## Secessionist attempts on the Comoros

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INDIAN OCEAN

UG.
KENYA
SOMALIA

TANZANIA

LES
AMIRANTES

Mahé

SEYCHELLES

ZAM.

GROUPE
D'ALDABRA

COMOROS

Glorioso
Islands
(FR.)

Agalega
Islands
(MAURIS.)

MALAWI

INDIAN
OCEAN

MOZAMBIQUE

MADAGASCAR

ZIMB.

Mozambique
Channel

MAURITIUS

S.
AFR.

Reunion
(FRANCE)

SWAZILAND

Mitsamiouli
Mbeni

**GRANDE
COMORE**

*Grande Comore
(Njazidja)*

N'Tsoudjini

★ **Moroni**

Iconi

Pidjani

Foumbouni

Dembéni

Ouani

Mutsamudu

ANJOUAN

Hoani

reefs

Sima

Miringoni

Fomboni

MOHÉLI

*Anjouan
(Nzwani)*

Domoni

Nioumachoua

Wanani

Moya

M'Rémani

*Mohéli
(Mwali)*

M'Ramani

Chissioi
M'Zamboro

reefs

reefs

Acoua

Mamoudzou

Ile
Pamanzi

☆ **Dzaoudzi**

Sada

Sisoa
Bouzi

Bandele

*Mozambique
Channel*

reefs

Mayotte
*(administered by FRANCE,
claimed by COMOROS)*

Comoros

★	National capital
MOHÉLI	Administrative unit
◉	Administrative seat
——	Road

*The municipalities of Domoni, Fomboni, Moroni,
and Mutsamudu are incorporated as entities
separate from the administrative units.*

0   10   20 Kilometers
0   10   20 Miles

2

Base 801747 (B00221-2) 10-91
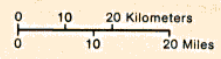
Comoros overview 1

- (Slave) trade stations in a global thoroughfare: long history of foreign influence (Arab, Madegassy, Portuguese, French – and mutual domination of islands' sultanates)

- Mixed heritage Bantu/ Shirazi/ Madegassy…

- Language and culture close to Swahili coast: Islamic, stratified, important local elite families

- Different, if similar, systems of domination on the four islands

Comoros Overview 2

- French colony: Mayotte 1841, Anjouan 1866, Grand Comore et Mohéli 1886

- Plantation economy (Vanille, Ylang-Ylang, Cloves)

- 1904 administrative unification of the four islands

- 1912-1946 administred through Madagascar, Dazaoudzi (Mayotte) as capital from 1946

- 1958 TOM

Independence

- Independence movement since the 1960s
- 1974 referendum on independence: large majority for independence, but on Mayotte, 65% against
- France, against international law, counted the islands' referenda separately.
- Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli as independent country „Comoros", Mayotte remains with France.

1975: Secession from above 1

- French „separatism"/ „irredentism" from above, backed by the local population

- France wanted to keep a base in the Indian Ocean (Suez Crisis, shipping route). Continued military presence.

- Reasons for local support: fears of domination fuelled by relocation of capital to Moroni in 1966; cultural differences (epitomized in women's role); French lobbying

- Against UN GA and OAU regulations; UN GA resolutions against partition of the islands

- Mayotte mentioned as part of the Comoros in Comoros constitution

1975: Secession from above 2

- Today: Mayotte as DOM, integral part of France (and the EU, Schengen area...)
- GDP per head 8 times higher on Mayotte
- LargeFrench subsidies („continuité de la territoire"), better hospitals, schools, roads etc.; high number of French expatriates
- Comoros' citizens need visa to visit (since 1995), cannot sell agricultural products due to EU regulations...
- High illegal migration on small boats; around 500 deaths/ year

Independent Comoros: what state?

- 20 (attempted) coups between 1975 and 2000
- First coup, immediately after independence, organised by mercenary Bob Denard with French involvement. Socialist regime by Ali Soilih. Deteriorating relations to France
- 1978, new Denard coup, Ahmed Abdallah as President. Close to France and South Africa. Presidential guard led by Denard. 1989 Abdallah shot by Denard's guard. Denard brought to France.
- 1995 new coup by Denard, this time for himself. Deposed by France.

Independent Comoros: what state?

- Weak, but important state: dysfunctional institutions, high number of public servants.

- Public goods provided by foreign aid or charity

- State institutions most important employers for elites

- Access to state is an important resource, but organised through societal networks and personal relations

- Everybody talks about the state and politics, even though politics won't change lives

Secessionism from ‚below': 1996

- Mohéli and Anjouan separately declare secession from Comoros and re-attachment to France. French flags raised.

- France, of course, ignores these claims and stresses territorial integrity of postcolonial states

- UN and OAU pressure on Anjouan

- Typical solution: international negotiations, decentralization. New consitution 2001: four presidents, rotating central Presidency

Reasons for secessionist attempts

- Political dominance by Grande Comore
- „Nation" underdefined: cultural similiarities, but no continuous territory, few common working institutions
- Attempt at collective migration to EU
- Most importantly: Elites, under-represented in Union, attempt to create their own resource allocation system
- Secessionism follows the logics of the Comorian state

Decentralization as solution?

- 2001 constitution flawed: does not regulate income allocation between Union and islands. (Reason: Pressure to reach a compromise to end secession.)

- Anjouan and Mohéli continued to raise their own taxes and custom duties – as did the Union.

- In 2003, companies declared they'll stop paying taxes. State became even more dysfunctional.

- Anjouan ruled by former colonel Bacar. Rigged elections 2007, ousted in 2008 by AU troops (from Tanzania, Sudan, Senegal)

AU involvement

- Easy success for AU conflict regulation; probably unnecessary. Secessionism one reason for AU involvement

- 2009: Mayotte voted to become DOM from 2011 (under protests from Comoros); fuels secessionist movements in Anjouan and Mohéli

- New, less decentral constitution in 2009, accepted in contested referendum

- The end to secessionism? Probably not.

General themes 1

- Secession of two thirds of the country – is there a theoretical difference?

- Role of colonial powers in definition of territories: boundaries less important than bases. Layers of geopolitics relating to boundaries.

- State capacity not the same as state importance – crucial for secessionism. Secession easier from weak state, but drive for secession from unimportant state less pronounced.

→ Is there an „optimum" level of state institutionalisation for secessionist attempts?

General themes 2

- International recognition surprisingly unimportant for local elites. A hindering factor (AU intervention), but only after the fact. Central state is too far removed to be captured by local elites, so they look for a closer state to capture, but from a very localised logic.

- Secessionism needs sense of unity *and* sense of disunity. Both is critical and needs to be analysed. In the Comoros case, very few conscious efforts of construction needed. Islands perceived as ‚natural' boundaries, but clearly with long history.

- Trust building not primarily in institutions, but family and other local networks can extend into the state and create trust. These networks do not sufficiently bridge the ocean between the islands to serve as elements of ‚nation formation'. Societal integration is too strong rather than too weak.

- General theme of secessionism debate: state-society interaction/ political integration *on different levels*.

Nota: this is a draft version. Please do not quote or circulate

Secessionism and the moral topography of the African state:

the case of Casamance, south Senegal

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In an influential and inspiring recent volume, political economist Cathy Boone insists that states in Africa, despite their declarations of intent and claims at national unity and homogeneity, have developed in different ways in their various regions, depending on the existing local structures of power[1]. To her, each state is actually comprised of a cluster of different 'local states', i.e. customized versions of the state template. Though secessionism is not a central element in her volume[2], Boone provides an interesting clue to the analysis of separatist movements in Africa and elsewhere: rather than explaining away separatisms as the result of the shock of the irreconcilable essences of societies artificially brought together in states by colonial domination, she points in the direction of the complex histories of the connection between state, market and local societies, of the specific kind of governance that developed as a result of this connection.

But when it comes to the separatist conflict in the Senegalese southern region of Casamance, which is one of the cases she details, Boone sticks to a surprisingly classical explanation. She refers to the centrality of the hierarchical Islamo-Wolof model in Senegalese politics – and to the nature of Casamance, or, more precisely of Lower Casamance, the real area of separatist mobilization: following scholars like Dominique Darbon and Mamadou Diouf, she takes it that, in contrast with the Wolof regions of north Senegal, the acephalous social structure of

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[2] Words like secession and separatism do not appear in the index of Boone's book, and subnationalism comes up only twice in the book, in pages dealing with the case of Casamance.

Lower Casamance did not allow for the development of a well-connected state; the persistent alienation of that region from state and market in turn determined the emergence of Casamançais separatism[3].

But this narrative is called into question by the results of a series of recent research on Casamançais history: in fact, the late colonial state did connect to Lower Casamance through other channels, namely education, migration and state employment. On some counts, one could argue that Lower Casamance has in its own way come much closer to the Senegalese state, colonial and postcolonial, than most other regions in Senegal, including the Islamo-Wolof heartland. The nature of this link, and its subsequent weakening in the late 1970s and early 1980s, are key elements for a proper understanding of Casamançais separatism. Because Boone's focus is exclusively on the political economy of agricultural production (and particularly cash-cropping), she pays little attention to these other connections. Because she focuses on political economy, she equally leaves out the moral dimensions of state-building, its various locally-construed 'moral economies'. And because she focuses on institutional choices, she pays too little attention to the bottom-up dynamics of state-building. Using the case of Lower Casamance as a starting point, the present article thus engages in a broader discussion of Boone's model of state-building, suggesting the need for a widening of the scope of investigation on state-society relations: the inspiring approach that Boone suggests would gain a lot if it could include non-agricultural aspects of the political economy of state-building in West Africa, the bottom-up dynamics of state-building as well as its moral dimensions, all dimensions that are present in an earlier, influential take on state-formation, that suggested by John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman in their classic *Unhappy Valley*.

After a brief presentation of both the model offered by Boone and her take on the Casamance case, this paper will review the evidence and interpretation she gives of that latter case. An alternative account of the case will then be suggested, which points to a number of ways in which her broader theoretical stand could be usefully revised.

Boone's topographic model and the case of Lower Casamance

Boone takes up the challenge of the analysis of the African state where Jeff Herbst left it in his celebrated volume, *States and Power in Africa*[4]: where Herbst looked lengthily into the

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[3] Dominique Darbon, *L'administration et le paysan en Casamance* (Pédone, Paris, 1988); Mamadou Diouf, 'Sénégal: la négritude n'est plus ce qu'elle était', *Autrement* 72 (1994), pp. 129-138.
[4] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000).

physical topography of the African states, the size and shape of nation-states, their physical infrastructure and demographic distribution, Boone examines their *political* topography. How does she proceed? Combining a fantastic wealth of secondary sources, she investigates the dynamics of state building in several rural areas, comparing between themselves a set of regions in three West African countries (Ivory Coast, Ghana and Senegal). She shows that in each country state-building has differed from one region to another: no matter what the official project of a state might be, no matter its formal, established structures and rules, the state is transformed by the various localities in which it is being deployed. A customized local state develops as the rulers adapt the state template to the local context. In Boone's terms, institutional choices meet with established territorial authorities (or their absence), and it is this interaction which results in a specific type of state.

A political economist with an eye for typology, Boone uses two main variables: the nature of the local rural economy/polity on the one hand, and the interaction between regional and state elites on the other. Her model is summarized in two four-square tables. The first (table 2.1, p. 29) describes the local social structure: is there or not a strong social hierarchy? How autonomous are the rural elite from the state? The second (table 2.2, p. 33) describes the rulers' institutional options: rule by rural elites or by state agents, deconcentration or concentration of state institutions. When local social structures meet with rule options, there are basically four main cases: powersharing (a strong rural elite works as a partner for a state which is also very involved); usurpation (the state deploys a dense power network and challenges local elites); non-incorporation (state agents do not seek to exercise authority, and leave it to local leaders); administrative occupation (in the absence of powerful local leaders, state institutions are suspended well above local society and act autonomously). To Boone, Lower Casamance, a society with little local hierarchy with whom the state could ally (or compete with), is a clear-cut case of administrative occupation. Ruling such an 'egalitarian and politically fragmented society' (p. 94) could only be done with tools different from those used elsewhere in Senegal, and particularly in the Murid heartland, a land of strong local hierarchies: there, the state, colonial and postcolonial, established and maintained a close relationship with local elites (and particularly the Muslim marabouts), supporting them strongly while respecting their autonomy. In Lower Casamance, to the contrary, the state exerted a centralised and concentrated rule, but its powerful civil servants remained disconnected from the rural population and unaccountable to them. Because of the 'social structure' (p. 135), the absence of 'rural social hierarchy' (p. 135) and because of Dakar's

state-building strategy (limited state involvement in market-control, little promotion of intermediary institutions), the state-society connection remained weak in Lower Casamance. To Boone, this weak connection explains much of the separatist mobilisation, all the more as, in the absence of hierarchy, 'rural communities were available for mobilization by upstart political entrepreneurs (...) independent of the center's control' (p. 135).

The Lower Casamance evidence and Boone's view

There is undoubtedly a degree of truth behind Boone's Lower Casamance narrative, but her interpretation of the origins of separatism in Casamance is far from complete. Before detailing an alternative account of the political topography of Lower Casamance, I would like to turn to some of the evidence in Boone's Casamance argument. As will be seen, Boone gives too much credit to some of the conclusions of the classical secondary sources she is using, some of which have been questioned by recent research. She does so because she is at pains to fit the case of Lower Casamance in her broader model of state-building, sticking as she does to the classical narrative of Lower Casamançais one-sided difference, exclusion and marginality.

Colonial domination, Jola agency and the development of cash-cropping

As is well-known, since the late XIXth century, the development of groundnut cropping has been a major feature of the strong connection between the state and the *marabouts* of north Senegal. Boone rightly insists that groundnut developed massively and quickly in Lower Casamance too. But in her description of this process, Boone is ambivalent: she describes it essentially as a result of French imposition of taxes, finding in this an additional sign of the historical alienation of the Jola, the main ethnic group of Lower Casamance, from state and market. But she does also make a passing reference to the more nuanced description provided by anthropologist Jos van der Klei (p. 108). Based on his fieldwork among the Jola, van der Klei does mention French fiscal pressures as an element in the rapid growth of groundnut cultivation, but he insists on Jola agency: groundnut was taken up by Jola farmers as a reply to the massive imports of Indochinese rice by the French, which had destroyed the rice-trade which the Jola had been engaging in for centuries in order to acquire cattle and other prestige goods from the neighbouring Mandingo – more than French fiscal pressures, it was the Jola's

desire to sustain their own political economy that drove the young Jola in temporary migrations in the Mandingo-controlled groundnut fields along the Gambia river valley[5]. Jola agency come out even more clearly in Peter Mark's account of the development of groundnut-cropping, and so do another factor, tensions within Jola society itself[6]: for Mark, groundnut cultivation has been just one aspect of a dynamic reshaping of Jola society which the Jola youth labored at, migrating to the groundnut fields of the Gambia and converting to Islam in a step to circumvent their elders. Indeed, groundnut came along with a whole new lifestyle and ethos, as migrants massively converted to Islam, Mandingo-style – in a few decades, gender and family relations, religion and dress codes were all substantially reshaped, a powerful testimony to the Jola's historical agency[7].

The development of groundnut-cropping among the Jola is just one instance of the perennial debate around the agency of the colonial subjects and the autonomy of their agenda, which may have been driven as much by the tensions within their own societies than with their relationship to their broader colonial environment. It is significant that, in this debate, Boone proves more sensitive to domination than to agency, that she should be so willing to downplay the way in which state and market could be put to use by segments of Jola society for their own purpose: it fits in her broad narrative of the radical and persistent alienation of the Jola from state and market.

State development and Jola resistance

It is equally logical that Boone sticks to the long prevailing image of a radically unbalanced interaction between state and society in Lower Casamance. She asserts for instance that, in the absence of local hierarchies available for cooptation by the colonial authorities, the canton chiefs whom the French used to run the rural areas were often foreigners, northern Senegalese migrants, who made state penetration only more complicated (p. 107). Though this idea is an article of faith for many in Casamance[8], it is not supported by the examination of the data available in the French colonial archives: while it is true that in the early years of their

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[5] Jos van der Klei, 'Articulation of modes of production and the beginning of labour migration among the Diola of Senegal', in Wim van Binsbergen and Peter Geschiere (ed.), *Old Modes of Production and Capitalist Encroachment. Anthropological Explorations in Africa* (KPI, London, 1985).
[6] Peter Mark, 'Urban Migration, Cash Cropping, and Calamity: The Spread of Islam among the Diola of Boulouf (Senegal), 1900-1940', *African Studies Review* **21**, 2 (1978), p. 1-14.
[7] See Olga Linares, *Power, Prayer and Production: The Jola of Casamance* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992).
[8] In the large-scale effort in soul-searching which the conflict stirred among both separatists and Senegalese 'loyalists', the few early spectacular cases of allochthonous chiefs were given undue explanatory status as antecedents of a supposedly persistent trend of northern domination (for the separatists) or as evidence of French misrule (for those Senegalese 'loyalists' who are seeking to pass the blame on).

deployment in Lower Casamance, the French did use a number of northerners, this policy quickly showed its limits, and was soon abandoned. The biggest critic was William Ponty himself, governor general of French West Africa from 1908 to 1915, who developed the principles of 'politiques des races', according to which chiefs had to be drawn from the populations they were supposed to rule[9]. And indeed, for most of the colonial period, the French *administrateurs* in Casamance paid much attention to the autochthony of their nominees – to take but one example, in 1922, when he proposed to the governor of Senegal new chiefs for two Jola cantons, the *administrateur supérieur* of Casamance felt obliged to mention that they were 'Diola of pure race, belonging from their ancestors to each of the mentioned groupings, where they enjoy the esteem of the population'[10]. In fact, during the colonial period indeed, the quasi-totality of canton chiefs among the Jola were actually Jola[11]. Boone also buys uncritically into the narrative of resistance that some authors have weaved and that has been enthusiastically taken up by supporters of Casamançais separatism[12]. She thus presents Aline Sitoé Diatta, a Jola priestess-prophetess of the 1940s, as an anti-French resistance figurehead. In this, she does echo the separatists' official history but she fails to take into account the recent works of a number of scholars who have called into question the idea that her preaching had anti-colonial political content: Aline Sitoé was not involved in anti-French mobilization, but actually concerned herself with the reformation of Jola society and religion; while her discourse made an impact among the Jola partly because it resonated with their own difficulties with the French, Aline Sitoé herself should be distinguished clearly from the 1942 rebellion of the Jola village of Effock against French authority[13].

When it comes to the description of electoral politics that developed in the region after World War II, Boone's narrative is equally problematic in its quest for evidence of Jola alienation and resistance: for instance, when discussing votes at the 1958 referendum which De Gaulle organised on the African territories' entry into the Communauté Franco-Africaine, she claims

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[9] See Alice L. Conklin

[10] In Archives nationales du Sénégal 11D1/147, Lettre de Mr l'Administrateur supérieur à Monsieur le Lieutenant-Gouverneur du Sénégal, Ziguinchor, le 19 avril 1922.

[11] See Vincent Foucher, *Cheated Pilgrims, Education, Migration and the Birth of Separatism in Casamance*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2002, Chap. 2 ; and Philippe Méguelle, *Les difficultés d'implantation de la chefferie coloniale dans les pays diola de Basse Casamance, 1890-1923*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, 2001.

[12] Indeed, this is a tenet of Casamançais separatism, and the ideologue of the MFDC, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, first made his separatists claims public in the course of a celebratory speech on Aline Sitoé he gave in Dakar in 1980.

[13] See Christian Roche, 'Le cercle de Ziguinchor au Sénégal pendant la guerre de 1939-1945', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* **85**, 319 (1998), pp. 87-115; Wilmetta J. Toliver, *Aline Sitoe Diatta: addressing historical silences through Senegalese culture*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Stanford University, 1999; and Robert M. Baum 'Alinesitoué: A Diola Woman Prophet in West Africa', in Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross, *Unspoken Worlds - Women's Religious Lives*, (Wadsworth, Belmont, 2001), pp. 179-195.

that the 'no' vote (i.e. against the Communauté and for immediate independence from France) 'won' (p. 114) in Lower Casamance – further evidence of the 'uncaptured' (p. 111) nature of the region. It is indeed true that the 'no' vote was higher in the region of Casamance than anywhere else in Senegal, but if one is to believe the official results, it was actually far from winning a majority there, as it attracted only around 7 per cent of the votes (against 2 per cent at the national level). The subregional sociology of the vote is particularly interesting: in the Jola heartlands of Oussouye and Bignona, the 'yes' vote amounted to 95 per cent of the expressed votes, only slightly below the national average which stood at 97 per cent. The 'no' was at its biggest in Ziguinchor, the capital city of Casamance, where it attracted 48 per cent of the votes[14]. But many of the (few) urbanites of Ziguinchor were of north Senegalese origin and their 'no' vote was a way to protest the ascent of rural Jola politicians within the ruling party, the Bloc Populaire Sénégalais of president-to-be Léopold Sédar Senghor, which stood for the 'yes'. The 'no' vote can thus in no way be taken as an indication of the dislike of the 'uncaptured' Jola for the Senegalese state or regime – it was largely the opposite of that[15]! Indeed, Senghor had early on forged very strong connections among the Jola elites, and these *did* by and large deliver the rural votes[16]. Beyond this episode, Boone's portrayal of political choices of the postcolonial state is occasionally confusing: if she is indeed right when she mentions the death of the leading Jola politician Emile Badiane in 1972 as a big loss for both Casamance and the state, and the connection between then, Boone gets into a clear case of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' when she describes the position of Casamançais politicians who are taken in stato-national politics as 'removed from Casamance' (p. 120), while those who are not are marginalized...

Finally, in her discussion of the separatist movement itself, Boone insists on describing the rural areas as fonts of mobilisation. While it is true that separatist activists have been keen on pointing out their rural origins and their rooting in tradition, the available evidence actually points in a very different direction: as has been noted in many cases, the prime-movers in identity politics are rarely the mythical peasantry which is placed at the centre of nationalist narratives, and early mobilisers for the MFDC included many first- or second-generation Jola migrants based in Dakar and in Ziguinchor (then a booming city where land disputes were

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[14] Archives ANSOM, Affaires politiques, 3548, Procès-verbal de la Commission des votes pour le référendum sur la Communauté.

[15] See Foucher, *Cheated Pilgrims,* Chap. 3. The "no" vote also attracted some of the younger Jola literati, who were heavily influenced by left-wing radicalism, but they had little impact on the rural Jola vote.

[16] Senghor himself was the former classmate of Pierre-Edouard Diatta, the son of the powerful Jola colonial chief Benjamin Diatta, who became an important figure in his party and cabinets. The fact that Senghor was Catholic, as some key figures of the emerging Jola literati elite like Diatta or Emile Badiane, played a part, too.

indeed particularly acute, pitting the migrant Jola against north Senegalese migrants).
Members of the tiny Jola community in France played a particularly influential part, and the
movement is usually analysed as the result of the alliance between a Jola Catholic priest,
Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, who was the ideologue of the MFDC, and a France-
based Jola migrant and community activist, Mamadou Sané Nkrumah[17].

Rethinking state-building

Overall, when it comes to Lower Casamance and the Jola, Boone accepts a series of debatable
observations made by earlier authors, bypassing the critics and nuances these observations
have attracted since. Saying this, I am not only being picky and playing the part of the
'specialist', the defender of the monograph who criticises the bold comparativist for being
what he/she is. To me, these issues reveal a broader problem with Boone's approach – one
that, I think, could be fixed. Boone indeed sticks to these disputable interpretations of
Casamance history because these allow her to portray the state and market on one side and the
Jola on the other as irreconcilable enemies, and Lower Casamance as an 'uncaptured' region.
Boone thus gets a nice fit in her effort at producing a typology of state-building in Africa, but
at a significant empirical cost.

Why is this depiction of a structural enmity and alien-ness not satisfactory? The discussion
above already indicates some of the answers: because the relation between Lower Casamance
and the state has been more complicated and richer than Boone's account describes. And also
because this account does leave some important questions open: if the situation was so
structurally unsatisfying for the Jola, how come there was no separatist mobilization in the
1960s and 1970s? How come separatism broke out only in the 1980s? How come, too, the
separatist struggle never went really awry, and turned quickly into extremely low intensity
warfare, as if many Jola still had a stake in Senegal? For an answer to these questions, one has
to acknowledge the inaccuracy of Boone's depiction of the construction of what she calls the
'local state' in Lower Casamance.

Aiming for a more accurate account, we can gain from reading Boone's text with an eye for
Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale's classic book on Kenya, *Unhappy Valley*. When they were
writing the texts that form part of this book, Berman and Lonsdale were not in the business of
drawing a typology of state-formation in Kenya, let alone in Africa. Still, they have been
suggesting a number of notions which are helpful in approaching state-building in Africa.

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[17] See Foucher, *Cheated Pilgrims,* Chap. 6.

Particularly relevant is a distinction they suggest between 'state formation'('an unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups whose self-serving actions and trade-offs constitute the vulgarization of power') and 'state construction' ('a conscious effort to create an instrument of control')[18]. It is clear here that they tread a ground which is close to Boone's: after all, both approaches point out that the official formal state template is substantially transformed and modified when it is actually implemented. Still, Berman and Lonsdale's take has different emphases from Boone's. First, while Boone asserts forcefully that the political economy of cahs-cropping is the best point of observation (p. 318), Berman and Lonsdale do not circumscribe so tightly their approach. Second, in their depiction of Kenyan politics, beyond the actuality of material exchanges, Berman and Lonsdale insist on what they call the 'moral economy', values and beliefs, the sense of rights and entitlements – to them, this is clearly a part in what they call the 'vulgarization' of power. Boone, on her part, seems to give a lot more importance to what one could call the 'material economy' of state-building, to the state's capacity to incorporate and accomodate local players through patronage and delivery of services. A third (related) difference in emphasis must be noted too: while Boone tends to emphasize institutional decisions taken by the rulers, colonial and postcolonial, Berman and Lonsdale grant greater (though by no means absolute !) importance to choices from below; the process is thus much less dependent on the rulers' 'conscious' options, and has a lot more to do with the discrete, 'unconscious' balances which are unceasingly worked out locally. Taking from Berman and Lonsdale their cue that state-building is a complex, multi-level affair, I now propose to reexamine the history of state-building in Lower Casamance, which explains a lot about the birth, nature, and current failure of secessionism.

Re-thinking the political topography of Lower Casamance

Before going to Lower Casamance, it is worth taking a *détour* by the Islamo-Wolof model, Lower Casamance's structural opposite in Boone's typology of versions of the state in Senegal, and discussing the *marabouts*, the north Senegalese Sufi religious leaders. The accommodation between the *marabouts* and the colonial and postcolonial state is at the centre of a massive historiographical production. This accommodation, Donal Cruise O'Brien

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[18] Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley. Conflict in Kenya and Africa (*James Currey, Porsmouth, 1992), p. 5.

suggested, has led to the formation of a kind of 'Senegalese social compact', a complex system of exchange and interaction between the Wolof peasantry, the *marabouts* and the state. Under this system, the state was made to a certain degree accountable to the peasantry[19]. The centrality, visibility and weight of the *marabouts* is often so big in Senegal that the historiography of Senegal tends to be conflated with the historiography of the *marabouts*. But from this centrality, one should not rush to conclude that since there were no marabouts (or, more exactly, since marabouts were never in a position to act as brokers between the state and the peasantry) in Lower Casamance, the state never developed roots and links there. Indeed, it is my understanding that a version of the Senegalese social compact developed in Lower Casamance, among the Jola. It was very different from the alliance of state and *marabouts* around groundnut, much less centralised, and not related to cash-cropping, but it has been equally central in shaping local state-building. I shall now discuss how this compact came about, its functioning and its unravelling in the 1970s.

The best place to start is possibly a figure: Lower Casamance stands out from the rest of Senegal not only as a result of her geography or her supposedly more traditional character. It has been, for the past fifty years, the region with the highest primary education level in Senegal. In 1990-1991, the rate of primary education reached the intriguing figure of 101 per cent in the region of Ziguinchor, ahead of the region of Dakar itself (96.6 per cent in the same year) - on the same year, the other half of Casamance, the region of Kolda, had one of the lowest rates in Senegal, 42 per cent only[20]. Catherine Boone is well aware of the Jola educational specificity – she does mention it twice (p. 99 and 136), and she also makes a passing reference to the role of the numerous schoolteachers in the development of local cooperatives in Lower Casamance (p. 130). But she does not seem to draw bigger conclusions from this fact. My own argument is thus twofold: the late colonial and postcolonial state did develop strong roots in Lower Casamance, through education, migration and state employment, and the nature of this link, and its subsequent weakening in the late 1970s and early 1980s, are key elements in the analysis of Casamançais separatism.

Building the local state in Lower Casamance: the part of the évolués

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[19] See Donal Cruise O'Brien, *Saints and politicians. Essays in the organisation of Senegalese peasant society* (Cambridge University Press, London, 1975). Cruise O'Brien argues that the marabouts did act in the defence of the interests of the peasantry in front of the state, acting as a *de facto* trade-union.
[20] See République du Sénégal. Ministère de l'Education nationale. Direction de la Planification et de la Réforme de l'Education, *État de l'Éducation de Base au Sénégal: Indicateurs 1995* (Dakar, 1995), p. 20.

The history of education in Lower Casamance is now better known[21]. Perhaps a quote from an interview with Solomon Sagna, a Jola policeman in Dakar, reflecting on his village's contact with education, sums it up best: 'It is above all the missionaries who did it. People did not want to send their children, for there were the cattle to look after. But as time went by, there was the success of the children, intellectuals were trained. In a village, when there is an intellectual, small children will follow. That's how people saw the success of education: 'I want my child to be like the other, who has already succeeded in school'[22].' As Solomon Sagna makes clear, education owed much to the Catholic missionaries. Because Islam was by and large absent from that portion of Casamance when it came into the French fold, Catholic missionaries based in northern Senegal were excited with this opportunity to gain converts – in the north, where Islam was already strong and benefited from the sympathy of the French authorities, their attempts had borne little fruit. Missionaries were thus prime movers in developing schools throughout the region, and they did not shy from operating in rural areas. In a context where trade in Lower Casamance had historically been controlled by allochthonous networks of traders working for companies based in north Senegal, many of the young Jola men were quick to measure the opportunities which education offered, and even though their level of education was often limited as a result of them attending rural schools (they rarely went beyond the *Certificat d'études primaires*), they made very well after 1945, during the economic boom stimulated by the late colonial state: from the late 1940s to the 1960s, the civil service grew rapidly, and the Jola flocked in its lower ranks, taking up positions as drivers, policemen, clerks, nurses or schoolteachers throughout Senegal… As pressures increased for wage equality between Africans and Metropolitan French civil servants, even the lowest ranks of the post-World War II civil service proved a good bet. The educated Jola young men, the so-called *évolués*, thus became major players in Lower Casamance, transforming local culture with such innovations as ballroom-dancing, football, theatre and European-style dress. They also engaged in what were becoming 'development' and 'politics' – setting up evening classes for their younger brothers, taking up the fight against female genital mutilation[23], opposing the arbitrary rule of the canton chiefs and the racialism of the colonial state, forming associations to build schools, health centers and even kindergartens. Significantly enough, under the influence of the *évolués* and the health centers,

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[21] See Foucher, *Cheated Pilgrims*, Chap. 2; Céline Labrune-Badiane, *Processus de scolarisation en Casamance (Sénégal) : Rythmes et logiques (1860-1960)*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Université Paris VII, Paris, 2008.
[22] Interview with Salamon Sagna (pseud.), Dakar-Yarakh, 1er août 1999.
[23] FGM had developed among the Islamized Jola only a generation earlier, as the *évolués'* fathers and mothers had gone to the Gambian groundnut fields where they had converted to the Mandingo kind of Islam, of which FGM is a part.

Lower Casamance went through a particularly quick demographic transition, with infantile mortality collapsing in a few decades[24]. The 1950s and 1960s were years for school-building in Lower Casamance, and if communities started to build a school on their own, the state was more or less due to send support and despatch schoolteachers[25]. Schools were opened in villages that had none, and in those endowed with Catholic schools, state schools, which offered cheaper education, soon took over. In the late 1950s and early 1960s already, schools were so big in Lower Casamance that they had become an element in the competition between villages and a key resource in pork-barrel politics – the opposition could thus accuse the state of withdrawing school projects from villages that did not vote for the ruling party[26].

Partly under the influence and with the help of the Jola *évolués*, Jola society became growingly involved in migration, both temporary and permanent, to cities in northern Senegal, where education could be gained (the Jola were keen on night courses and private education !) and valorized. The migrations of the Jola and their engagement with the cities have now been well documented by anthropologists, and these play a key part in the reproduction of Jola communities, to the point that one specialist, Michael Lambert, has described them as 'multilocal'[27]. There are indeed now very few Jola who have not spent part of their life working in north Senegal – the men that are lucky as civil servants, the less lucky ones as stevedores or watchmen, and the women as maids. Those older or less lucky Jola who stay in the villages complain that their localities are now 'dead'[28], but it is clear to everyone that staying behind is for idiots – migration has become a norm, as is clear from this interview

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[24] Gilles Pison, 'Demain les hommes ? La révolution sanitaire en Casamance', in François-Georges Barbier-Wiesser (ed), *Comprendre la Casamance. Chronique d'une intégration contrastée* (Karthala, Paris, 1994), pp. 299-319.

[25] For an example of a request by Jola villagers to the French administration, see Archives Nationales du Sénégal 11 D1 180, Lettre adressée le 9 décembre 1957 par des représentants de trois villages de la subdivision de Bignona, Bouregue, Mendouare et Boutolatta-Caramba à l'administrateur, chef de subdivision de Bignona. The letter was copied to Emile Badiane, one of the Jola representatives at the Senegalese legislative body, the Assemblée territoriale, who was expected to act in support.

[26] See Archives Nationales du Sénégal 11 D1 180, Lettre adressée par Doudou Mohamed Sarr, secrétaire-général du PRA-S à Bignona, le 13 janvier 1959 à Monsieur l'administrateur, chef de subdivision de Bignona.

[27] Michael Lambert, *Longing for Exile: Migration and the Making of a Translocal Community in Senegal, West Africa* (Heinemann, Portsmouth, 2002). From the rich literature on Jola migration, see for instance Klaas De Jonge *et alia, Les migrations en Basse Casamance (Sénégal). projet d'une recherche multidisciplinaire sur les facteurs socio-économiques favorisant la migration en Basse Casamance et sur ses conséquences pour les lieux d'origine (*Afrika-Studiecentrum, Leiden, 1978) ; Alice Hamer, 'Diola women and migration: a case study' in Lucy Gallistel Colvin, *The Uprooted of Western Sahel* (Praeger, New York, 1981), pp. 183-203 ; Marie-Christine Cormier, 'Les jeunes Diola face à l'exode rural', *Cahiers ORSTOM, série Sciences Humaines* **XXI**, 2-3 (1985), pp. 267-273 ; Olga F. Linares, 'Going to the City . . . and Coming Back? Turnaround Migration among the Jola of Senegal', *Africa* **73**, 1 (2003), pp. 113-132.

[28] Linares, 'Going to the City…', p. 121.

with a villager from the old generation: 'To see the youth in the village, it is a bit rare. If they are seen here, people will say "he has refused to go and look for work"'[29].

This makes Boone's exclusive focus on the political economy of cash-cropping all the more problematic: the political economy and politics of education, civil service employment and urban migration have long been just as important, if not more important for Jola societies than groundnut. A Jola version of the Senegalese social compact was thus built following World War II, a version that brought state and society in close contact – one could actually argue that the Jola have in many ways gone much closer to the state than any other groups in Senegal, dependent as they have grown on state services and employment. To get back to the contrasts between Boone on the one hand and Berman and Lonsdale on the other, one should note that this Jola form of the state developed much less as a result of conscious choices from above, a grand plan by the Governor of Senegal or President Senghor, than from the coalescence of a myriad decisions and actions by Catholic missionaries and the Jola population, the young men who took up school so enthusiastically, the *évolués* and local politicians who canvassed the government for schools and schoolteachers. Eventually, this had broader implications on politics and policies, when for instance Emile Badiane, a leading Jola *évolué,* was Senghor's Minister for Vocational Training (indeed a strategic ministry for the young Jola literati!) from 1960 to 1970, but there is little doubt that the impulse for the peculiar form of connection that developed between state and society in Lower Casamance came by and large from below. Though the early phase of Lower Casamance's colonial history might possibly be characterised as 'administrative occupation', this description is clearly not applicable to the late colonial period – I follow here Frederick Cooper in pointing to the importance of the late colonial period as a key moment of change: coloniality cannot be reduced to the primal scene of early colonialism[30]. It was in that time that Lower Casamance got close to the state, in its own peculiar way. And precisely because it got so close, the region was devastated by the crisis which the Senegalese state went through in the late 1970s. Some of the aspiring Jola literati went on a eager search for a re-building of the state – the idea of Casamançais difference was very good for that.

The break-up of the Lower Casamance compact

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[29] Interview with Etienne Sagna (pseudo.), Bafican, mars 1999.

[30] In Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005), p. 51-52. Cooper's critique is addressed to Mahmood Mamdani and Crawford Young but is largely applicable to Boone.

The break-up came in the late 1970s, the result of a combination of structural and conjonctural forces: while the number of educated men kept growing in Senegal (and particularly in Lower Casamance, where both demographic growth and the development of education were sustained), there was a limit to the possible growth of the civil service. This was all the truer as the Senegalese state progressively entered into budgetary crisis, and actually ceased to recruit civil servants, especially at the rather . The school system too was victim to these budgetary troubles and the quality, intensity and gratuity of primary education were all called into question.

The separatist movement was born from this situation: young men, connected by their educational 'pilgrimages' (*à la* Benedict Anderson) in direction of Dakar and the Senegalese state, on a quest for 'development' and a state that would fulfill its obligations, were suddenly robbed of their hopes. The words and trajectory of Paul Tamba, a sympathiser of the separatist movement are telling of the experience of the young Jola *évolués*. A holder of the *brevet de fin d'études moyennes,* he came to Dakar in 1980 to take the state examinations but failed and was forced back to the village: 'I took the exams for customs officers, for nurses, for schoolteachers. But it did not work out. The northerners, they always manage to put their own kin. In the offices, you see people who do not even know how to write. As for us, we do not have kin, so nobody can help[31].' In less violent tones, Soulèye Sambou tells a rather similar story, that of an unfair competition : 'It was my headmaster who told me to come to Dakar. He was very fond of me, and he wanted me to become a schoolteacher. But here, it is so difficult. Even if you are a good student, hard-working, [if] you do not have the means, you do not stand a chance. And there are no scholarships. (...) For the people of Dakar, it is easy, they live there. But as for ourselves, even the best fail [32].' In narratives of separatist militants, stories of failed educational pursuits are recurrent: young Jola going to private schools or to Dakar to study, and forced back to the village for want of scholarships or family support; the failure to secure formal sector jobs interpreted as the result of maneuvers by privileged northerners… Because a whole society had turned to betting on school and state in the 1950s, a whole society stood to lose – it is no surprise that one of the chief ideologists of the movement, a Catholic priest, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, was also a noted pedagogue and a tutor and lodger for many aspiring Jola students…

At this turn indeed, my sense is that something is to be gained from the moral dimension (the 'moral economy') which Berman and Lonsdale include in their discussion of state-building in

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[31] Interview with Paul Tamba (alias), Thiaroye, October 1998.
[32] Interview with Soulèye Sambou (alias), Bignona, May 1996.

Kenya, which is absent from Boone's model. Indeed, in the late 1970s, the very moral economy of postcolonial Jola society, the sense of entitlement of the young Jola literati – and their pedagogues and the families which had invested so heavily in their future – were brutally called into question by the sudden 'treason' of the Senegalese state; in turn, they took to questioning their very belonging to the Senegalese nation. No doubt they had material at hand to help them to do so, the geographical oddity of the region, almost cut from the main body of Senegal, its (partial) ethnic difference, the aggressive influx of northerners with strong connections in state and politics and the land disputes in Ziguinchor – the idea of a Casamançais difference so strong that it should translate into politics had indeed been hanging in the air for some time already[33], but it had not been appropriated by the Jola literati. The fact that they chose to question the Senegalese state in a very statocentric way, by developing their own state-project, is revealing of their trajectory.

Thus, because of the moral topography of the state in Lower Casamance, the very peculiar ways in which it has been construed since the colonial era, the Jola were thus endowed with a political capacity, a sense of unity born out of their common educational pilgrimages, a strong sense of what a nation and a state should be like and a very big grudge. It was only logical that some of them at least would take to questioning the state. Surely, Boone is right when she insists that the relative weakness of Jola elites played a part in the development of violent separatism: they were less well placed to influence the state and to mitigate and mediate between the state and the population. But the birth of the separatist movement itself cannot be properly understood without reference to how its social basis and ideas came about.

The resilience and weakness of Casamançais separatism

This peculiar moral topography is also key to a proper understanding of Casamançais separatism as it has developed since the 1980s, and particularly of two of its (somewhat paradoxical) traits: its duration and the low intensity nature of the conflict, the resilience and the weakness of the MFDC.

Indeed, one cannot but wonder about the resilience of the MFDC in the face of the Senegalese state, a state that never quite 'collapsed' as other African states did in conflict situations. Against unfavourable military odds and despite Dakar's willingness to extend its benevolent clientelistic hand to the separatists, not all of them have given in, and sympathy for the separatist project persists both among the civilian population. After years of inconclusive

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[33] See Séverine Awenengo Dalberto, *Les Joola, la Casamance et l'Etat (1890-2004). L'identisation joola au Sénégal*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Paris, Université Paris 7 - Denis Diderot, 2005.

struggle, and while a military victory has ceased to be imaginable, there still are radical guerrilla groups in the Casamançais bush – for some years already, they have done little else than defend their patch of bush and maraud along the tarmac roads, but they still are there. Many elements account for this persistence, but one of them is clearly the strength of the moral outrage which a number of Jola feel, as well as the strength of their nationalism, an ideology steeped into their scholastic experience: controversies over maps and the precolonial and colonial past as well as the celebration of Casamançais historical figures are all key elements in this nationalist passion which many MFDC supporters still demonstrate, and meeting with them not infrequently leads to several hours of passionate political, legal, historical and ethnographical discussion. The strength of this political commitment can simply not be accounted for within a pure political economy model.

At the same time, while a nucleus of militant separatists has maintained, the movement has been progressively forced to tune down – how come, if Lower Casamance was only ever under 'administrative occupation', as Boone has it, the region did not rise up in arms against the Senegalese state ? Here again, many elements should be mentioned, from Dakar's military upper-hand and willingness to 'negotiate' to the movement's failure to develop a solid economic basis and command structure, but one of the key factors lies in the fact that the relationship between Lower Casamance and Senegal, though it did degrade in the 1970s and 1980s, has never died away: almost all Jola children still get some education in Senegalese schools in the hope of making it to some city *lycée*, most Jola adults still make it to Dakar at some point in their lives, and enough of them make something out of this connection to Senegal for the separatist project to remain weak[34]. This is all the truer as the economic situation in Senegal in general, and the capacity of the Senegalese state to deliver services in particular, have improved notably since 2000 and the political turnover that brought Abdoulaye Wade to power: the regime's governance record has not been particularly encouraging, but a lot of money has been coming in over the past decade, from both donors and international migrants, and the Senegalese administrative structure has revived in various ways[35].

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[34] Interestingly, pro-MFDC Jola refugees in both the English-speaking Gambia and Portuguese-speaking Guinea Bissau have been extremely keen on maintaining access to Senegal's French-language school education; over the recent years, the Senegalese state has been using schools to try and reinscribe the pro-MFDC civilians and their children into the Senegalese fold.

[35] See Tarik Dahou and Vincent Foucher, 'Senegal since 2000: rebuilding state hegemony in a global age', in Raufu Mustafa and Lindsay Whitfield (ed), *Turning Points in African Democracy* (James Currey, Oxford, 2009), pp. 13-30.

Conclusion

In *Political Topographies of the African State*, Catherine Boone aims to develop a model of state-society interaction which goes beyond the generalisations about the 'African peasantry' or 'decentralised despotism', trying to distinguish between main types of state-society interaction. This model is undoubtedly a very helpful one in the analysis of secessionisms in contemporary Africa, but its narrow focus on agricultural political economy does weaken its explanatory power. As Boone points out, all models leave out data in order to typify (p. 321) – if they did not, they would not be models, and would be about as useful as a scale 1 map. But my sense is that, because of her exclusive focus on cash-cropping and political economy, Boone may have left out some essential variables of state-society interactions. In the case of Lower Casamance these variables are school education, urban migration and civil service employment. But state-society interactions should not be analysed only in terms of political economy – they must also be approached through their moral economy, the ethics and lifestyles which they are entangled with, the sense of identity and entitlement that emerges from these social dynamics.

In Lower Casamance at least, these aspects have been a lot more important than cash-cropping which has been, as Boone rightly notes, left by and large to market forces – and the peasants' own efforts. As a provider of education and employment, the late colonial and the early postcolonial state developed and maintained strong roots among the Jola – in a certain way, the Jola did come much closer to the Senegalese state than many other groups in Senegal. In fact, as was seen above, they came too close for their own good, and lost a lot more than any other segment of the Senegalese population when the state was eventually unable to deliver the goods – it is from this paradoxical proximity to the state that Casamançais separatism results.

Secessionism in Nigeria

The proclamation of Biafra by Igbo politicians in May 1967 was the only consequent attempt at secession. Nigeria's government fought a 30-month war, with about a million dead, to defeat Biafra's army and regain control of its Eastern Region. However, the Igbo were not the only people who had wanted to leave the federation. In the 1950s, when the colonial administration and representatives of the African population negotiated the political structure of a future, independent Nigeria, Hausa-Fulani politicians repeatedly threatened to secede taking the whole Northern region with them. Colonial officers were much concerned that Nigeria might break apart before reaching independence, so they made substantial concessions to the Hausa-Fulani leaders. The Northern Region, dominated by Hausa-Fulani, comprised 79 percent of Nigeria's territory and 55 percent of its population,[1] but in terms of economic development and western education, the North lagged far behind. Thus its leaders feared that an independent Nigeria would be dominated by Southerners. In order to preserve Hausa-Fulani hegemony in the North, they insisted on far reaching autonomy for their Region.

Representatives of the Yoruba, the dominant group in the Western Region, also fought for autonomy and threatened to secede. However, they did not call for Regional but for ethnic autonomy. Yoruba leaders were ready to dissolve the Regions and pursue self-determination within the confines of Yorubaland. The demand for ethnic autonomy was also popular among ethnic minorities, who resented the compelling influence of Nigeria's three big ethnic nationalities. However, they did not consider secession, because most of Nigeria's 500 ethno-linguistic groups were simply too small and disunited to form states of their own. Instead they called for additional regions or states within the federation to give them protection from the Big Three.

The Igbo were the only people whose political elite in the 1950s and early 1960s favoured a unitary state with a strong central government. With the beginning of colonial rule, many Igbo had left their densely populated home territory in the Eastern Region and migrated to all parts of the country, as traders, artisans and government employees. Thus the Igbo had a strong interest in the continued existence of Nigeria and in a powerful central authority that would guard their diaspora against

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[1] According to the census of 1952/53, whose results were later disputed by Southern politicians. Its main results are reprinted in Coleman 1986: 15.

discrimination by the indigenous population of the North and West. Their attitude towards Nigeria changed dramatically in 1966, when thousands of Igbo were killed in the North and about a million fled back to their traditional settlement area. In this moment of crisis, after a military coup in January 1966 and a counter-coup in July, all major groups prepared for secession. Rival sections of the military and the political class tried to negotiate a compromise; in the end the Igbo stood alone against a broad alliance of Northerners and Westerners, and with little support from the neighbouring ethnic minorities in the Eastern Region.

With the defeat of Biafra in 1970, separatist agitation ended. It only re-emerged in the 1990s, first among the Yoruba, who rose against military rule, after General Babangida, a Northerner, had annulled the presidential elections of 1993, which a Yoruba candidate had won. Repeated protests against the annulment, coupled with the threat to secede, had some success, because in 1999, when military rule ended, a Yoruba politician was made president. This power shift, in turn, led to separatist trends in the other two major groups. Among the Igbo, the secessionist Movement for the Actualisation of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) became the most popular political organisation. Igbo governors and other establishment figures distanced themselves from the new Biafra project, yet they tried to use the radicalism of their 'youth' to put pressure on the central government. In the Muslim North, resentment of the Nigerian federation was expressed primarily in religious terms. The introduction of strict Islamic laws in twelve states of the far North was a sign that the local Muslim population wanted to determine their social and political life on their own, without interference from Southerners who are mostly Christian. Since precolonial times, religion has been the main force to create unity among the Hausa, Fulani, Nupe and other Islamic groups in the region. However, the Hausa-Fulani elites and their Northern allies have more ambitious aims than pursuing religious unity and self-determination. They regard the whole of the former Northern Region as their sphere of influence, including the Middle Belt, a vast stretch of land between the North and South, populated by hundreds of ethnic groups, many of whom are largely Christian. Since the 1950s separatism has followed a clear pattern. In the South and in the Christian parts of the Middle Belt, calls for autonomy or secession have been based on the idea of ethnic self-determination. In the Muslim North, Hausa-Fulani politicians have rejected the right of ethnic self-determination because they have "transregional

aims and interests based on both precolonial history and religious culture".[2] In order to explain how these rival models of secessionism developed, I will look at the diverse historical experiences in the North and the South, starting with precolonial times. But before, I will summarise what the academic literature has said about Nigeria's centrifugal tendencies.

Managing Diversity

At independence in 1960, Nigeria was described by European observers as a country that had undergone a smooth transition to African rule and that had elected a moderate, pro-western government. For some observers, it was "the most promising hope for democracy on the African continent".[3] When the First Republic collapsed in 1966, the focus shifted and analysts sought to explain the forces that were tearing the country apart. In the main, three reasons for Nigeria's instability were given: the "extreme cultural diversity"[4] of its population (1), British constitutional engineering which deepened ethnic cleavages (2), the manipulation of ethno-regional identities by the political elite (3).

1. The "enormous cultural distance between North and South"[5] has often been seen as a handicap for Nigeria's unity. In precolonial times, large parts of the North were dominated by Islamic emirates, with an aristocracy of ethnic Fulani who ruled over a largely Hausa population. To western analysts, the emirates appeared despotic, theocratic and hostile to dissent[6] – the very opposite to the political culture of the South. Southerners like the Igbo, with their ancient village republics, seemed to have a natural affinity to democracy. Their egalitarian, individualist and achievement-oriented ethos made them predisposed to embrace western modernity.[7] The assumption that political attitudes in the North and South are too divergent has been shared by many political actors in Nigeria. Dr Frederick Fasehun, leader of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the main self-determination group in Yorubaland, declared: "Nigeria cannot become a nation" because the "conservative, sectarian

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[2] Sklar 2004: 43.
[3] Diamond 1988: 2.
[4] Joseph 1999: 362.
[5] Diamond 1988: 48.
[6] Coleman 1986: 33, 357; Diamond 1988: 34, 66–71; Whitaker 1970: 262, 268, 305.
[7] Ottenberg 2006 [1959]: 179; Diamond 1988: 68–69; Lloyd 1970: 3; Spalding 2000: 67.

pan-Arabist North" is "culturally irreconcilable" with the "Westernized, secular South".[8]

2. Ethnic groups like the Igbo and many others only emerged in colonial times. The relationship between them was shaped by the British administration whose policy of indirect rule preserved the 'feudal' emirates and shielded them from alien influences, such as Christian missions, western education and electoral politics. Another characteristic of the administrative structure that amplified ethnic differences was the division of the protectorate into three regions, each of them built around a core ethnic group that was numerically strong enough to dominate a periphery of ethnic minorities. In the North, 5.5 million Hausa and 3 million Fulani formed slightly more than half of the population. In the West, 5 million Yoruba formed 80 percent of the population, and in the East, 5.5 million Igbo more than 60 percent.[9] During the transition to independence, this tripartite structure was maintained, and the three regions were given substantial autonomy, with the result that political parties were organised along regional lines, each controlled by one of the main ethnic groups. In this way, regional, ethnic and party cleavages coincided and reinforced each other.[10] Another flaw of the federal structure was the uneven size of its constituent units. The administrative boundaries, which made the Northern Region larger in territory and population than the West and the East together, favoured the Hausa-Fulani elite. Their political party, the Northern Peoples' Congress, was in a better position to gain control of the central government than its rivals.

3. Ethnic differences were politicised by members of the elite seeking to mobilise popular support against their rivals. Since "control of the state was essential to accumulate wealth", Nigeria's fragmented elite desperately fought over access to state offices.[11] This is, of course, true for many African countries, but it seems that in Nigeria distrust between rival sections of the political class was very strong right from the beginning. The nationalist movement against colonial rule was split along ethnic lines already in the 1940s, and its protagonists did not reach a consensus on the type of constitution the country should have at independence. Competition for state power was intensified by the oil boom of the 1970s, when government expenditure rose by

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[8] Fasehun 2002: 2, 3.
[9] Coleman 1986: 15. – In the nineteenth century, the Fulani formed a distinct stratum of conquerors, but most of them gradually adopted the language and often the culture of the numerically dominant Hausa. Thus it has become common to talk of the 'Hausa-Fulani', though on the Jos Plateau and some other areas Hausa and Fulani often prefer to live in separate settlements.
[10] Diamond 1988; Osaghae 1998, Suberu 2001.
[11] Diamond 1988: 38; Nnoli 1980.

more than 3000 percent.[12] In the decades before, agricultural goods had provided the bulk of Nigeria's exports: cocoa grown in the West, palm oil in the East and groundnuts in the North. This regionally produced wealth was gradually replaced by the oil rents which today account for 95 percent of Nigeria's export earnings and 70 percent of all state revenues.[13] With the reorientation of the economy towards oil, all parts of the country came to depend on payments from the 'federation account', fighting desperately for their share: "power is overpriced in Nigeria so that the contest for it becomes a matter of life and death".[14]

Oil has made the political competition more ruthless, yet it has also kept the country together. If the federation broke apart, people in Hausaland would no longer have a claim to the oil wealth that is produced at the south coast, hundreds of kilometer away. Igbo- and Yorubaland are much closer to the oil fields in the Niger Delta, but they too have no appreciable oil deposits of their own. Without the framework of the federation, all groups in Nigeria would lose massively, even the ethnic minorities in the Delta. It is true that the coastal minorities are bitter about the Nigerian state which has 'stolen' their oil wealth, while leaving them with ecological damage and a decaying infrastructure. Nevertheless, they can ill afford pulling out of the federation. Ken Saro-Wiwa, the most prominent campaigner for the Delta minorities who was executed by the military regime in 1995, demanded self-determination for his Ogoni people and, above all, the right to control 'their' land and the natural resources on it, but he did not fight for secession. He suggested that there should be "one Hausa state, one Tiv state, Idoma state, Ijaw state, one Ogoni state",[15] but he wanted these states, which would be very uneven in size, to be balanced and kept in check through a federation. Only the Nigerian government can protect the minorities from a possible hegemony of their Igbo and Yoruba neighbours and from inter-communal conflicts within the Delta population itself.

Perpetual violence in the Niger Delta, as in many other places, demonstrates that Nigeria's federal structure does not work. Nobody feels bound to the present constitution, yet an agreement on a new federal structure is not in sight. Political concepts among Christians and Muslims, North and South, 'settlers' and 'indigenes'

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[12] Herbst 1996: 158.
[13] Economist Intelligence Unit 2007.
[14] Ake 1994: 34.
[15] Saro-Wiwa 1998 [1993]: 356, 357.

are too far apart. Thus Nigeria's continued existence rests on informal arrangements, which are unstable because they are not rooted in common convictions.

Early Secessionism

In precolonial times secessionism was experienced in the context of empires, but these empires were quite diverse. In the northern savannah, the kingdom of Kanem-Bornu, around Lake Chad, and the city states in Hausaland, such as Kano, Katsina and Zaria, emerged at the terminal points of the trans-Saharan trade routes. For a thousand years they were in regular contact with the Islamic world of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Yet they had, until the beginning of British rule, no direct contact with Igboland and some other parts of the south, because trade to the Atlantic coast, through the forested regions of today's Nigeria, was monopolised by local middlemen. For most of their history, the Hausa states had remained independent of each other, locked in bitter disputes over control of the long-distance trade. They were only united when an external force took control. In 1804, Usman dan Fodio, a Fulani preacher, proclaimed a jihad against the 'godless' Hausa kings who tolerated many pagan practices, although they professed Islam. With the support of Fulani pastoralists and parts of the Hausa population, these kings were toppled and replaced by a Fulani aristocracy who established a Caliphate with the capital of Sokoto. The supremacy of the Fulani minority might have been quickly eroded, if they had not directed the aggression generated within the multi-ethnic empire against 'infidels' outside. The armies of the Fulani and their allies proceeded further south into Yorubaland and eastwards into today's Cameroon. In the urban centres of the empire, life was prosperous and secure, while at the periphery the jihadists did not establish firm rule but raided for slaves. In an attempt to escape the slave raids by the Fulani and their Hausa allies, many groups fled to the Jos Plateau, the Muri Mountains and other impassable areas where they preserved their independence throughout the nineteenth century. When British colonialism came, many of them converted to Christianity in order to distance themselves from the advancing Hausa-Fulani culture.

The Caliphate of Sokoto was an alliance of some 40 emirates that recognised the pre-eminence of the Sultan of Sokoto. It was held together by a sense of belonging among its Fulani aristocracy, combined with the claim to spread a pure form of Islam.

Its unity, however, was threatened from the periphery where subjugated people rose to regain their independence and stopped paying tribute. And it was threatened from within, by ambitious emirs who defied the authority of the Sultan. Emirates that broke away disrupted trade routes and raided for slaves among the population of neighbouring emirates. Thus separatism was associated with lawlessness and war.

Empire-building had also a long tradition in the Southwest. In mid-eighteenth century, the Empire of Oyo had subjugated most areas of today's Yorubaland. Its rulers traced their authority to Oduduwa, a legendary king who is seen today as the mythical ancestor of the Yoruba people. However, the Yoruba as a self-conscious group with a common name did not yet exist,[16] so the Oyo Empire could not draw on nationalist sentiments. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was already in decline. The most devastating blow it received was perhaps the secession of Afonja, the provincial ruler of Ilorin, at the northern margin of the empire. In his struggle with Oyo, Afonja called in Fulani jihadists, who raided the imperial capital, but also killed Afonja and incorporated the northern part of Yorubaland into the Caliphate. With the destruction of Old Oyo, at around 1830, waves of refugees fled to the forested regions of the south. The city of Ibadan, founded as a war camp by refugees, emerged as the most powerful successor state, but it was not strong enough to pacify the region. Thus the decades between the fall of Oyo and the beginning of British rule are remembered as a period of "almost constant warfare".[17]

In Igboland, the largest political units were 'towns', i.e. federations of villages that had moved together in defence of their land. In most Igbo-speaking areas, people did not accept living under chiefs or kings, however, life without central authorities was not safer, nor was it democratic. Autonomous towns clashed over land, and even within village federations rival segments were often feuding because they did not submit to the decisions of town councils. Decisions, to be effective, had to be unanimous.[18]

When the British government took possession of the territory between Lagos and Sokoto in 1900, it administered the North and South initially as separate protectorates. With their amalgamation in 1914, customs frontiers were abolished, the railway system was unified, and the currency standardised, but otherwise the Northern and Southern Provinces remained under two distinct bureaucracies: "The only bond of unity […] was the person of Sir Frederick Lugard, the new governor-

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[16] Peel 2000: 26–28.
[17] Falola and Heaton 2008: 77.
[18] Uchendu 1965: 46.

general".[19] In the North, British rule preserved the emirates and their Fulani nobility, and it codified the prevalent legal system, the Sharia. Hausa was retained as language of administration, while English was used in the South. Since the authority of the emirs rested largely on their religious legitimacy, the British were anxious to seal off the emirate areas from Christian-Western influences. For decades, Christian missionaries were not allowed to operate in the emirate regions, so they concentrated their activities on the South and on those 'pagan' areas of the Middle Belt that had not been conquered by the Fulani. Mission work was accompanied by the establishment of schools and hospitals, thus the Christianised areas acquired a lead in Western education. In 1957, only 185,000 children in the North attended primary school; in the South the number stood at 2,343,000.[20] Thanks to their educational advantage, Southerners were in a far better position to gain jobs in the colonial administration and in other parts of the modern sector. Many Igbo, Yoruba and Ibibio found employment in the North, but the British authorities, averse to rapid change, sought to contain the cultural, political and economic impact of the migrants. Southerners in the North were not allowed to buy land; they had to live in segregated areas, and the Sharia laws, enforced by the colonial authorities, did not permit them to marry Muslim women.

The South, though much smaller in size, was split in 1939 into a Western and Eastern Region, with the River Niger as boundary. In the East, among the acephalous Igbo, the system of indirect rule did not work, so the British replaced the 'native administration', based on government-appointed chiefs, with 'modern', democratically elected councils, fashioned on the model of English local governments.[21] The Igbo were more than any other large group "receptive to culture change, and most willing to accept Western ways".[22] Although mission schools had come late (Igboland had only been pacified by the end of World War I), the Igbo pursued Western education so vigorously that they caught up with their main rivals, the Yoruba, in the late 1940s.[23] About the same time, they began to dominate the nationalist movement that was going to replace the colonial government. The controlling position of Nnamdi Azikiwe and other Igbo in the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) prompted a young Yoruba intellectual, Obafemi

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[19] Coleman 1986: 46.
[20] Coleman 1986: 134.
[21] Coleman 1986: 314.
[22] Ottenberg 2006 [1959]: 179.
[23] Coleman 1986: 333.

Awolowo, to form a regional party in 1951, with the explicit aim of mobilising Yoruba voters and gaining control of the West. Awolowo's Action Group, as a defender of ethnic autonomy, wanted the right to secede to be included in the constitution,[24] and it actually threatened with secession when Igbo and Hausa-Fulani politicians rejected a plan to incorporate the federal capital Lagos, traditionally a Yoruba town, into the Western Region.[25]

Anti-colonial parties which sought to take over the state apparatus from the British had emerged among the western-educated elites in Lagos and other Southern cities. They were led by Igbo and Yoruba politicians who paid little attention to the interests of the North, assuming "that the so-called backward north could be manipulated at will".[26] The traditional rulers of the Islamic North only began to organise themselves in a political party, when Nigeria's transition to independence had already set in and they were facing the first election, in 1951. Their Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was a purely regional party, controlled by the emirs and their officials in the 'native administration'.[27] In the early 1950s, the political prospects of the Hausa-Fulani elite looked grim. Executive positions in the state machinery would be filled by an 'educated' elite, and it looked as if European criteria alone would define who was 'educated'. Young Nigerians, who had learned English in the mission schools, now held the key to success, while all forms of Islamic learning had been devalued: "Southerners will take the places of the Europeans in the North. What is there to stop them? […] They have control of the railway stations; of the Post Offices; of Government Hospitals; of the canteens; […] in all the different departments of Government it is the Southerner who has the power".[28]

The Northern Peoples' Congress sought to delay the transition to independence, hoping to improve their competitive position. If Southern hegemony could not be averted, separation looked like a better option. In 1950, when delegates from the North and South met for the first time to discuss constitutional reforms, the Emirs of Zaria and Katsina threatened to lead the whole Northern Region out of Nigeria.[29] In

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[24] Lynn 2001: LXXI.
[25] Nnoli 1980: 160.
[26] Coleman 1986: 352.
[27] The Fulani aristocracy did maintain its control over the party apparatus into the postcolonial era. In 1961, when elections were held for the Northern Region's parliament, 40 percent of the elect were members of royal families, a further 28 percent belonged to other noble families, and only two percent were descendants of slaves, (Whitaker 1970: 322) although slaves had comprised between 25 and 50 percent of the emirates' population (Lovejoy 1986: 240).
[28] The editor of a Hausa weekly, 1950, in Coleman 1986: 362.
[29] Tamuno 1970: 568; Coleman 1986: 362.

1953, after NPC delegates had been abused by the crowd in the streets of Lagos, the Premier of the Northern Region called the creation of Nigeria in 1914 a "mistake", and the Northern House of Assembly passed a motion that called for separation from the South in all matters except defence, external affairs and customs.[30] The British saw a "very real possibility of secession"[31], so they granted the NPC far-reaching concessions, thereby encouraging Northern intransigence: "secession, as so often in these years, was the threat the North was prepared to use to get its way".[32] The NPC had two key demands:

– give the Regions much autonomy, with control over the police and the judiciary,

– maintain the Northern Region as the largest political unit in the federation, with more than half of Nigeria's population and more than half of the seats in the federal parliament.

The British gave in to these demands, against the protests of Christian Middle Belters, whose political party, the United Middle Belt Congress, demanded a separate Region for the minorities in order to break free from Hausa-Fulani hegemony. However, the colonial administration resisted any partitioning of the North. It accepted that NPC leaders sought to maintain the North's numerical advantage as "the sole defence against political and economic domination by the South".[33]

When Northern politicians were given control over the Regional government in 1954, they began to purge their administration of all Southerners. This policy was popular in all parts of the North, including the Middle Belt, because a good number of mission-educated Middle Belters received posts vacated by Southerners. With its Northernisation policy, the NPC acted as champion of an all-inclusive Regional solidarity, true to the party motto: One North: One People irrespective of Religion, Rank or Tribe. After independence, however, when Hausa-Fulani politicians asserted control over the Regional and federal government, they sidelined the minorities and cracked down on opposition parties. Furthermore, in 1963 the Premier of the Northern Region Ahmadu Bello, a direct descendant of Usman dan Fodio, embarked on an Islamisation campaign to consolidate Hausa-Fulani hegemony in the potentially seditious Middle Belt.[34]

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[30] Sklar 1983: 128, 132; Lynn 2001: LXVI.
[31] Lynn 2001: LXVII.
[32] Lynn 2001: LVIII; Njoku 2002: 250.
[33] Sharwood-Smith: Recollections of British Administration, 1969, in Diamond 1988: 29.
[34] Paden 1986: 566–569.

Descent into Civil War

With British help, the Northern Peoples' Congress emerged as the strongest party in the federal elections of 1959, only eight seats short of an absolute majority, yet its leaders were still afraid of losing out. While they negotiated with the Igbo-dominated NCNC to form a coalition government, they also held meetings with representatives of neighbouring Chad in order to be prepared for secession, in case conflicts with the South escalated.[35] With the beginning of independence in 1960, Northerners held barely one percent of all positions in the federal administration,[36] but once in control of the central government they lowered the entry qualifications of the civil service and improved their job opportunities. Together with their Igbo allies, they sought to destroy the main opposition party, Awolowo's Action Group, taking advantage of faction fighting within it. Samuel Akintola, whose faction had lost out against Awolowo, sought help from the central government under Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, who in 1962 placed the Western Region under a state of emergency, arrested Awolowo and imposed Akintola as premier. The Regional elections in 1965 were "fraudulent and brutal confrontations"[37] that disempowered the population in the West. From a Yoruba perspective, Nigeria had turned into a colonial power, and its security forces acted like an "army of occupation".[38] Democracy seemed only possible, if the Yoruba shook off the Hausa-Fulani yoke. Violent protests and a secessionist mood made the Western Region ungovernable. Other parts of the federation remained calm, but the Igbo (and other groups) were disaffected as well. After NPC politicians had installed a docile government in the West, they no longer needed their allies in the East and began to turn against their NCNC coalition partner. In December 1965, the premier of the Eastern Region threatened with secession, and on 15 January 1966 some young army officers (six Igbo and one Yoruba) staged a coup, which was greeted in most places with joy or cautious approval.

The new head of state, however, antagonised large sections of the population when he surrounded himself with Igbo advisers, fuelling suspicions that the coup had

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[35] Lynn 2001: LXXXVI.
[36] Diamond 1988: 27.
[37] Diamond 1988: 41.
[38] Obafemi Awlowo, in St. Jorre 1972: 109.

actually been an Igbo take-over. On 24 May 1966, General Ironsi abolished the Regional structure and decreed a unitary state with a centralised administration. Every observer immediately knew that this would strengthen Igbo influence in the state apparatus. The Northernisation policy, which had benefited the 'indigenous' population in the Northern Region, would be reversed, and 'strangers' from the South would regain control of the local administration. A few days after the announcement of the decree, riots broke out against the Igbo living in the North. Two months later, on July 28, 1966, General Ironsi was killed by Northern officers. The coup plotters, led by Lieutenant Colonel Murtalla Mohammed, had initially aimed for secession. At the army headquarters in Lagos they had hoisted a flag that heralded a Republic of the North. The soldiers, however, were divided. The majority of the rank-and-file, recruited among Christian and 'traditionalist' groups in the Middle Belt, had little interest in joining a Republic of the North. Under the rule of the Northern Peoples' Congress, the minorities had been repressed and marginalised. With the July coup, they suddenly found themselves at the centre of power. Their spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Gowon, a Christian Angas, fought vigorously to preserve the federation. He had the support of the British High Commission and of high-ranking officials in the federal administration, the so-called technocrats. As the dominant faction within the army, Gowon and his Middle Belt followers forged an alliance with Muslim soldiers and politicians from the Far North, yet he pressured them to accept a constitutional change: The federation had to be restructured to give the minorities autonomy. The old Regions, inherited from the colonial regime, were to be replaced by 12 states. Of the six states planned for the North, only three would be dominated by Hausa-Fulani while the others would mainly encompass ethnic minorities. In order to protect these minority states, Gowon insisted that there be a strong federal centre. This set him on a collision course with the military governor of the Eastern Region, where the July coup had not succeeded. Colonel Ojukwu, an Igbo, called for a looser association: a confederation of Regions with their own security forces and with the right to veto decisions at the centre. He argued that Easterners could not trust the army command in Lagos because it had not been able or willing to stop the riots against the Igbo. Between May and October 1966, thousands of Igbo (and some other Easterners) had been killed in the North, and about a million had fled to their home region.

At a conference in Aburi, Ghana, on January 4–5, 1967, Gowon gave in to most of Ojukwu's demands and accepted a confederal solution, but on his return to Lagos he

reneged and insisted that sovereignty must remain with the central government. Yoruba politicians, who had little influence in the army, were reluctant to support Gowon's regime. On May 1, 1967, Awolowo announced that the Western Region would leave the federation in case the East pulled out.[39] Nigeria seemed to be at the verge of collapse. But four weeks later, when Ojukwu declared secession, Awolowo did not follow. Instead he joined Gowon's government and campaigned against Biafra. The rebels, he said, had "committed a crime and must be punished".[40]

Biafra

Part of the 'punishment' was an economic blockade against the East. When federal troops invaded the Region on 6 July 1967, they cut off Biafra from its seaports and stopped the supply of food into the densely populated enclave. Trying to starve the Biafrans into submission, the Gowon regime ruled out any compromise: "This war must be fought to the finish".[41] The Biafran troops were poorly armed and vastly outnumbered. By October 1968, 15 months after the Nigerian invasion, all major cities had been lost and Biafra was reduced to a quarter of its original territory: a stretch of land less than 200 km long and 50 to 100 km wide, in its middle an airstrip where up to 40 planes landed each night, loaded with arms and hunger aid.[42] Biafra's leader Ojukwu had no chance of military victory. When his troops were defeated, in January 1970, about a million people had died,[43] many of them civilians who had been starved to death. Why did Ojukwu not surrender, when the suffering of his people became unbearable? His only hope lay with the international community which had to be swayed by humanitarian considerations to intervene on behalf of the secessionists: "Our aim all along has been to delay the enemy until the world conscience can effectively be aroused against genocide".[44] Biafran propaganda, backed by a public relations firm in Geneva, tried to convince the world that the Igbo

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[39] Kirk-Greene 1971: 415.
[40] Cronje 1972: 116.
[41] Obafemi Awolowo, Vice Chairman of Nigeria's Federal Executive Council, in Cronje 1972: 115.
[42] Harneit-Sievers 1992: 281; St. Jorre 1972: 272; Cronje 1972: 75.
[43] Estimates vary considerably. The only way to obtain reliable figures would have been to take a sample of regions in southeast Nigeria and inquire about the number of casualties. Harneit-Sievers (1992: 285) found in his research area that about ten percent of the population had died as a consequence of the war. If figures in other regions were similar, then the assumption of about one million casualties would be realistic.
[44] Odumegwu Ojukwu (1981: 353), in a speech on September 25, 1968.

were fighting a desperate war of survival against a regime of mass murderers that would annihilate them if they surrendered.[45]

News of the humanitarian catastrophe led to a wave of protests in Europe and North America. Public opinion was largely pro-Biafran, supporting Ojukwu's call for a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement, yet diplomatically Biafra remained almost completely isolated. Western governments and the Soviet Union, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Arab world, all sided with Nigeria. It looked as if Biafra were confronted with an "international conspiracy"[46] that defied all religious and ideological antagonisms. The only open support came from the International Red Cross, Caritas and the World Council of Churches that flew in relief material, and from four African countries: Tanzania, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire and Zambia, that accorded international recognition to Biafra. There was also some covert support: the French government supplied weapons, though only belatedly and not in large enough quantities for the encircled Biafrans to repel the Nigerian army.[47]

Igbo leaders had hoped, when preparing for secession, that the British government would back Biafra, or stay at least neutral.[48] The Igbo were clearly the wronged party, and their government presented itself as a pro-Western, Christian force. Ojukwu did not differ ideologically from his rival Gowon,[49] and he did not give any hint that he was going to harm British business interests. However, the government of Harold Wilson became Nigeria's main supplier of arms, and it played a crucial role in isolating Biafra diplomatically. Although the prime minister was under pressure from his own party, he did not stop or reduce arms supplies, even when the Nigerian air force shot down a Red Cross plane that had defied the blockade to bring food into Biafra.

Today's Igbo nationalists sometimes claim that the British government was involved in the planning of the 1966 anti-Igbo riots and that it pushed the Gowon government into a confrontation. However, archival evidence, found in recently declassified documents, "points to the contrary. The British High Commissioner at the time made spirited efforts to get Gowon to do more to stop the killing of Ibos".[50] After his talks with the Nigerian leadership in August and September 1966, the High Commissioner

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[45] Stremlau 1977: 109–117, 320–321, 328.
[46] Odumegwu Ojukwu, in *The Source* [Lagos], 2 June 1997: 8.
[47] St. Jorre 1972: 211, 214–218, 229; Cronje 1972: 323; Stremlau 1977: 224–233.
[48] St. Jorre 1972: 295.
[49] Stremlau 1977: 41, 112.
[50] Uche 2008: 120.

wrote to London that Gowon refused "to face up to the stark facts of the scale of brutalities in the North, and the extent of the Army's positive responsibilities for them".[51] For British diplomats, this denial was dangerous because the ethnic cleansing of Igbo threatened the unity of Nigeria: "The Northern murderers are certainly making it as difficult as possible for the East to refrain from secession. The disastrous consequences for the Northern economy are brushed aside by even sophisticated Northerners as secondary to the need to make it quite impossible for the Ibos ever again to aspire to play any decisive part in the North".[52]

After Biafra's declaration of independence, Britain adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Anxious not to antagonise the Biafran side which controlled two-thirds of the oil resources, the British government did not interfere when Shell-BP agreed to pay the secessionist republic £ 250,000 as a first instalment of oil revenues, thereby giving a tacit recognition to Ojukwu's government as the de facto owner of the oil fields.[53] The Nigerian side, however, reacted strongly in defence of its sovereignty. Its navy sealed off the Biafran coastline to stop tankers from loading oil. The British High Commission protested the blockade which threatened to have dramatic consequences for Britain's oil supplies.[54] Just a week after the Biafran declaration of independence, the Six-Day War (June 5–10, 1967) between Israel and its Arab neighbours had constricted the flow of oil. The Suez Canal had been closed, and some Arab countries had placed an oil embargo on Britain. In this tense situation, British officials warned the Gowon regime that they would stop the delivery of weapons, which they had been supplying since independence, if the Nigerians did not lift the oil blockade.[55] But Gowon did not give in. His government had already begun negotiations with the Soviet Union over arms supplies, and in August 1967 it received its first consignment of MiG fighter jets. The threat that their most loyal ally in Africa might establish closer links with communist countries raised serious concern in British government circles. The most pressing need, however, was to secure the flow of Nigerian oil which was ten per cent of British oil use.

When the British threw their weight behind the federation, they assumed that the war would be over in a matter of weeks. The federal campaign did indeed make quick progress against the poorly armed Biafrans. In the oil-producing areas at the coast,

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[51] Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce on October 1, 1966, to the Commonwealth Office, in Uche 2008: 120.
[52] Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce on October 1, 1966, to the Commonwealth Office, in Uche 2008: 120.
[53] Uche 2008: 123.
[54] St: Jorre 1972 140.
[55] Uche 2008: 124–126, 131.

the ethnic minorities did not defend the new republic, however, in the core Igbo areas, Nigerian troops met with fierce resistance, which led to a war of attrition. The Biafran government allowed foreign journalists to travel freely through its territory and document the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the food blockade and by air strikes against civilian targets: "markets, hospitals, churches, villages […] were indiscriminately strafed and bombed".[56] Public protests calling for a ceasefire and an arms embargo placed England's Labour government in an embarrassing situation. It had played down the role of oil interests[57] and justified its support for the Gowon regime as a matter of principle, arguing that it was in the best interest of Africans to crush separatist rebellions: If Nigeria fractured along ethnic lines, this would encourage secessionist movements elsewhere in Africa and contribute to the Balkanisation of the entire continent. Given this principled stance which coincided with the position taken by the Organisation of African Union, the British government found it difficult to reverse its policy.

The International Committee of the Red Cross spoke of "the gravest emergency" it had handled since the Second World War.[58] For the first time, dozens of religious and secular aid agencies came together and coordinated their operations. Although the Nigerian government vehemently protested their interference, humanitarian organisations such as Caritas, Oxfam and Médecins sans Frontières insisted that they had a right to intervene on behalf of the suffering civilians, even if it meant breaking international law.[59] However, the food which they flew in was not sufficient to prevent mass starvation. Though their intervention was meant to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, it may have had the opposite effect. It did nothing to solve the conflict but prolonged the war and thus the suffering of the Biafran population.[60]

Military Rule

A few months after the war, Igbo began moving back to the northern and western parts of the country where most of them could reclaim their properties. Today there are probably millions of Igbo living in the North, as there are millions in the West, spread into the remotest villages. The oil boom of the 1970s helped to re-integrate

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[56] St. Jorre 1972: 291 ; Cronje 1972: 111, 120–122.
[57] Uche 2008: 111, 122, 125, 131.
[58] St. Jorre 1972: 209.
[59] Pérouse de Montclos 2009: 70.
[60] Pérouse de Montclos 2009.

them economically, but politically they remained 'second-class citizens'. The federal government had promised at the end of the war that there would be 'no victors, no vanquished'. Nigerians should forget the enmities of the past and make a new start. However, the victors made sure that Igbo did not rise to top positions in the army and that they had little access to political decision making. This was tolerable for a while but became a severe handicap in the 1980s, when communal conflicts intensified and state authorities in the North did not adequately protect the Igbo diaspora.

After General Gowon was toppled in 1975, the new military leadership designed a transition programme to bring the country back to democratic rule. Nigeria's new federal structure, with 12 states created in 1967 and 19 states in 1976, seemed better suited to manage ethnic diversity than the tripolar structure of the First Republic. It defused tensions between the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba, and it better accommodated the ethnic minorities. A constitutional conference in 1977/78 added to this federal structure consociational elements, such as a proportional representation of ethnic groups in the cabinet and other federal institutions, and an electoral system that favoured broad-based, multi-ethnic parties.[61] Political scientists lauded Nigeria's return to civilian rule as "one of the most imaginative and carefully designed transitions ever staged",[62] but when the Second Republic started in 1979, it took a similar turn as the First. The National Party of Nigeria, a kind of successor to the Northern Peoples' Congress, emerged as the strongest force and formed a coalition with the Igbo-dominated Nigerian Peoples Party. The new republic was as short-lived as the old. After four years in office, the government of Shehu Shagari had been so discredited by corruption and election rigging that people celebrated in the streets when the army took over and arrested hundreds of politicians.

The army saw itself as the guardian of Nigerian unity, but it was controlled by Northern officers. They ruled in a more or less tight alliance with the Hausa-Fulani elite who thus managed to dominate Nigerian politics for decades. Moreover, the army leadership, as the supposed guardian of national unity, was torn by faction fighting which reflected ethnic and religious antagonisms. Christian officers from the Middle Belt had retained some influence and played a key role in several coups. Secession was not an option for them, but they found another way of redrawing Nigeria's boundaries. When a group of Middle Belt officers staged a coup in 1990 that nearly succeeded, their leader announced in a broadcast to the nation that five

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[61] Bach 2006: 66–68; Falola and Ihonvbere 1985.
[62] Diamond 1988: 2.

Muslim states in the far North, which they did not want in the federation, would be excised from the Nigeria.

Despite their nationalist rhetoric, the ruling generals did not help negotiating a settlement between rival sections of the country. President Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) and his successor Sani Abacha (1993–1998) designed ambitious transition programmes and promised to place Nigeria's next democracy on a solid basis, but did not honour the rules they proclaimed. They announced and then postponed elections; they allowed for the creation of political parties and then banned them. Thus they destroyed all institutions which could have mediated between competing elite factions and stabilised power-sharing arrangements.[63] After much delay, the presidential election for the Third Republic were finally held on June 12, 1993, but when it became clear that Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba Muslim, had defeated the Northern candidate, General Babangida declared the election void, although it had been largely free and fair. If all civilian politicians had accepted the election results they would have prevented the military regime from aborting the transition to democracy. However, most politicians in the North supported the annulment of the election; even the highest religious authority, the Sultan of Sokoto, collaborated with the military in betraying the victorious candidate, although Abiola was the Vice President for Nigeria's Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs. In the end, the Yoruba stood almost alone in their campaign to have Abiola sworn in as the rightful president. In Lagos and other cities of Yorubaland, the population went on strike, but elsewhere in Nigeria people had little interest in fighting for a Yoruba president.

The strikes and violent protests which paralyzed Yorubaland for weeks proved futile. The federal government remained unimpressed: "killings and economic sabotage caused by the south-west [...] only succeeded in affecting them. Who was killed? Whose houses were destroyed? Whose economy was destroyed? […] We are thankful to them for killing themselves and crippling their economy".[64] Although 60 percent of Nigeria's industrial production was concentrated in the Lagos area, the military rulers in Abuja were not much affected by the strike. The steady flow of oil money insulated them from the fate of their country and produced a cynical attitude.[65] There was nothing Yoruba politicians could appeal to: no commitment to rules of

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[63] Diamond 1995: 461.
[64] Abubakar Buba Galadima, a minister of the Abacha regime, in *TSM. The Sunday Magazine* [Lagos], 4. 12. 1994: 17
[65] Herbst 1996: 164, 158.

fairness and reciprocity, not even the idea of a common good. An overwhelming majority of the Hausa-Fulani elite preferred a military regime, however brutal, to a democratic government headed by a Yoruba president. They supported the Abacha regime till the end, rejecting any accommodation with their rivals in the South. Moshood Abiola, the winner of the elections, was detained without trial and kept in jail until he died under mysterious circumstances in 1998.

The trauma of the annulled election gave rise to a wave of separatism. Why should the Yoruba share a polity with people who excluded them from ruling it? Many Yoruba intellectuals, disillusioned with multi-ethnic democracy, found ethnic nationalism a better means of confronting the military regime.[66] The threat to secede was more effective than the campaign for democracy. After the sudden death of Sani Abacha in 1998, when the threat of Yoruba secession became more real, it helped to convince the generals that it was better to relinquish power. In the struggle against an unjust regime, ethnicity looked like a "beneficial" force, like a "voice of civil society and accountability".[67] Moreover, it helped to eclipse conflicts within Yoruba society, especially religious conflicts which had begun to turn violent in the 1980s. At a constitutional conference in 1986/87 many Yoruba Muslims had sided with Hausa-Fulani delegates who had wished to extend the jurisdiction of Islamic law and to establish a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal. The League of Imams in Yoruba States had backed this initiative, and Moshood Abiola had become the chairman of the National Committee on Sharia, which ran a weekly column in his *Concord* newspaper.[68]

To many Yoruba, Abiola had been a traitor, reminiscent of Afonjo and Akintola, who had delivered Yorubaland to its enemies in the North. In 1979, during the transition to the Second Republic, when Southern politicians had had a chance to end two decades of Northern hegemony, Abiola had campaigned for the Hausa presidential candidate Shehu Shagari and contributed to the defeat of Awolowo, the Yoruba leader. When Shagari's government was toppled in 1983, he backed the military rulers. Thanks to his close contacts with those in power, he had become one of Nigeria's wealthiest businessmen. It is ironic that Abiola, the archetypical traitor, became an icon of Yoruba nationalism. He had tried hard to be accepted by his fellow-Muslims in the North, but when it really mattered, they saw him, above all, as a

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[66] Sklar 2004: 42.
[67] Igwara 2001: 88, 86; cf. Njoku 2002: 267.
[68] Suberu 1997: 411.

Yoruba man who could not be trusted. His ordeal in a prison cell, at the hands of his former allies, demonstrated that treason did not pay. Ethnic ties were stronger than the spiritual brotherhood of religion. If Abiola, the Vice President for Nigeria's Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, could not bridge the divide between Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani elites: who else could?

When Abiola died in prison, he was turned into a martyr, as if he had suffered for his Yoruba people. Commemorating his death had a unifying effect; it reminded Muslims and Christians that they had a common cause against the Northern rulers who had asserted their supremacy by any means, destroying democratic institutions and turning Nigeria into the worlds most corrupt country (according to Transparency International). This trans-religious alliance against the North was still intact in 1999, when Hausa-Fulani politicians started a campaign for Sharia and called on their co-religionists in the South to join them. The Governor of Lagos, Ahmed Tinubu, said that he was "under immense pressure" by parts of the local population to introduce Islamic law.[69] However he, like the other Yoruba governors, was aware that a controversy over Sharia would set the Yoruba against each other. There are as many Christians as Muslims among them, and the line separating them runs through the middle of many families. It was obvious that Northern attempts to deepen religious antagonisms was not meant to bring peace to Yoruba society but to split it. Wole Soyinka, the foremost Yoruba intellectual, warned that the Sharia campaign was a "prelude to civil war".[70]

The Fourth Republic

Ethnic militancy played an important role in bringing down military dictatorship. When Abacha died in 1998, a Yoruba militia called Oodua People's Congress (OPC) asserted control over Lagos and other cities in the Southwest, attacking Hausa, Igbo and Ijaw 'migrants' living there. The security forces tried to suppress the militia, but violence against the Hausa and other 'settlers' did not stop. Nigeria's government was in a more precarious situation than five years ago. In 1993/94, after the annulled election of 1993, the military regime had been confident that it would stifle Yoruba separatism: "whoever tries to go we will force him to remain. […] we have all the

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[69] *Tell* [Lagos], 23 September 2002: 46.
[70] Quoted in Freedom House 2002: 9, 56.

resources to put down any upheaval […] ruthlessly".[71] In 1998, the death of Sani Abacha left the army divided; many soldiers would have declined fighting down a Yoruba rebellion. Furthermore, the generals knew that a Yoruba Republic was a realistic option. Yorubaland is not as densely populated as Igboland; it has direct access to the sea and some industrial production in Lagos, the former capital. Secession, though, has not been in the centre of OPC agitation. Yoruba nationalists have demanded autonomy within a restructured federation;[72] secession is just a last resort, in case other groups are blocking Yoruba interests. In their sixth Pan-Yoruba Congress in 2001, delegates decided to design a national flag and to compose a national anthem in order to be prepared for the event of secession.[73]

In 1998, military rule was also threatened by a rebellion in the Niger Delta. Militants attacked oil installations and shut down parts of the production, forcing the federal government to increase the share of oil rents paid directly to the Delta states from 3 to 13 percent. Here again, activists were organised on an ethnic basis, as Ijaw National Congress, Urhobo National Assembly or Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People. The fight for control over the oil wealth did not unite the population but rather fuelled local rivalries. So-called 'oil-producing' communities, on whose land the oil companies operated, did not want to share the revenues with neighbouring groups who did not possess oil fields on their own. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, founded in 2005, tried to overcome factionalism, claiming to speak for all groups in the Delta, but it is just an association of local gangs and has not advocated a break-up of the federation. One of the local warlords, Asari Dokubo, whose Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force also claimed to fight for the whole Delta, took a radical secessionist stance, hostile to all authorities which were collaborating with the federation: "Nigeria […] only exists in the imagination of the bandits".[74] However, his secessionist rhetoric was not meant seriously. It gave him the appearance of being principled and uncompromising; thus it served to distance himself from the political establishment with whom he had been allied only months before. In 2003 the governor of Rivers State had employed him to intimidate opposition parties and to rig the elections in favour of the ruling People's Democratic Party.

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[71] Abubakar Buba Galadima, a minister of the Abacha regime, in *TSM. The Sunday Magazine*, 4 December 1994: 10, 17.
[72] Yoruba Agenda 2005: 2.
[73] *The Week* [Lagos], 19 November 2001: 34.
[74] *Tell*, 18 October 2004: 17.

With the increase of ethnic militancy in 1998, Nigeria looked as if it were on "the brink of warfare".[75] In order to forestall disintegration, the army command decided to return the country to democracy and to hand over the presidency to a Southerner. This decision was *not* the result of a power-sharing agreement. The generals in the Provisional Ruling Council took all major decisions among themselves, in close consultation with Ibrahim Babangida and other eminent persons from the North. They decreed a constitution which had not been discussed with politicians from the South. It contained none of the power-sharing arrangements suggested by some Igbo and Yoruba politicians, such as the creation of six geo-political zones and the rotation of the presidency between them. Although the generals and their Northern allies resolved to give the presidential office to a Yoruba, they did not allow Yoruba politicians to nominate the most suitable candidates. Instead, they decided in closed-door meetings who should be the first president of the Fourth Republic. They needed a Yoruba who was not anti-North, and they settled on Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired four-star general who had the reputation of being 'detribalised'. Obasanjo was duly elected in April 1999, but it was the money and influence of Ibrahim Babangida and other former generals that paved his way. Obasanjo later admitted that he had signed a secret agreement, before he became a presidential candidate. It had probably included a provision to serve for only one term and then return the office to the North. But it appears that Obasanjo never intended to live up to the terms of this agreement. Within days of assuming office, he ordered 150 high-ranking army officers to retire, most of them from the Islamic North.

This 'betrayal' changed the balance of power. Without control over the army, Northern politicians could no longer determine the course of the transformation they had initiated, and they did not possess the economic means to put pressure on their adversaries. Their only chance of extracting concessions was to threaten their opponents with massive damage, and the most formidable weapon at their disposal was the Sharia campaign, which started soon after the inauguration of President Obasanjo. Sharia was a "bargaining chip",[76] very efficient as an instrument of political blackmail because it could have extremely dangerous consequences. When the governors of some Northern states announced the introduction of a strictly orthodox form of Islamic law, everyone knew that this would spark religious riots. Since the early 1980s, clashes between Christians and Muslims in the cities of the North had

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[75] Joseph 1999: 364.
[76] Mazrui 2001: 2.

claimed thousands of lives. With the Sharia controversy, conflicts in Kano, Kaduna and Jos were rekindled, provoking the worst massacres since the Biafra War. In February and May 2000, endless convoys of Igbo and Yoruba refugees were heading south.

Professor Ben Nwabueze, a constitutional lawyer, called the introduction of Sharia "tantamount […] to an act of secession".[77] The mood of many Muslims in the North was indeed secessionist. Governor Ahmed Sani, whose administration in Zamfara State had been the first to pass a Sharia legislation, dreamt of a "new caliphate".[78] He plastered posters throughout the capital, informing visitors that Nigeria's constitution had been suspended: "God's Law is Supreme".[79] However, political reason dictated to preserve the federation. Without the transfer of oil money form the South, the whole North, including its political class, would impoverish. The rich and mighty had little interest in subordinating their life to Sharia, so the divine rules were applied at best half-heartedly. However, the elites were not the only actors in the Sharia drama. Groups of Islamic militants have emerged, who are disenchanted with the state-decreed Islamization. For social rebels, who do not share the luxurious life of the elite, oil is of minor importance. They despise the emirs and governors who engage in Nigerian politics in order to make money. A federation with infidels seems to pollute the community of faithful, therefore militant groups like Boko Haram do not feel bound to informal agreements with the Christian minority. In 2004, Islamic rebels, who were called Taliban by the media, attacked some rural police stations and local government buildings. They raised flags inscribed with 'Afghanistan' and began to impose on local peasants a pure form of Islamic life. In order to dislodge them from their lairs at the border to Cameroon and Niger, the army deployed heavy artillery.[80]

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[77] *Tell*, 15 January 2001: 25.
[78] Mustapha : 270.
[79] Maier 2000: 180.
[80] *Tell*, 26 April 2004: 22–26; *Newswatch* [Lagos], 11 October 2004: 22–25.

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Somaliland: the complicated formation of a *de facto* state

Markus Virgil Hoehne

Introduction

The recent debate about state formation highlights the conflict-ridden and complicated mature of this process.[1] States are increasingly recognised as heterogeneous and contested constructs. Different local or regional powers coexist and sometimes compete with official state institutions. They may even command their own armed forces, and establish their own legal and administrative structures.[2] Clearly, the once broadly accepted Weberian definition of the state as that authority with the legitimate monopoly of violence over defined territory is undergoing challenge at the beginning of the 21st century.[3] Nonetheless, statehood is still the 'entrance ticket' to the world-system for those aspiring political recognition and the resources coming with international sovereignty. This explains why new states still are established, such as Croatia (1991), East Timor (2002) and most recently Kosovo (2008), and why other state-like entities continue to struggle for recognition, such as Transnistria, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, and Somaliland.

Some of the latter conform to the definition of statehood, insofar as they include permanent population, defined territory, and government. Yet, since the recognition of states is as much a legal as a political matter, not all state-like entities enjoy recognition. In Africa, in particular, the principle of the sanctity of the post-colonial borders, originally adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and since upheld by its successor organisation, the African Union (AU), opposes secession and the formation of new states. From the perspective of existing governments, this principle helps to prevent large-scale instability due to the contested nature of most of Africa's state-borders.[4] The complicated nature of international recognition, together with the relative lack of resources and the centralisation of the economy in many African states also prevent local elites in the continent from pursuing secessionist politics. They rather compete for the resources of the existing state.[5]

In some cases at least, the gap, which results between the empirical reality of state-like entities and the politics of (non-)recognition is filled by the concept of *de facto* states. According to Scott Pegg's definition, *de facto* states 'feature long-term, effective, and popularly supported

organized political leaderships that provide governmental services to a given population in a defined territorial area. They seek international recognition and view themselves as capable of meeting the obligations of sovereign statehood. They are, however, unable to secure widespread juridical recognition and therefore function outside the boundaries of international legitimacy.'[6]

This article shows that the Republic of Somaliland in the Horn of Africa that seceded from collapsing Somalia in May 1991, but still lacks international recognition, fulfils most criteria of this definition. Interestingly enough, and in contrast to all other cases of secession in Africa, Somaliland's existence derives from the collapse of the 'parent state' of Somalia.[7] This particular situation – secession from a collapsed parent state – is closely related to the ongoing problems the country faces regarding the recognition of its statehood.

Of course, Somaliland was not 'born' as a viable *de facto* state. It emerged in relation to complex social and political dynamics within the region and, partly, in response to external factors such as the situation in Somalia and the establishment of Puntland in north-eastern Somalia.[8]

Background to the setting

In colonial times, the Somali peninsula was divided between Great Britain, Italy, France and the Ethiopian Empire. The British established their protectorate of Somaliland in the northwest. The Italians administered the territory from the northeast to south Somalia. The British Protectorate became independent on 26 June 1960; four days later, Italian Somalia followed. On the same day, 1 July 1960, both territories merged to form the Republic of Somalia. The first decade after independence was characterised by internal problems of legal and administrative integration, and corruption and clanism within the political system.[9] Externally, the so called 'Greater Somalia' policy of the government in Mogadishu, which aimed at uniting all Somalis in one state, led to major conflicts with Kenya and Ethiopia. In October 1969, a group of 25 military and police officers led by General Maxamed Siyad Barre toppled the democratic government of Somalia.[10] The new rulers subsequently strengthened the military capacities of the country. The instability reigning in Ethiopia after the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie and the take-over of the *Derg* in 1974 prompted Somalia's attack on its neighbor in pursuit of its irredentist dream. This resulted in one

of the bloodiest inter-state wars in Africa, popularly known as the Ogaden war (1977-78). In this war, Moscow that was formerly allied with Mogadishu, sided with Addis Ababa. The devastating defeat of the Somali national army weakened the regime of President Siyad Barre. In the 1980s the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM) took up the struggle against the government in Mogadishu. The SSDF was predominantly a Majeerteen movement. Members of this clan resided in north-eastern Somalia. The SNM was dominated by Isaaq whose clan territories were in north-west of the country. Both guerilla fronts were hosted by Ethiopia. While the SSDF dissolved due to internal problems and conflicts with the *Derg*, the SNM continued its struggle. After the peace-agreement between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa in 1988 it was forced to enter Somalia. In reaction, the Somali government bombarded the main towns of the northwest, Hargeysa and Burco. Maxamed Siyad Barre clung to power by distributing resources and weapons that were largely provided by his western allies among his followers. Many of them were relatives of the President.[11] By manipulating Somali clans against each other Barre contributed to the disintegration of Somalia. The government was overthrown by Hawiye guerillas belonging to the United Somali Congress (USC) in January 1991. Fear and hatred between descent groups, and the lack of agreement between the various Somali guerrilla movements led to new violence and the complete state collapse in Somalia, which was followed by international intervention in southern Somalia and internal territorial re-organization in the north.[12]

The troubled foundation of Somaliland

The SNM and with it the Isaaq were the strongest military power in the northwest in early 1991. But instead of continuing the fighting along decent lines against the other clans in the region, such as the Gadabuursi and the Ciisa (belonging to the Dir clan-family) in the far west, and the Dhulbahante and the Warsangeeli (belonging to the Darood clan-family) in the east, which mostly had been supporting the government of Siyad Barre, the SNM proposed peace-negotiations. In May 1991 a conference (Somali: *shir*) was held in Burco. Guerrilla commanders, traditional authorities and clan representatives participated. The SNM leadership was not in favour of secession. Yet, the rank and file of the movement was. They remembered the

devastation of the civil war and particularly the harsh measures that had been taken by the previous Somali government against the civilians in the northwest. Also, the news coming from the south, from Mogadishu, was worrisome. Cali Mahdi, one of the two leaders of the USC, had usurped the presidency of Somalia. He had done so without the consent of his co-leader in the USC, Maxamed Faarax Caydiid, and without consulting the other guerrilla factions, e.g., the SNM. Mogadishu was on the verge to descent into extreme violence.

When Radio Mogadishu announced that the SNM leadership had agreed to meet with the southern groups in Cairo, large demonstrations happened in the major towns of north-western Somalia. The SNM leadership was compelled to declare the independence of the Republic of Somaliland on the 18 May 1991.[13] The declaration happened 'without the benefit of planning or careful considerations of the possible consequences'.[14] The political leaders and the people in southern Somalia did not accept this step. Yet, caught up in civil war and warlordism, there was not much they could do. Even many members of the non-Isaaq clans in the region were not in favour of the secession. They nonetheless accepted it in the light of the superior military power of the SNM and the escalating violence in and around Mogadishu.[15]


Map I: *Political divisions in northern Somalia, since 1991 © Max Planck Institute for social anthropology*

Arguably, secession was essentially a security measure. It created political distance from collapsing southern Somalia and provided people in the northwest with some political orientation and the incentive to halt the escalation of further violence in the region. The most decisive feature of Somaliland at this point was its claimed territory: the Republic was declared in line with the borders of the former British Protectorate. A two-year interim-government led by the SNM was established in the capital city of Hargeysa. Cabdiraxmaan Axmed Cali Tuur, the last SNM Chairman, and Xassan Ciise Jaamac, his Vice-Chairman, became President and Vice-President of the Republic of Somaliland. The cabinet consisted of some guerrilla commanders plus six members of the non-Isaaq clans. The lack of state revenue, the destruction of the regional infrastructure due to the civil war, the high number of armed clan and free-lance militias, and splits within the SNM made any form of effective government impossible. In early 1992, intra-Isaaq fighting broke out over the issue of demobilisation between two rivalling clans, Habar Yonis and Habar Jeclo, in Burco and over the control of the port in Berbera. Some Gadabuursi elders offered to negotiate. A peace conference was held in the town of Sheekh in October 1992.

A peace and a national charter were adopted at a second big national *shir* in the town of Boorama in the Gadabuursi area in the first half of 1993. The national charter functioned as a provisional constitution for Somaliland. It provided for the separation of the executive, legislative and judicative branches of the government, and introduced a bicameral parliament, consisting of a House of Elders (*Golaha Guurtida*; commonly shortened to *Guurti*) and a House of Representatives (*Golaha Wakiilada*). Thereby, a hybrid political system was founded that incorporated 'traditional' and 'modern' elements of governance. The experienced Isaaq-politician, Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal was elected as the new president for a two years term. He had not been part of the SNM struggle. Yet as elder statesman he enjoyed respect. Cigaal had been the head of Somaliland before the unification with the south, and Somalia's last Prime-Minister before the coup of 1969. His Habar-Awal clan occupied economic key positions in the north. This would prove crucial for Cigaal's rule. Vice-President became Cabdiraxmaan Aw Cali Tolwaa, an SNM veteran and a member of the Gadabuursi clan. The Boorama conference had been a 'watershed event in Somaliland', since it established the political framework of the country for the coming years.[16]
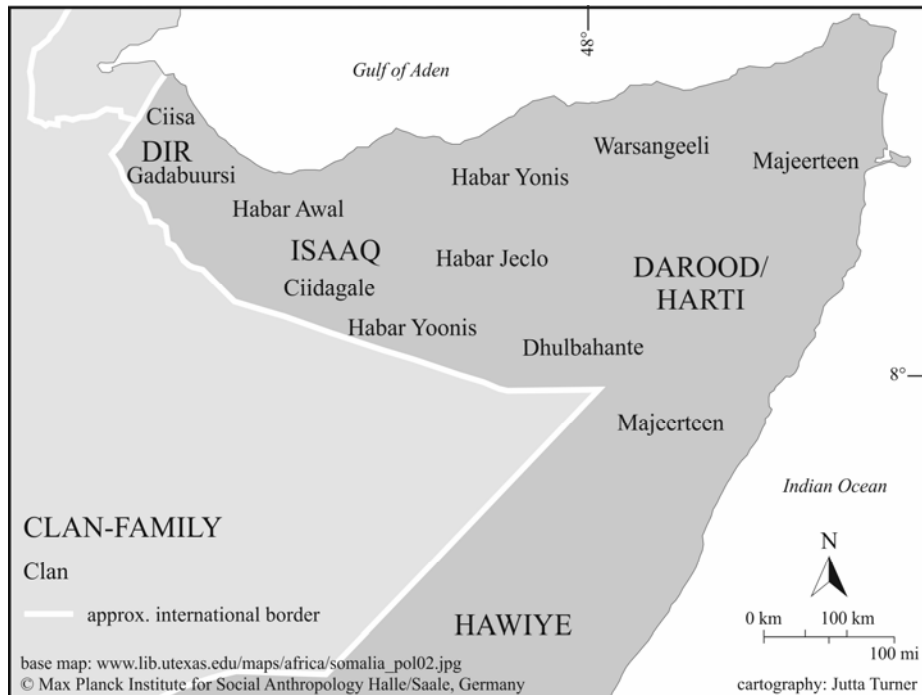
Map II: *Clan-territories in northern Somalia © Max Planck Institute for social anthropology*

However, after the Boorama conference peace was still not firmly anchored in Somaliland. Cabdiraxmaan Tuur, the former president, abandoned the secessionist project and turned to the south where he joined Maxamed Faarax Caydiid in Mogadishu. He appeared together with Caydiid at a common press-conference in Addis Ababa end of April 1994, presented himself as SNM Chairman, and declared his support for a federal system for Somalia, including Somaliland. While Tuur followed his own personal agenda, he also represented some sections among the Isaaq, particularly among his own Habar Yonis clan, that were against secession and looked for other options in Somalia. In addition, he and some others managed to manipulate those clan members who, after Tuur's replacement, felt deprived of power in Somaliland, even if they not necessarily were against the secession. Finally, Cabdiraxmaan Tuur mingled with the UN that had staged its intervention in southern Somalia (UNOSOM) and was interested to expand its operations into Somaliland, which was refused by the Cigaal-administration.

Simultaneously, the government got involved in another conflict over the control of the airport of Hargeysa. Next to the port in Berbera, this airport was the second most important economic and political asset of the country. It was the gateway for goods and people, including representatives of the international community, into Somaliland. In the early 1990s it was held by

local militias of the Ciidagale clan. These militias refused any compromise with the government. The more the government threatened their position, the more did their resistance gain some backing within the Ciidagale clan.[17]

Both conflicts, the one with Tuur and his followers and the one over the airport, increasingly mixed, due to the genealogical factors involved: within the Isaaq clan-family, the Habar Yonis and the Ciidagale clans belong together as Garxajis. This provided a basis for their alliance against what they perceived as a Habar Awal dominated government that was aided by others, e.g., the Habar Jeclo, who, as mentioned above, were the traditional rivals of the Habar Yonis in Burco. Fighting escalated when government troops set out to seize the airport of Hargeysa and quickly spread to Hargeysa town and Burco. For one year, from mid-1994 to mid-1995, both places were haunted by sporadic episodes of violence and civil war that alternated with periods of tense stalemate. Ten-thousands of inhabitants fled the towns temporarily.

These events, however, concerned only a part of the polity of Somaliland. The Habar Yonis and Habar Jeclo residing in the Sanaag region managed to keep the politics in the centre and the inter-clan fighting at bay.[18] The Habar Jeclo and Habar Yonis in Burco and further southwest, and their relatives living from east of Burco up to Ceerigaabo and the coast belong partly to different lineages. In Ceerigaabo Habar Yonis and Habar Jeclo reside together with Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli. They therefore had to keep some 'Isaaq-unity' against the local Darood clans. People in Ceerigaabo had already tasted the bitterness of internecine fighting between local SNM-supporters and local government-supporters in the last years of the anti-regime struggle between 1988 and 1991. This explains the differences of conflict dynamics in central Somaliland and further northeast.

Simultaneously, the non-Isaaq clans in the west and east existed in a limbo; they remained in peace but without any state administration. Governance was exercised locally, by traditional authorities, other community leaders (e.g., former military or police officers and teachers), and by members of the diaspora. The following example of administration-building in the Sool region illustrates the fluid nature of the process of local reconstruction and points to emerging tensions within the polity of Somaliland.

The members of the Dhulbahante clan held a *shir* in Boocame, a place in the southeast of Sool region in early 1993, when the second national Somaliland-conference was underway in Boorama. The Boocame conference had been co-organised by some Dhulbahante in the near

diaspora, in Nairobi (Kenya) who were largely against the secession of Somaliland.[19] The diaspora-hardliners tried to play the 'clan card' and called for Darood-solidarity against the Isaaq dominating in central Somaliland. They wished to prevent members of the Dhulbahante clan from attending the Boorama conference. Yet, there were also voices on the conference that became known as 'Boocame I' that tried to prevent the community in Sool from being misled by Darood chauvinism.[20] The result of the controversial discussions was the establishment of a local council for the Sool region. It consisted of 33 men, mostly intellectuals and former professionals. The local traditional authorities cooperated with this council.[21]

During the meeting in Boocame an Isaaq delegation came and invited Dhulbahante delegates to Boorama. Around 50 Dhulbahante men were sent there. Some members of the clan perceived this as an attempt to 'split' the Dhulbahante community.[22] Obviously, the *shir* in Boorama was essentially a state-building conference, as outlined above. When the Dhulbahante delegation came back from Boorama to the Sool region they found that during their absence things had changed. The anti-Somaliland faction had influenced the people, who now in their majority were against supporting Somaliland's independence.[23]

Between 1993 and 1996, the local council worked for peace in the Sool region. Its capacities, however, were limited since it lacked finances. Relations to the administration in Hargeysa existed. Particularly Garaad Cabdiqani, the highest-ranking traditional authority of Dhulbahante, was in contact with President Cigaal. Yet, in those days, Hargeysa had neither the interest nor the resources to engage with the Sool region.

'Boocame I' showed the will of the majority of the Dhulbahante clan to regulate its own affairs autonomously. It also revealed the increasing split within the Dhulbahante community. Some Dhulbahante, including Garaad Cabdiqani, were in fact moderately pro-Somaliland, since this seemed to be the way to peace and prosperity in the early 1990s. Others preferred to gain distance from Hargeysa, after they had been compelled by the circumstances to participate in the *shir* in Burco in 1991. The other non-Isaaq group that kept some distance to Somaliland was the Warsangeeli clan whose members reside in the east and northeast of the Sanaag region. The Warsangeeli also established some local administration led by their traditional authorities in the early 1990s. In contrast to Dhulbahante, however, the majority of them did not openly oppose the politics of Somaliland in the early 1990s.

The construction of an imagined community in Somaliland

Despite the fighting and instability in central parts of Somaliland, President Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal was able to undertake important steps regarding state building. He personally came from a wealthy merchant family and had good relations to the business class of his clan. Since his Ciisa Muuse sub-clan controlled the port of Berbera, Cigaal was able to raise some substantial funds in order to engage in some of the most basic tasks of the state: paying salaries to those in the administration and the armed forces, and engaging in demobilisation. Additionally, first steps regarding the economic consolidation of Somaliland were taken. The Habar Awal business community financed the introduction of a new currency, the Somaliland Shilling, in 1994. By early 1995 it had become legal tender in western and central Somaliland, up to the city of Burco.[24] The government started some basic taxation of the *qaad* trade,[25] the import and export in Berbera, and the businesses in the centre and the west of the country. The moderate state revenue was consumed by the administration in the capital, the security forces, the war efforts inside the country, and corruption. Thus, the only real service that was provided by the government, usually in cooperation with local traditional authorities, was basic security in central Somaliland, where the authority of the government reached. In the more peripheral regions the authority of Hargeysa was minimal.

The violent conflicts in central Somaliland, which had followed Tuur's anti-secessionist move, were mediated by various parties, such as the diaspora-based Peace Committee for Somaliland and local traditional authorities and members of the *Guurti* in Somaliland. This time, however, the elders did not act as a unified body of 'neutral' mediators, as previously in Boorama. In fact, the traditional authorities of the Isaaq clan-family and the *Guurti* members were divided. Some were in favour of and others were against the government of Cigaal. This weakened their overall influence and standing in Somaliland's politics.[26]

A final national *shir* was held in Hargeysa from October 1996 to early 1997. It marked the end of large scale fighting in Somaliland. In contrast to the previous conferences in Burco and Boorama, the *shir* in Hargeysa was clearly dominated by the government and the incumbent president (whose term of office had been extended previously by the *Guurti* due to the fighting in Somaliland). The place of the *shir*, the capital city, was fully in the hands of the government that

also financed the conference. The voting delegates were all 150 members of the two houses of parliament plus 165 additional clan representatives. The members of the chairing committee (*shir gudoon*) who chose the additional delegates were under Cigaal's control. Therefore the selection process became problematic. The chairing committee preferentially endorsed delegates from various clans who were perceived as pro-government. The list sent by Garaad Cabdiqani, for instance, naming the participants from the Sool region was rejected by Cigaal. This strongly irritated the *garaad* who had been moderately pro-Somaliland in the years before.[27]

Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal's plan worked out and in February 1997 he was re-elected as President of Somaliland, this time for a five years term of office. Cigaal had massively bribed delegates to secure his re-election.[28] Dahir Rayaale Kahin, a Gadabuursi who by then was a rather unknown figure, became new Vice-President. In addition, a new interim constitution of the country was approved at the Hargeysa conference. This constitution represented a compromise between Cigaal's wish for a strong executive, and many delegates' preferences of a parliamentary democracy. It also provided for the enlargement of the members of parliament from previously 75 to now 82 per chamber. The additional positions in the *Guurti* were mostly given to Habar Yonis and Ciidagale. The extra seats in the House of Representatives were divided among some small and so far not or not properly represented groups such as the Midgan. This was one way to incorporate and appease former opponents to the government.[29]

Formally, the system of clan representation continued, but, as outlined above, many clan representatives at the national level had lost legitimacy. The hybrid political system established in Boorama 1993 had come with costs for the 'nationalist' elites, who had to accept traditional authority. It also had come with costs for the elders. Renders argued that already before Cigaal's coming to power the system of clan nomination for delegates/parliament members was hardly transparent.[30] Mostly urban-based and politically and economically well-connected men became clan representatives. In many cases, they were not even chosen by 'their people' but simply nominated themselves, or were pushed by influential interest groups. By 1996, particularly the members of the *Guurti* and leading traditional authorities of Somaliland had lost their 'innocence'. Their integration into the state apparatus of Somaliland had forced them to take sides and to get involved into 'national' politics. In many instances, this made them parties to ongoing conflicts, and susceptibly to manipulation and corruption.[31] Still, they continued to

occasionally intervene in situations of crisis and worked as mediators between clans, lineages, families and political interest groups.

The *shir* in Hargeysa also marked the final turning point in the already difficult relationship between Dhulbahante and the government of Somaliland. Again, as in the case of the *shir* in Boorama, some anti-Somaliland forces had organised a 'counter-*shir*' in Boocame in 1996, parallel to the meeting in Hargeysa. This conference became known as 'Boocame II'. The local council established at 'Boocame I' had become inactive. 'Boocame II' strengthened the power of the anti-Somaliland faction within the Dhulbahante clan.

Despite its shortcomings, the Hargeysa-conference enabled Somaliland to move forward with political, economic and social reconstruction. In the second half of the 1990s, Somaliland as a polity took shape in a *quid pro quo* struggle for power and participation between the leading politicians, the business community, SNM veterans, traditional authorities, members of the nascent civil society, and diaspora actors. Despite the importance most people in Somaliland attribute to Islam, and the fact that Somaliland is officially an Islamic state, religious leaders did not play a very visible role in the state formation process in Somaliland. Within the government, civilians and bureaucrats successively took over from the former SNM cadres. In this context, Isaaq politicians who had served in the administration of Maxamed Siyad Barre up to 1990, came to power again in Somaliland. It was not uncommon to hear ordinary people in Hargeysa in 2003 and 2004 say that the members of the government are '*faqash*'. *Faqash* is a derogatory term that can be translated as 'collaborator' or generally: 'filth'. The government in Hargeysa successively established more authority over central and western Somaliland with regard to general administration and the control of key economic resources. It also began to reach out to some more peripheral regions, particularly to Sanaag in the northeast and Awdal in the west of the country. The state institutions, however, did not hold the legitimate monopoly on violence. Clans and individuals retained their small arms. Even in the capital city, traditional authorities continued to act as *ad hoc* mediators between families, between state institutions, and between citizens and the government, in times of crisis. Among the population, criminal cases (from shop lifting to murder) were usually handled by family elders. In case the police got involved, it did so only in agreement with the relevant traditional authorities.

Individual financial remittances from Somalis abroad secured family survival and some moderate 'wealth' of people in Somaliland. Collective diaspora initiatives contributed to the

establishment of basic infrastructure like schools, hospitals and even universities. Diasporic actors increasingly got involved in politics. Some engaged in local peacebuilding, others supported local politicians or traditional authorities, or returned and tried themselves to build-up a political position back 'home' in Somaliland.[32] The basis for these various social and political forces working in concert (not necessarily always in harmony) was mutual recognition and the will to keep the peace.[33] This arguably constituted a moderate and family-based form of 'external' interference that was controllable by the actors themselves. In contrast, the large-scale military and humanitarian interventions in southern Somalia between 1992 and 1995 clearly fuelled the conflict escalation there.[34]

The vision of Somaliland as an independent state inhabited by a particular community or nation gained in substance through the establishment of Radio Hargeysa (in 1991), the foundation of several daily newspapers such as *Jamhuuriya* and *Haatuf* (throughout the 1990s and early 2000s), the introduction of a national currency in 1994, the introduction of a new flag for the country (in 1996), the composition of a national anthem (in 1996), the development of a Somaliland school curriculum (from 1997 onwards), the erection of national and civil war monuments (2001), and so forth. Particularly the symbolism of the current flag is interesting: For the first six years, Somaliland used the SNM flag, which was white with a green circle in the centre, and 'Allahu akber' (God is the greatest) written in Arabic on top. In October 1996, when the most recent national *shir* in Hargeysa began, a new flag was introduced, with green, white and red horizontal stripes, 'La Illaha Illalah Muhammedan Rasuul Allah' (There is no god apart from god and Mahamed is his messenger) written in Arabic in the green field, and a small black star with five corners in the white field. The meaning of the colours was: green for prosperity; white for peace; red for the fallen fighters. The black star indicated the 'death' of the idea of 'Greater Somalia'.[35]

Already since 1991, the 26 June and the 18 May were celebrated annually as the days of the original independence of Somaliland from British colonial rule, and the day of (renewed) independence, respectively. Other important celebrations, but not official national holidays, were the 6 April, as the Day of SNM (founded in London on 6 April 1981), and the 17 October, the Day of the fallen SNM fighters (Somali: *Maalinta Shuhadada*).[36] It commemorated a particularly decisive battle against the Somali national army in a place called Burco Duuray, on 17 October 1984. Another institution related to the vision of Somaliland as distinct polity was the Technical

Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes. This commission had been established in August 1997, after heavy rains in mid-May that year had disclosed several mass graves in and around Hargeysa containing the remnants of hundreds of bodies. It later changed its name into War Crimes Investigation Commission (*Xafiiska Badhitaanka Xasuuqa*). In December 1997 a team of UN forensic experts visited Hargeysa for an on-site assessment of alleged mass graves. After some excavations in some of the more than 100 potential sites of mass graves, they confirmed the suspicious character of the killings, which constituted human rights violations. Claims to install a war crimes tribunal were occasionally voiced. Nonetheless, President Cigaal was against such a tribunal. In an interview in May 2001 he argued that it would be very difficult to define the exact perpetrators, since there had been informers of the national army among the civilian population (meaning: Isaaq) in the north.[37]

These above mentioned policies, symbols, memorials and practices facilitated the development of an 'imagined community' within Somaliland.[38] They added weight to country's *de facto* statehood, in concert with the working of the political institutions created in Boorama 1993. Contrary to Bradbury's (2008) presentation of the process of 'becoming Somaliland', who sweepingly brushes over regional and political differences in Somaliland's history and politics, the processes of state formation and community building outlined so far concerned only a part of the country, namely the area from Boorama to Burco to Ceerigaabo and the people living there. Bradbury also ignores the fact that the historical experiences and political orientations within the groups that predominantly supported Somaliland were far from homogenous. Even in the centre of the polity an influential minority continued to exist that resented the definitive secession from Somalia and the 'death' of the vision of Greater Somalia.[39]

Beyond 'core-Somaliland', the political consensus was fragile. Members of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli clans in Sool and eastern Sanaag, as well as parts of southern Togdheer, increasingly distanced themselves from the idea of an independent Somaliland. This means that roughly 30% of the territory and 20% of the population of the polity were not integrated (see Maps I and II above). The members of these clans felt politically and economically marginalised by Hargeysa. Moreover, the non-Isaaq groups clearly had experienced Somali history differently than most Isaaq. The monuments, holidays and other symbols of Somaliland frequently did not instigate 'heroic' memories and a feeling of togetherness in them. To the contrary, Somaliland's symbols rather stood for the defeat of values and visions, which

many Warsangeeli and Dhulbahante had upheld until 1991, and many continued to do so, even if political pragmatism had dictated some concessions to the Isaaq majority and the overwhelming firepower of the SNM.

The formation of Puntland, Somaliland's rival

The anti-secessionist position of Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli hardened in the second half of the 1990s. It finally found a new political home in Puntland.[40] Puntland was established as an (autonomous) regional administration (in Somali: *maamul goboleed*) in north-eastern Somalia in 1998. The region was mostly inhabited by Majeerteen and had been controlled by the regrouped SSDF forces in cooperation with local traditional authorities since 1991. In the mid 1990s the SSDF participated in several conferences organised in the towns of Sodere (Ethiopia) and Cairo, among others, which aimed at the rebuilding of Somalia. When these conferences did not yield any tangible result, the people and political leaders in the northeast decided to erect their own administration. They called for a clan conference, similar to the ones held previously in Somaliland. The *shir* that eventually led to the establishment of Puntland took place in the town of Garoowe between May and August 1998. Its participants came from all clans of the northeast. Additionally, members of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli clans residing in eastern Somaliland participated in the meeting.[41] Genealogically, most of these clans belong together as descendants of an ancestor named Harti, who descents from Darood. Before the state-collapse of Somalia, Harti had not been very significant in Somali clan-politics. It only became an important genealogical reference point in the context of inter-clan fighting around the town of Kismaayo in the south,[42] the defence of the Majeerteen in the northeast against Hawiye forces in Gaalkacyo,[43] and the growing distance of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli from Somaliland.

On 16 August 1998 the establishment of the State of Puntland was officially announced by its founding President, Colonel Cabdullahi Yuusuf. Garoowe became its capital. The Charter of the State of Puntland, which functioned as the polity's preliminary constitution, followed 'the pattern of the Boorama National Charter, which formalized the birth of Somaliland.'[44] Elsewhere I argue that Puntland emerged by mimicking the institutional framework that contributed to the emergence of Somaliland.[45] It was initially based on a similar 'formula', integrating clans and

their traditional and other leaders. The political aims behind it, however, were quite different from the ones pursued in Burco, Boorama and Hargeysa before. Most importantly, Puntland did not claim independence from Somalia. Article 1.4 of the Charter provided that 'Puntland is part of Somalia, and it is striving to regain the unity of Somali people and the creation of a Somali government based on a federal system.' Therefore, Puntland works as an autonomous regional administration (in Somali: *maamul goboleed*) in north-eastern Somalia, neighbouring Somaliland. Article 1.2 of the Charter confirmed that the territory of Puntland includes the regions 'Bari, Nugaal, Sool, South Togdheer (Buuhoodle district), Mudug (with the exception of the districts of Hobyo and Xaradheere) and east, south and northeast of Sanaag.' This means that Puntland, at least on paper, cut the Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli territories out of Somaliland.

Battera rightly presumed from the very beginning that 'eastern Somaliland might become a buffer zone between two entities, without clearly defined sovereignty.'[46] He also thought that Puntland's incorporation of the Harti territories in the north could convince Somaliland to give up its claim to independence. This was confirmed, in his eyes, by a statement of President Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Hayat* from 21 February 1999, in which he announced that he would be in favour of a confederation system for a united Somalia. This statement triggered vehement protest by the majority of people in central Somaliland.[47] In contrast, I argue that the establishment of Puntland rather strengthened core-Somaliland. It provided the 'relevant other' in northern Somalia against whom the own polity is continuously defined. Identification against another group is the precondition of any process of identity formation.[48] Certainly, (*de facto*) state formation, if successful, is always accompanied by the formation of a collective identity.

The first three years of Puntland were marred by internal conflict. While power-sharing among the different Harti clans was regulated (Majeerteen took the presidency, Dhulbahante the vice-presidency, Warsangeeli the speaker of the parliament, and so forth), tensions increased within the leading Majeerteen clan. The Cusman Maxamuud and Cumar Maxamuud lineages rivalled for political and economic dominance. The former was the 'aristocratic' lineage leading the Majeerteen. It dominated the port of Boosaaso, Puntland's economic hub. Cumar Maxamuud was considered the 'nomadic' and 'warrior branch'; it was the descent group of President Cabdullahi Yuusuf. Besides, Cabdullahi Yuusuf made himself enemies since he did not fulfil the constitutional demands for decentralisation. To the contrary, he was accused of running a 'one-

man state', in which mostly supporters of the administration received posts and finances were handled in an in-transparent way by the president alone. Under President Yuusuf, the state became the largest employer, with around 7000 public employees, 4500 of which served in the security forces. The salary of public servants and security forces consumed around 90% of the government revenue. The growth of the security apparatus was on the one hand typical for Cabdullahi Yuusuf who was widely considered to be a 'soldier'. On the other hand, it was an effect of the 'demobilisation' of the clan-militias. Many irregular units had been integrated in the police or the army, which in fact had contributed to the security in the region. [49]

In 2000, the government of Djibouti hosted a Somali national peace conference in Arta, a town southeast of Djibouti city. This conference was supported by the international community. It resulted in the establishment of the Transitional National Government (TNG). Since the Arta-conference ignored the existence of Somaliland and Puntland, both administrations boycotted this initiative. In Puntland, Yuusuf's opponents took their chance, allied with the TNG and mobilised against the president, whose term officially ended in mid 2001. In November 2001 some traditional authorities elected Jaamac Cali Jaamac of the Cusman Maxamuud lineage as new President of Puntland. Cabdullahi Yuusuf retreated to his home town Gaalkacyo, where he amassed his forces. In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, Yuusuf managed to brand Jaamac Cali Jaamac and his allies from the TNG government in the south as 'terrorists'.[50] This secured him the backing of Ethiopia. Yuusuf's faction ousted Jaamac Cali Jaamac from Puntland in early 2002. Fighting between different Majeerteen groups continued throughout 2002. Somaliland aided the anti-Yuusuf forces. An agreement within Puntland was reached in 2003, and Cabdullahi Yuusuf managed to re-establish himself as president for the coming years.

Democratisation in Somaliland

In the meantime, the people of Somaliland approached the transition from clan-representation to multi-party democracy. The conflict between President Ciigaal and the parliament over the development of the constitution had ended in a compromise in 2000. The constitution in its first article confirmed the independence of Somaliland. It affirmed a presidential system of government and demanded the installation of a multi-party electoral democracy. When the

referendum on the constitution was held in May 2001, it was essentially a vote for or against Somaliland's independence, particularly against the background of the establishment of the TNG that was recognised as the government of Somalia by the international community. The official result of the referendum was that 97% of all registered voters (about 1.18 million people) approved the constitution.[51] International observers evaluated the referendum positively, even if they were not numerous enough to report authoritatively on the poll throughout the country. Particularly, in Sool, eastern Sanaag and southern Togdheer, not many people registered for the poll. Nonetheless, since the number of the actual voters represented approximately two thirds of all eligible voters, the 97% approval meant that roughly 65% of all eligible voters confirmed the constitution and therefore the independence of Somaliland.[52]

The next steps were to introduce political parties and prepare local government elections. In the middle of the process, on 5 May 2002, Maxamed Xaaji Ibraahim Cigaal died while on a private visit to South Africa for medical treatment. According to the constitution, Vice-President Dahir Rayaale Kahin took over the presidency for the remainder of the term. People in Somaliland mastered the 'shock' of their president's unexpected death and progressed with democratisation. On 15 December 2002, six political organisations competed in local government elections. The first three positions were taken by UDUB (*Ururka Demoqraadiga Ummada Bahowdey*)[53], Kulmiye[54] and UCID (*Ururka Caddaaladda iyo Daryeelka*)[55]. These became the three national parties that would shape Somaliland politics in the future.[56] UDUB, the party of the incumbent president, became the ruling party, while the other two parties took the role of the opposition. The first democratic presidential elections were held on 14 April 2003. Dahir Rayaale Kahin won by a minimal margin of about 80 votes. The result was contested by Kulmiye. The Supreme Court of the country decided in Kahin's favour and the opposition finally accepted, bowing to increasing public pressure. Parliamentary elections took place on 29 September 2005. While UDUB won the largest single share, Kulmiye and UCID together formed an opposition of almost 60% in the House of Representatives. Both the presidential and the parliamentary elections were deemed reasonably free and fair by international election observers.[57] Notably, the parliamentary elections only concerned the lower house of parliament. The members of the *Guurti* remained unelected.

Clearly, between 2000 and 2005, the development of Somaliland's *de facto* statehood had accelerated. This went along with the growing demand among the active supporters of

Somaliland for international recognition. The democratisation process also added to the argument of the tiny but vocal group of international 'Somaliland lobbyists', that Somaliland was 'Africa's best kept secret', in the sense of being democratic, peaceful and showing signs of modest economic development, without being recognised.[58]

Despite the impressive successes of Somaliland with regard to formal democratisation of the overall political system, several problems remained. First, in everyday political life, clan politics continued within the parties and therefore also within all government institutions, including the cabinet and the parliament. Leading positions were divided among members of different descent groups. In the absence of ideological differences between the three parties, the mobilisation of party supporters also followed clan lines.[59] This brought about the 'unfinished' status of democracy that characterises Somaliland until 2010.

Secondly, the democratisation process outlined above did only very incompletely, if at all, take place in southern Togdheer, Sool, and eastern Sanaag, where Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli resided. This resulted in the disproportionate under-representation of these clans in the government institutions of Somaliland.[60] The Harti-peripheries in the east largely remained outside of the reach of Hargeysa. When Puntland started to effectively interfere there, the conflict between Somaliland and Puntland took a violent turn.

Conflict between Somaliland and Puntland

Until the early 2000s, both, Hargeysa and Garoowe, refrained from actively engaging in the contested borderlands. When Puntland was weakened by internal conflict in late 2002, however, President Dahir Rayaale Kahin of Somaliland visited Laascaanood, the capital of Sool region. The visit on 7 December 2002 triggered a clash between troops of Somaliland and Puntland inside Laascaanood. Shocked by the event, Hargeysa withdrew its forces and local shadow administration from Laascaanood.[61] The Puntland forces also retreated. For a year, Laascaanood was left to the local powers.

In December 2003, Puntland police forces took clashes between two Dhulbahante lineages as an excuse to intervene and occupy Laascaanood. The government of Somaliland had to react and sent its army to the region. The dominant sentiment in Hargeysa in those days was

that the Somaliland national forces had to defend the territory of the country. *The Republican*, one of the most influential English weeklies issued in Hargeysa, printed an article in which a Somaliland minister, who was one of the few Dhulbahante in the government, called on the people to safeguard Somaliland and to go to war over Sool. The minister was cited with the words that 'there is no better cause than to fight in defense of one's country or to be a martyr […]. I wonder why the people of Somaliland are not fighting for their territory.'[62]

In fall 2004 the conflict between the two centres over the periphery in Sool came to a head, related to some 'external' events concerning Somalia. The TNG established in Arta had proven a failure. After the terror attacks on 11 September 2001, Western powers grew increasingly concerned about stateless Somalia. A Somali peace and reconciliation conference under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and financially backed by the international community, had been opened in Kenya in October 2002. Somaliland refused to participate, but Puntland went there. The agenda to establish Somalia as a federal state was in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of Puntland. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established in mid-2004. Its members elected Cabdullahi Yusuf, the President of Puntland, as new President of Somalia on 10 October 2004. One of the first announcements of the new president clarified that he would not tolerate the splitting-up of Somalia. Against this background, the confrontation between Somaliland and Puntland took a new turn. On 29 October 2004, the armies of Somaliland and Puntland clashed some 30 kilometres west of Laascaanood. Several dozen soldiers fell on both sides or were wounded. Politically, the clash did not bring about any decisive result; Laascaanood continued to be under Puntland's rule. However, the politicians in Hargeysa and their constituencies, who by 2004 had developed a strong feeling of belonging to a state known as Somaliland, could not ignore the problems at the eastern margins of their polity anymore.

The situation remained tense, but for some years, no further fighting escalated in the contested borderland. Cabdullahi Yusuf's TFG got caught up in fighting against Islamic courts and Islamist militants in southern Somalia between 2006 and 2008. Maxamuud Muuse Xirsi (also known as Cadde Muuse), a Majeerteen from the Cusman Maxamuud branch was elected new president of Puntland in January 2005. He did not make Laascaanood his priority. The situation changed again in mid 2007, when Axmed Cabdi Xabsade, the Minister of Interior of Puntland, a senior Dhulbahante politician, fell out with Cadde Muuse. Xabsade turned to the government in

Hargeysa for help and in October 2007, Somaliland forces ousted the Puntland army from Laascaanood.[63] Up until 2010, the town and the surrounding areas remain under Somaliland's control. Occasionally, politicians in Garoowe vow to take back the lost territory.

It is worth noting that the conflict between the two administrations in the north is not about land or resources (even if reportedly oil can be found in the regions Sool and Sanaag), but about political vision. Somaliland longs for international recognition. It needs to control the contested borderlands to bolster its claim to be an established state. Puntland envisions a unitary but federal Somalia. This aim compels it to prevent Somaliland's *de jure* independence. By undermining the borders claimed by Hargeysa, Puntland complicates the position of Somaliland tremendously.

Somaliland 2007-2009

The future of Somaliland hinges not only on the conflict with its neighbour Puntland. The years 2007 to 2009 have shown how precarious the country's domestic situation is. The government of Dahir Rayaale Kahin is facing growing internal opposition. In 2007, the president and his family came under attack when *Haatuf*, one of several independent newspapers in Hargeysa, issued reports [alleging?] the involvement of the president's wife in a corruption scandal in Booroma, the hometown of the presidential family. The heavy handed reaction was that armed police raided the office of *Haatuf*. The managing editor and several journalists were arrested and put on trial. The court proceedings were highly dubious. Despite public outcries in Somaliland, the Diaspora, and internationally, the trial continued and in March 2007 the *Haatuf* journalists were sentenced to several years of imprisonment. In addition, the court ordered the *Haatuf* Media Network (HMN) to pay a fine and called for the suspension of the HMN's license. Within weeks, President Kahin pardoned the journalists. HMN continued publishing. Yet the government had made its position clear, and many journalists understood the warning.[64]

This conflict over the freedom of expression was followed by a struggle over political participation in Somaliland. A group of Somaliland intellectuals, former politicians and businessmen formed a political organisation called *Qaran* (Nation) in Hargeysa in April 2007. The government argued that *Qaran* was illegal since article 9 of the constitution allowed only for

the existence of three political parties. The leadership of *Qaran* and its followers stressed that article 22 of the constitution provided that 'every citizen shall have the right to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural affairs in accordance with the laws and the Constitution.'[65] While these contradictions were not yet reconciled, the government already took action. The three *Qaran* leaders were arrested in Hargeysa in July for allegedly engaging in unauthorized political activities with the intent to cause subversion. The court proceedings followed the model of the previous case of *Haatuf*, and the three politicians were sentenced in August 2007 to several years in prison, and a five year ban from holding public office. In late December 2007, they were released by order of the president. The ban from holding public office remained in force. In early 2008, *Qaran* formed a joint opposition committee together with Kulmiye, Somaliland's leading opposition party. Its aim was to remove President Dahir Rayale Kahin from power in the upcoming presidential elections.

The preparations of these elections turned into a major crisis between 2008 and 2009. According to the constitution, the elections had to take place in April 2008. Yet neither the administration nor the opposition had taken the necessary steps for holding the vote. Already the nomination of the seven members of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) through the government and the opposition took longer than expected. After its establishment, the NEC was continuously criticised for its ineffectiveness and even inability to organise the elections. The elections had to be postponed repeatedly, and the president's term was prolonged accordingly. The process was complicated by the agreement between the government of Somaliland, the European Commission and the international NGO Interpeace to organise a country-wide voters' registration that should result in the issuing of voters' and ID cards.[66] The Somaliland parties and NEC opted for a sophisticated biometric registration system based on fingerprint identification, against the explicit advice of the donors and Interpeace. The ID cards were supposed to contain photographs. Registration involved the taking of fingerprints, in order to be able to sort out double registration. This process was technically very ambitious and highly symbolic – for the first time, all citizens of Somaliland should be able to receive a document identifying them as 'Somalilander'. It started in October 2008 and proceeded relatively quickly from western to eastern Somaliland, despite a host of logistical problems. It came to a sudden halt when Somaliland and Puntland were shaken by five concerted suicide bomb attacks on 29 October 2008. In Hargeysa, the presidential palace, the UNDP compound and the Ethiopian liaison office

were attacked. In Puntland, two offices of the Puntland Intelligence Service (PIS) were bombed in the town of Boosaasso. In Somaliland alone, more than 20 people were killed and about 30 were injured. It was commonly suspected that the perpetrators were closely related to Islamic extremists based in southern Somalia, who also had supporters in the north. With regard to Somaliland, the attacks most probably aimed to end the relative peace and stability of the country and to undermine its *de facto* statehood. Somaliland's independence has never been accepted by southern leaders. It also was against the Islamist agenda of a strong, united and Islamic state of Somalia in the Horn of Africa.[67]

The voters' registration in Somaliland continued after a break of about six weeks in late November 2008. Initial registration concluded by end of the year; until February 2009, 'late comers' had a chance to make use of supplementary registration. For the first time, the national policies of the government in Hargeysa had reached out to and partly were implemented in the territories inhabited by Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli. At least in Laascaanood and some surrounding areas the voters' registration had taken place.

Just after the first region (Saxiil) had been registered, in October 2008, it had already become obvious to close observers that many people had registered several times and circumvented registration rules.[68] Nonetheless, the members of the politically responsible actors in Somaliland as well as the donors let the process continue. Public 'mourning' about misconduct during the voters' registration started only in January 2009. About 1.4 million registrations were counted, over 50% without fingerprints.[69] It should have been clear to all involved parties (particularly the actors in Somaliland) that the deceit of external observers and the exaggeration of the numerical strength of the own group constitute a 'tradition' in the Somali society that resisted many attempts to count and register accurately since colonial time. Registration and census is a classic state-technology of control and a 'power game'. People in Somaliland reacted accordingly. Since certain locations in Somaliland could easily be identified as strongholds of UDUB, Kulmiye or UCID respectively, it was clear that the multiple registrations, particularly in Booroma, Hargeysa and Burco and surroundings had the aim to enhance the voting powers of the different party constituencies. In early 2009, representatives of the three parties lamented the 'misbehaviour' of the respective opponents' supporters, and sought to play down the fraud of their own followers. Soon it became clear that sorting out the extra registrations was not only a technical issue. Representatives of the EC and Interpeace repeatedly visited Hargeysa in early

2009 to contribute to the solution of the crisis. However, neither the opposition party leaders nor the government were ready to compromise. It again became impossible to hold elections on 29 March 2009, the date that had previously been set.

In early March 2009, the *Guurti* prolonged the president's term for the second time (since April 2008). It referred to provisions in the constitution concerning the 'security situation' (article 83 [5]) that arguably did not apply to the situation. This unconstitutional delay, in the eyes of many, caused rising tensions in Somaliland. Calls of the opposition parties for demonstrations were regularly met with threats from the administration that declared any demonstration illegal, accused opposition leaders to undermine the 'peace and stability' of Somaliland, and deployed armed police and military in the major cities to keep the situation under control.[70] Nonetheless, demonstrations took place in the capital and the regions in August and September 2009, and at least one person died when the police opened fire during a demonstration in Hargeysa on 12 September. On 25 September, the *Guurti* extended the term of the President and Vice-President again 'until one month after holding the presidential elections', without presenting a date for these elections. This decision meant that a vacuum of power in the country and possibly further escalations of violence were prevented, yet, the election crisis was not solved.

The tensions within Somaliland only dissolved after presidential elections finally were held on 26 June 2010. The candidate of the opposition, Axmed Maxamed Maxamuud Siilaanyo, the Chairman of the Kulmiye party, won. While it is too early to assess the consequences of this election, e.g., with regard to Somaliland's conflict with Puntland or the incomplete integration of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli in Somaliland, it is clear that the second peaceful presidential elections sent a very positive signal regarding the continuing democratization of the country.

The issue of international recognition

The main arguments in favour of Somaliland's recognition are the following: first, Somaliland existed as an independent state between 26 and 30 June 1960. Second, the union of Somaliland and Somalia on 1 July 1960 was a voluntary union between two states. Third, northerners were treated unfairly in the newly established Republic of Somalia, where power and resources were concentrated in the south. Many northerners expressed their disappointment with the union

through the boycott of the constitutional referendum in early 1961. Fourth, under Siyad Barre people in the north were systematically oppressed by the government in the south that, at latest from 1988 onward, launched a genocidal campaign against the Isaaq. Against this background, Somaliland 1991 'revoked' the union and re-established its independent statehood.[71]

This is presented as the historical aspect of the issue. With regard to the period since 1991, the argument continues that Somaliland's case complies with the basic requirements of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of states. Somaliland is comprised of clearly demarcated boundaries, a permanent population, and a government. Since its borders go back to treaties between the colonial powers and were 'inherited' upon independence on 26 June 1960, Somaliland's claim for recognition is even 'consistent with both the letter of the AU Charter and the spirit in which it has historically been applied.'[72] Somaliland's case is completed by outlining the public support for independence inside the country, expressed in the constitutional referendum 2001, the economic viability of the country, and its democratic credentials 'in full accordance with the requirements of the current dominant narratives of western donors.'[73]

This line of argumentation is presented to the outside world in writing (in official government publications) and whenever Somaliland officials address audiences/partners inside and outside of the country.[74] Arguably, over the past decade or so it has condensed into a dominant discourse on the matter that informs the talks (to outsiders) of many Somaliland supporters.[75]

This claim for recognition is met by two very different approaches to recognition under international law. The constitutive approach stresses that an emerging state has to be recognised by existing states in order to become a state. Recognition is a *conditio sine qua non* for state formation under international law. The declaratory approach, on the other hand, maintains that recognition is a political act that is independent of the actual existence of a new state. The constitutive approach clearly emphasises the agency of the existing states. This guarantees that once recognised the new state can count on some support from the existing states. But it detaches recognition from the question of internal stability and effectiveness of the newly recognised state. The declaratory approach prioritises effectiveness and the *de facto* existence of a state. This, however, does not necessarily mean that diplomatic relations between the existing states and the 'newcomer' will be established. Without acceptance from other states, however, even a highly effective polity cannot participate in international relations.[76]

The case of Somaliland is complicated by the fact that it seceded from a collapsing parent state. Schoiswohl, who has written the most detailed legal analysis on Somaliland's claim for recognition, outlined that in international law secession is generally understood as a separation of a part of a territory of a state carried out by the resident population with the aim to create a new independent state or to accede to another state. This happens without the consent of the previous sovereign. Still, recognition usually hinges on the later acceptance of the secession by the former sovereign. In case the new political entity emerged from a collapsed state and proved a reasonable degree of stability and continuity, it can acquire statehood even without the recognition of the parent state.[77] This conclusion, however, remains theoretical. Somaliland can be understood as a state in the doctrinal sense (and according to the declaratory approach), but as long it is not treated as such by the international community, its statehood does not yield the expected results including international sovereignty.[78]

It is noteworthy that an AU fact-finding mission dispatched to Somaliland in early 2005 evaluated the case of Somaliland favourably. The mission found that since 1991, a democratic order has been established in Somaliland. It confirmed the emotional attachment of the people to the claimed independence and a firm determination not to return to the failed union with Somalia.[79] Most importantly, the AU delegation stressed that the case of Somaliland should not be linked to the notion of 'opening a pandora's box'. This referred to the issue of the contested (colonial) boundaries in Africa.[80] In December 2005, President Dahir Rayaale Kahin submitted Somaliland's application for membership in the AU.[81] Since then, however, the case is pending.

Recognition is not an aim in itself. It has to be asked what it would bring to Somaliland and its citizens. On the one hand it would endow Somalilanders with the rights and liberties enjoyed by citizens of recognized states, including freedom to travel abroad legally, engage in economic transactions more easily, have one's documents and certificates acknowledged in other countries, and so forth. It would also open Somaliland to international cooperation and, most probably, assistance on a large scale. On the other hand, recognition my have severe negative repercussion for the nascent democracy in Somaliland. Shortly before the first presidential elections in 2003 Matt Bryden pointed out that Somaliland would pass the test of statehood easily, particularly if compared with its undemocratic, highly militarized and internally divided neighbours in the Horn of Africa. Nonetheless, 'in reality, the foundations of democracy and rule of law in Somaliland are still fragile and the transition has far to go.'[82] He confirmed that

corruption was endemic, and clan-based interest groups would cling to power. He stressed that only the government's relative poverty and its lack of coercive authority rendered it somewhat accountable to the public. 'But if Somaliland receives recognition, all that could change.'[83] To endow a government that displays a growing tendency to disrespect the laws of its own country and keeps its population 'hostage to peace' by arguing that any oppositional move would endanger the country's chances for recognition, may worsen the situation.[84]

Conclusion

No one could have predicted the success of Somaliland's state and, to some extent, nation-building process in the early 1990s. Certainly, Somaliland today is not simply the continuation of the (ex-)British protectorate, even if this is frequently stressed by political actors in and supporters of Somaliland. Somaliland has to be understood as a complex new state, born out of civil war, which in fact provided the drive to engage in secession and state-formation, and shaped by complex political dynamics since 1991. The common experiences of guerrilla struggle and hardship provided a basis for state-formation in central Somaliland, where Isaaq reside who filled the ranks of the SNM and constitute the majority of the population of Somaliland. The peaceful hand-over from the SNM to civilian leaders, unparalleled in African post-colonial history, paved the way for the establishment of Somaliland's hybrid system of government in Boorama 1993. This system carried the polity a long way. The most important factor on the way to a *de facto* state, however, were countless everyday practices and decisions of ordinary people who increasingly left their guns at home when tensions arose, tolerated power-hungry and corrupt leaders patiently, worked for slow but steady transitions of the system of government, endured economic hardship due to lack of resources and non-recognition, and relied on self-help and their relatives abroad rather than on help from the government or the international community. In many cases, the financial remittances sent by the diaspora facilitated family survival in the absence of jobs and public services.

Finally, a number of external factors aided Somaliland's gestation. The continued state-failure of and warring in Somalia, which over the past two decades was complicated by external interventions, forced people in Somaliland to move on. To return to a collapsed Somalia is no

option after the successful peace and democratisation processes in Somaliland since 1991. The establishment of Puntland in north-eastern Somalia in 1998 seemingly threatened Somaliland. Puntland was constructed as 'counter-polity' to Somaliland. It capitalised on the fact that the above mentioned *de facto* state-formation of Somaliland had happened largely in central and western Somaliland. The eastern regions of the country were hardly integrated. The members of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeeli clans residing there did not share the negative experiences of the Isaaq under the regime of Maxamed Siyad Barre and therefore were not motivated to secede in 1991. They tolerated the declaration of independence in 1991 in order to avoid further fighting in the region. Yet, over the 1990s they distanced themselves from Hargeysa and finally engaged in the establishment of Puntland. They are united with the Majeerteen dominating in north-eastern Somalia in the vision to re-establish a unitary Somalia. I argued, however, that this seeming threat to Somaliland's state formation in the long run contributed to Somaliland's stabilisation, at least in its centre. Puntland provides the 'relevant other' against which Somalilanders, who share the vision of gaining international recognition, define their identity and polity. By engaging in military conflict over the contested borderlands with Puntland, Somaliland eventually established some control over the so far peripheral and not well-integrated territories. The process of state and nation building in Somaliland is still ongoing.

Notes

[1] C Tilly, Reflections on the History of European State-Making, In C. Tilly (ed.) The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975; C Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990, Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990; C Clapham, Degrees of Statehood, Review of International Studies 24, 1998; JS Migdal Joel S. and K Schlichte, Rethinking the state, In JS Migdal and K Schlichte (eds.) The Dynamics of States, Burlington: Ashgate, 2005; M Doornbos, Global Forces and State Restructuring. Dynamics of State Formation and Collapse, London: Palgrave, 2006.

[2] C Clapham, Rethinking African states. *African Security Review* 10(3), 2001; A Bellagamba and G Klute, Tracing emergent powers in contemporary Africa, in A Bellagamba and G Klute (eds.) Beside the state: emergent powers in contemporary Africa, Koeln: Ruediger Koeppe, 2008, 9-11.

[3] B Kapferer, New formations of power, the oligarchic-corporate state, and anthropological ideological discourse, Anthropological Theory 5 (3), 2005, 286.

[4] J Herbst, The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa, International Organisation 43(4), 1989.

[5] P Englebert and R. Hummel, Let's stick together: Understanding Africa's secessionist deficit, African Affairs 104 (416), 2005.

[6] S Pegg, Scott, International Society and the De Facto State, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998, 4.

[7] L Ciabarri, No representation without redistribution: Somaliland plural authorities, the search for a state and the 2005 parliamentary elections, in A Bellagamba and G Klute (eds.) Beside the state: emergent powers in contemporary Africa, Koeln: Ruediger Koeppe, 2008, 57.

[8] For reasons of space and lack of reliable data this text does not analyze the local and regional economy at any depth and only occasionally refers to the wider political dynamics in the region, particularly the politics of Ethiopia, Djibouti and some Arabic states toward Somalia in general, and Somaliland in particular.

[9] In Somali society, groups belonging together by patrilineal descent cooperate or compete with regard to sharing resources. Besides descent, also co-residence and adoption provide a social basis for group-belonging, particularly in central and southern Somalia.

[10] Somali place and personal names in this text generally follow the Somali orthography. The Latin 'c' stands for a sound close to the Arabic 'ع' (ayn); 'x' denotes 'ح' (ha), as in, e.g., Cali or in Faarax.

[11] Barre was Marrexaan. His mother was Ogadeen. An important companion of the President, Axmed Sulebaan Daffle, a son in law of Barre and high government official, was Dhulbahante. Their clans provided the backbone of the regime.

[12] D Compagnon, Political Decay in Somalia: From Personal Rule to Warlordism, Refuge 12 (5) 1992.

[13] J. Drysdale, Somaliland: the anatomy of secession (Booklet, no publisher indicated), 1992, 25.

[14] M. Bradbury, Becoming Somaliland, London, James Currey, 2008, 82-83.

[15] Interview with Garaad Cabdiqani, Laascaanood, September 2002; Interview Cabdisamid Cali Shire, Garoowe, 05.12.03.

[16] Bradbury, Becoming Somaliland, 98.
[17] K Eikenberg, Somaliland: Der Konflikt in Hargeysa, AG KAD (Arbeitsgemeinschaft kirchlicher Entwicklungsdienst) Informationen zum Horn von Afrika 1, 1995.

[18] U Terlinden, Emerging governance in Somaliland: a perspective from below, in E.-M. Bruchhaus and M.M. Sommer (eds.), Hot Spot Horn of Africa Revisited, Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 2008, 51-67.

[19] Interview Yassin Faraton, Laascaanood, 04.11.2003.

[20] A second *shir* was held in Boocame in 1996/97; see below for details on 'Boocame II'.

[21] Interview Jaamac Cabdullahi Shurie, Laascaanood, 11.09.2002.

[22] Interview Cabdillahi Qalaffo, Laascaanood, 18.12.2003.

[23] Interview Yassin Faraton, Laascaanood, 04.11.2003.

[24] East of Burco the old Somali Shilling continued to be used, since there the economic ties to the rest of Somalia were strong.

[25] *Qaad* is a mild drug. The leaves of the *qaad* tree (*catha edulis*) are chewed for their stimulating effect. The leaves are imported from eastern Ethiopia into Somaliland.

[26] M. Renders, Traditional leaders and institutions in the building of the Muslim Republic of Somaliland, Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Ghent, 2006, Chapter 4; Bradbury, Becoming Somaliland, 116-123.

[27] Interview Garaad Cabdiqani, Laascaanood, 28.10.2003.

[28] Bradbury, Becoming Somaliland, 126.

[29] Interview with Muuse Cali Faruur, Hargeysa, 15.02.2009.

[30] Renders, Traditional leaders and institutions, Chapter 5.

[31] MV Hoehne, From pastoral to state politics: Traditional authorities in Northern Somalia, in . Buur and HM Kyed (eds.), State recognition and democratisation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A new dawn for traditional authorities?, New York, Palgrave, 2007.

[32] MV Hoehne, Diasporisches Handeln in Bürgerkrieg und Wiederaufbau: Beispiele aus Somalia und Somaliland, Friedens-Warte 85 (1-2), 2010.

[33] L Ciabarri, No representation without redistribution: Somaliland plural Authorities, the Search for a State and the 2005 Parliamentary Elections, in A Bellagamba and G Klute (eds.), Beside the State: Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa, Köln, Rüdiger Köppe, 62.

[34] The example of the role of members of the Dhulbahante diaspora at the Boocame conference (above) shows that diasporic actors also could engage in conflict escalation.

[35] In contrast the five-pointed white star on light blue ground of the old Somali flag had expressed the idea of Greater Somalia, including the British and the Italian Somalilands as well as the Somali territories in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya.

[36] *Shuhada* ist he Somali plural of the Arabic loanword *Shihid*, denoting a fighter died in jihad. The SNM had termed its struggle against the Barre-regime as jihad.

[37] Africa's 55th President, Egal of Somaliland, May 2001,
<http://www.afrol.com/Countries/Somalia/backgr_egal_interview.htm>

[38] B Anderson, Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, London: Verso, 1983.

[39] During an interview, a former Minister in Somaliland came to praise the beauty of Mogadishu before the war. He concluded: 'I tell you one thing: if there is law, order and a government in Mogadishu, and if people are given their property back and anybody can feel save in Mogadishu, nobody will stay in Hargaysa; everybody will go to Mogadishu' (Interview Anonymous, Hargeysa, 19.09.2003).

[40] M Bryden, New hope for Somalia? The building block approach. Review of African Political Economy 26 (79), 1999.

[41] F Battera, Remarks on the 1998 charter of the Puntland State of Somalia, Working Paper, United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS), 1999; M Doornbos, When is a state a state? Exploring Puntland, in P Konings, W van Binsbergen and G Hesseling (eds), Trajectoires de libération en Afrique contemporaire, Paris: Karthala,2000; AY Farah, Somalia: Modern history and the end of the 1990s, in WSP (ed.), Rebuilding Somalia: Issues and Possibilities for Puntland, London: HAAN, 2001; AY Farah, Troubled transition in Puntland State of Somalia (PSS), 1998-2001, Unpublished paper. Nairobi: UNDP resource centre, 2004.

[42] Kismaayo, an important port-town circa 450 kilometres south of Mogadishu, hosted a significant Majeerteen population since the time of Italian colonialism. Also Dhulbahante had emigrated there already in the early 20th century. In the early 1990s the town was heavily contested between two splinter groups of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) that originally had been an Ogadeen movement. One of the splinter groups was the SPM (Harti).

[43] USC forces loyal to Maxamed Faarax Caydiid tried to expand to the northwest in 1991. SSDF/ Majeerteen troops under Cabdullahi Yuusuf fought against them in Gaalkacyo until 1993. The conflict ended with the division of the town in a Hawiye and a Darood/Harti part.

[44] F. Battera, Remarks on the 1998 charter of the Puntland State of Somalia, Working Paper, United Nations Development Office for Somalia (UNDOS), 1999, 4.

[45] MV Hoehne, Mimesis and mimicry in dynamics of state and identity formation in northern Somalia, Africa 79 (2), 2009.

[46] Battera, Remarks on the 1998 charter, 12.

[47] Ibid., 13.

[48] F Barth, Introduction, in F. Barth (ed.), Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference, London: Allen and Unwin,1969.

[49] Farah, Troubled Transition.

[50] The TNG had close relations to some reform oriented Islamist groups in Somalia, particularly to Al Islaax. The latter, however, is clearly not a militant or terrorist organization.

[51] The number of 1.18 million voters must have included a large number of people who voted two or more times. In the parliamentary elections (2005) only 674.000 voters were counted.

[52] M Bryden, A State-within-a-failed-state: Is Somaliland Headed for Recognition or Reunification?, in P. Kingston and I.S. Spears (eds.), States-Within-States: Incipient Political Entities in the Post-Cold War Era, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 178.

[53] Literally: 'Party of the Democratic Peoples Alliance'. The abbreviation 'UDUB', however, refers to the Somali word *udub* that denotes the central pillar in the nomadic hut.

[54] The party name Kulmiye is not an abbreviation. Etymologically, it comes from *kulan* meaning: meeting.

[55] Literally: 'Party of Justice and Welfare'. The abbreviation UCID refers to the Somali word construction *u cid* that means 'responsible/care for' (*Somaliland anaga u cid* ah, meaning: we are responsible/care for Somaliland).

[56] Article 9 of the Constitution of Somaliland provided that not more than three national parties must exist in Somaliland. This was a measure against clan-factionism.

[57] U Terlinden and MH Ibrahim, Somaliland – a Success Story of Peace-Making, State-Building and Democratisation?, in E-M Bruchhaus and MM Sommer (eds.), Hot Spot Horn of Africa Revisited, Hamburg, LIT Verlag.

[58] I Jhazbhay, Somaliland: Africa's best kept secret, a challenge to the international community?, African Security Review 12 (4), 2003; DH Shinn, Somaliland: the little country that could, CSIS Africa Notes 9, 2002.

[59] This did not mean that 'pure clanism' reigned and that one party was controlled and supported by only one clan. Within every party, all clans had their share. Yet, positions within the government and the parties were rather awarded on basis of clan belonging than of individual merit and elections.

[60] SJ Hansen and M Bradbury, Somaliland: A new democracy in the Horn of Africa?, Review of African Political Economy, 3 (113), 2007, 470-471.

[61] MV Hoehne, Political identity, emerging state structures and conflict in Northern Somalia, Journal of Modern African Studies, 44 (3), 2006, 406-407.

[62] *The Republican* issue 304, 17-23.07.2004, p. 1.

[63] MV Hoehne, Puntland and Somaliland clashing in northern Somalia: Who cuts the Gordian knot?, 2007, <http://hornofafrica.ssrc.org/Hoehne/>

[64] MV Hoehne, Newspapers in Hargeysa: Freedom of speech in post-conflict Somaliland. Africa Spectrum 43 (1), 2008, 100.

[65] The English translation of the Constitution of Somaliland is available on http://www.somalilandlaw.com.

[66] Most of the resources were provided by EC, DfID/UK, USAID, SIDA Sweden, Norway, DANIDA/Denmark; together they form the Democratization Program Steering Committee.

[67] MV Hoehne, Somalia: Update on the current situation (2006-2008). Bern: Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe SFH, 2008, 13-15.

[68] Personal communication with an anonymous source based in Nairobi, 26 September 2009.

[69] In the parliamentary elections (2005), during which ink was used to prevent multiple voting, only about 674.000 voters were counted.

[70] Observations of the author in Hargeysa, January to May 2009.

[71] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The case of Somaliland's international recognition as an independent state, 3-6.

[72] Ibid., 10.

[73] Ciabarri, No representation without redistribution, 55-56; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The case of Somaliland's international recognition as an independent state, 12-48.

[74] For the description and analysis of an impressive performance of Somaliland's claim upon a visit of British parliamentarians to Hargeysa in January 2004 see Hoehne, Political identity, emerging state structures and conflict in Northern Somalia, 402-404.

[75] Interviews, Hargeysa, July and October 2004, December 2008, January 2009.

[76] M Schoiswohl, Status and (Human Rights) Obligations of Non-Recognized De Facto Regimes in International Law: The case of Somaliland. Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2004, 32-35.

[77] Ibid., 48-58.

[78] The case of Eritrea is different, since its independence in 1993 was recognised by the government in Addis Ababa.

[79] The mission only visited central and western Somaliland, particularly the cities of Hargeysa, Berbera, Burco, Sheikh and Boorama. It did not approach the regions contested between Somaliland and Puntland.

[80] AU, Resume: AU fact-finding mission to Somaliland (30 April to 4 May 2005), 2005.

[81] International Crisis Group (ICG), Somaliland: time for African Union leadership, Africa Report No. 110, 2006, i.

[82] M Bryden, The banana test: is Somaliland ready for recognition?, Annales d'Ethiopie XIX, 2003, 363.

[83] Ibid.

[84] The term 'hostages to peace' has recently been used as title for the Human Rights Watch report on the situation in Somaliland (Human Rights Watch, 'Hostages to peace': Threats to human rights and democracy in Somaliland, 2009, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/somaliland0709web.pdf). Originally, it has been employed by Matt Bryden already a few years ago. He argued that '[o]rdinary Somalilanders today seem to want more, referring to themselves as hostages to peace – desirous of change but fearful that any tinkering with their political system might trigger ist sudden implosion' (Bryden, The Banana test, 363).

ANGLOPHONE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS
IN CAMEROON

Piet Konings & Francis B. Nyamnjoh

Introduction

Secession has been rare in post-colonial Africa and has been strongly opposed by newly independent states and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in an attempt to safeguard territorial integrity. Secessionist claims have, however, been on the rise since the end of the 1980s in the wake of political liberalisation in Africa. Eritrea's independence in 1993, after several decades of a national war of liberation, is, significantly, the only example of a formal reorganisation of the continent's political map.

Of late, some Africanists have been trying to explain the reasons for Africa's remarkable 'secessionist deficit' and to identify the various internal and external factors accounting for the failure or success of past and on-going secessionist claims on the continent (cf. Forest 2004; Englebert & Hummel 2005; Keller 2007). Curiously, in their critical review of African secessionist movements, they have failed to discuss Anglophone secessionist movements in Cameroon.

This chapter tries to fill the lacuna. It will be argued that the deep roots of current Anglophone secessionist claims can be found in what has come to be called the 'Anglophone Problem', which is posing a major challenge to the post-colonial state's efforts to forge national unity and integration. There is a widespread feeling in Anglophone Cameroon that reunification with Francophone Cameroon in 1961 has led to a growing marginalisation of the Anglophone minority in the post-colonial nation-state project that is controlled by the Francophone political elite and endangers Anglophone cultural heritage and identity. Although Anglophone resistance has been a permanent feature of Cameroon's post-colonial biography (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003), it was not until political liberalisation in the early 1990s that the Anglophone elite began to mobilise the regional population against the allegedly subordinated position of Anglophones. Claims were made for self-determination and autonomy, first in the form of a return to a federal state and later, after persistent refusals by the

Biya regime to discuss the federal option, for outright secession. It is important to mention that the Anglophone secessionist movement differs from most other secessionist movements in Africa in that it wants to achieve an independent Anglophone state through peaceful negotiations rather than force.

Since the Biya government is continuing to uphold the unitary state and simply dismisses the secessionist option, the Anglophone leadership has adopted two main strategies to achieve its aim. On the one hand, it is trying to gain international recognition for its cause and, on the other, it is sensitising the Anglophone population to its objectives and strategies and mobilising it for possible action against the Francophone-dominated unitary state.

Finally, the chapter will show why, for a number of reasons, the prospects of Anglophone secession are somewhat bleak. Firstly, the relevant international organisations continue to favour territorial integrity. Secondly, the Francophone-dominated state has devised a series of divisive and repressive tactics that have proved largely successful in containing the Anglophone danger and in controlling Anglophone organisation. One of the immediate consequences has been that Anglophone nationalists have had to resort to less visible and controllable forms of protest. Anglophones in the diaspora have quickly underscored the importance of the Internet for raising Anglophone consciousness and promoting the virtual representation of the Anglophone cause within and outside Cameroon. And thirdly, it has become increasingly evident that there are internal divisions among the leadership of the various Anglophone movements and the Anglophone elite as a whole about the policies and strategies for redressing the Anglophone problem and determining the nature of the state's future form. One of the main cleavages in the Anglophone elite can be attributed to ethno-regional divisions and tensions within the Anglophone community itself, particularly those between the South West Province (the coastal-forest area) and the inland savannah area (the so-called Grassfields), today's North West Province.

This study is divided into five sections. The first provides an insight into the Anglophone problem; the second describes the Anglophone historical trajectory to secessionist claims in the political liberalisation era; the third deals with the Anglophone leadership's struggle for international recognition of its secessionist stand; and the fourth documents the leadership's sensitisation and mobilisation

campaign. And finally, the fifth section explores the future prospects for Anglophone secessionist claims.

The Anglophone Problem

The emergence of Anglophone secessionist movements in Cameroon during the current process of political liberalisation cannot be explained without reference to the so-called 'Anglophone Problem' (cf. Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2003; Eyoh 1998; Jua 2003). Its roots can be traced back to the partitioning between the French and British of the German Kamerun Protectorate (1884-1916) after the First World War, first as mandates under the League of Nations and then as trusts under the United Nations. As a result of partitioning, the British acquired two narrow and non-contiguous regions in the western part of the country, bordering Nigeria. The southern part, which is the focus of our study, was named Southern Cameroons, and the northern part became known as Northern Cameroons.[1] Significantly, the British territory was much smaller than the French one, comprising only about 20% of the total area and the population of the former German colony.

   The partitioning of the territory into British and French spheres had important consequences for political developments, laying the historical and spatial foundations for the construction of Anglophone and Francophone identities in the territory. The populations in each region came to see themselves as distinct communities defined by differences in language and inherited colonial traditions of education, law, public administration and world-view. Second, while French Cameroon was incorporated into the French colonial empire as a distinct administrative unit separate from neighbouring French Equatorial Africa, the British Cameroons was administered as an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, which led to the neglect of its socio-economic development and the increasing migration of Nigerians, notably the Igbo, to Southern Cameroons, where they came to dominate the regional economy (Konings 2005a). There was every indication, particularly in the period preceding reunification, that Britain intended to integrate Southern Cameroons into Nigeria, in spite of its distinct status as a trust territory (Awasom 1998). The dominant position of the Igbo in the regional economy and administration was deeply resented by the local population and resulted in an explosive situation after the Second World War when

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[1] For the history of Northern Cameroons, see Le Vine (1964) and Welch (1966). Northern Cameroons voted in the 1961 plebiscite for integration into the Federation of Nigeria.

regional politicians started exploiting the 'Igbo scare' in nationalist struggles (Amazee 1990). It was not therefore surprising that the nationalist struggles in Southern Cameroons had more of an anti-Nigerian than an anti-colonial character.

Southern Cameroonian nationalists started attacking the subordinate position of Southern Cameroons in the British-Nigerian colonial system and the dominant position of the Igbo in Southern Cameroons. They initially claimed a larger representation of the Southern Cameroons elite in the Nigerian administration, and later regional autonomy. In response to their pressure, the British authorities gradually increased Southern Cameroonian representation in the Nigerian administration after the Second World War. And following successive constitutional changes, they granted Southern Cameroons a quasi-regional status and a limited degree of self-government in 1954, and full regional status within the Federation of Nigeria in 1958 (Ngoh 2001). For part of the Southern Cameroonian elite, organised by Dr E.M.L. Endeley in the South West-based Kamerun National Congress (KNC) party, this was the reason to shift from an anti-Nigerian stance to a more positive view of Nigeria. From their perspective, regional status seemed a satisfactory answer to the problem of Nigerian domination, the lack of Southern Cameroonian participation in the Nigerian political system, and economic stagnation.

Interestingly, from the late 1940s onwards, the question of reunification had cropped up in the programmes of various Southern Cameroonian pressure groups and newly created parties, raising the possibility of an alternative political option for Southern Cameroons to escape from its subordinate position in the colonial system and Igbo domination. A number of factors underpinned their reunification campaign. There was the emergence of the 'Kamerun idea' among some members of the Southern Cameroonian elite and the belief that the period of German rule had created a Cameroon identity or nation (Welch 1966: 158-88; Johnson 1970: 42). It has been pointed out that such irredentist feelings of one Cameroon under German administration hardly corresponded with reality since German colonial rule had simply been too short to create a Cameroonian identity among the territory's multiplicity of ethnic groups (Ardener 1967; Chem-Langhëë & Njeuma 1980; Eban 2009). However Kofele-Kale (1980) argued that it was not the reality of the German experience but memories and myths (factual or otherwise) that inspired the Southern Cameroonian elite to start advocating reunification. To strengthen their arguments, the elite referred to the close relationship between ethnic groups on both sides of the

British-French Cameroon border. This boundary, they stressed, was regarded as an unnecessary inconvenience by the people in the area because it restricted the free movement of people belonging to the same ethnic group.

It must nevertheless be pointed out that the idea of reunification was much more popular among Francophones than among Anglophones (Awasom 2000). Its loyal flag bearers were from the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC), the radical nationalist party in French Cameroon (Joseph 1977; Mbembe 1996) and among Francophone immigrants in Southern Cameroons who saw reunification principally as a way of removing their second-class citizenship in Southern Cameroons and discrimination by the British Administering Authority (Amazee 1994; Njeuma 1995). Significantly, the Southern Cameroons elite initially regarded the propagation of reunification as an effective strategy that would encourage the British administration to grant their territory either a larger measure of autonomy within the Nigerian Federation or separation from Nigeria altogether. Dr Endeley's rejection of this idea in 1954 after the Southern Cameroons attained the status of semi-autonomous region attests to the fact that it was not a genuine concern among the people. Even John Ngu Foncha, the leader of the North West-based Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) which was championing reunification, had picked up the reunification idea merely as an electoral slogan to combat Endeley's new position. And perhaps even more importantly, he saw reunification not as an immediate goal but as an issue to be negotiated after the territory's separation from Nigeria and a period of continued trusteeship or independence. Besides being a slogan in Anglophone Cameroon, the idea of reunification had been rejected by the French colonial administration and most of the Francophone political elite.

With Nigeria approaching independence in 1960, the population of the British trust territory needed to decide on its own political future. It soon became evident that the majority of Southern Cameroonians did not favour joining either Nigeria or Francophone Cameroon, but wanted to form an independent state (Awasom 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). That this expressed wish was eventually not honoured must be attributed to two main factors. First, internal divisions within the Anglophone political elite prevented them from rallying behind the majority option in the territory. And second, the UN refused, with the complicity of the British, to put the option of an independent Southern Cameroons state to the vote in the UN-organised plebiscite on 11 February 1961 (Percival 2008), on the grounds that the creation of another tiny

state was politically undesirable (and likely to contribute to a further 'Balkanisation' of Africa) and economically unviable.[2]

Deprived of their preferred option, Southern Cameroonians were given what amounted to Hobson's choice, i.e. a choice they had to accept whether they liked it or not. In this case it was independence by joining Nigeria or reunification with Francophone Cameroon, which had become independent in 1960 under the new name of the Republic of Cameroon. Three smaller Southern Cameroonian parties – the Kamerun United Party (KUP) led by Paul Kale, the Cameroons Commoners' Congress (CCC) led by Chief Stephen Nyenti, and the Cameroons Indigenes Party (CIP) under Jesco Manga Williams – immediately contested the UN limitation of plebiscite options, insisting on the inclusion of an independent Southern Cameroons state as a third option. They sent several petitions to the UN, threatening to boycott the plebiscite if their wish was not honoured. Their protest actions did not, however, bear fruit (Ngoh 1990: 179-80). In the end, the majority of Southern Cameroonians voted for what they considered the lesser of two evils. Their vote in favour of reunification appeared to be more a rejection of continuous ties with Nigeria, which had proved detrimental to Southern Cameroonian development, than a vote for union with Francophone Cameroon, a territory with a different cultural heritage and one that was then involved in a violent civil war (Joseph 1977). As Susungi (1991) aptly observed, reunification was far from being the reunion of two prodigal sons who had been unjustly separated at birth, but was more like a loveless UN-arranged marriage between two people who hardly knew each other.[3]

By reuniting with the former French Cameroon, the Anglophone elite had hoped to enter a loose federal union as a way of protecting their territory's minority status and cultural heritage (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). Instead, it became evident that the Francophone elite wanted to have a highly centralised, unitary state to promote national unity and economic development. Obviously, the bargaining position of the

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[2] The British had informed the United Nations that the Southern Cameroons would not be economically viable as an independent state. This was based on the Phillipson Report (1959) commissioned by the Foncha government in 1959 to investigate the financial, economic and administrative situation in Southern Cameroons. Its findings, however, could be disputed as an economic survey done in the same year by Dr K.E. Berrill (1960) came to a different conclusion. Hesitant about investing heavily in a region that was supposedly unattractive economically, the British were also opposed to extended trusteeship. The British Secretary of State for the Colonies once warned Southern Cameroons leaders that the golden key to the Bank of England would not be handed over to Southern Cameroons in the case of an extended trusteeship period.

[3] For similar ideas, see Epie Ngome's excellent novel entitled *What God Has Put Asunder* (1992).

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Francophone elite was far greater than that of the Anglophones. The former French Trust Territory of Cameroon, now renamed the Republic of Cameroon, was already a much larger independent state. Moreover, the Francophone elite received strong support from the French during constitutional negotiations, while the Anglophone elite were virtually abandoned by the British, who deeply resented the Southern Cameroons option for reunification with Francophone Cameroon (Awasom 2000). As a result, a rumour quickly spread that Charles de Gaulle saw Southern Cameroons as 'a small gift from the Queen of England to France' (Milne 1999: 432-148; Gaillard 1994).

During the constitutional talks at Foumban in July 1961, the Francophone elite were only prepared to accept a highly centralised federation, which was regarded merely as a transitional phase towards the formation of a unitary state. Such a federation demanded relatively few amendments to the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon. Interestingly, Pierre Messmer (1998: 134-35), one of the last French high commissioners in Cameroon and a close advisor to President Ahmadou Ahidjo, pointed out that he and others knew at the time that the so-called federal constitution provided merely a 'sham federation', which was 'safe for appearances, an annexation of West Cameroon' (the new name of the former Southern Cameroons) (Anyangwe 2009). The final version of the constitution was only approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Cameroon on 1 September 1961, just one month prior to reunification. For this reason, the present Anglophone movements declared in 1993 that 'the union between the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon had proceeded without any constitutional basis' (All Anglophone Conference 1993: 12).

Under its new constitution, West Cameroon lost most of the limited autonomy it had enjoyed as part of the Nigerian federation (Ardener 1967; Stark 1976). Even worse, a few months after reunification, President Ahidjo created a system of regional administration in which West Cameroon was designated as one of six regions, basically ignoring the country's federal system. The regions were headed by powerful federal inspectors who, in the case of West Cameroon, in effect overshadowed the prime minister with whom they were in frequent conflict concerning jurisdiction (Stark 1976). In addition, the West Cameroon government could barely function since it had to depend entirely on subventions from the federal government that controlled its major sources of revenue (Benjamin 1972).

To achieve his objective of total integration by the Anglophone minority into a strongly centralised, unitary state, Ahidjo used several tactics. One was to play Anglophone political factions off against each other and eventually integrate them into a single party, the Cameroon National Union (CNU). Another was to eliminate from positions of power any Anglophone leaders who remained committed to federalism, replacing them with others who favoured a unitary state. Still another tactic was to create 'clients' among the Anglophone elite. By granting top positions in the federal institutions and in the single party to representatives of significant ethnic and regional groups in the Anglophone region, he tried to control these groups. Finally, he did not shrink from repressing opposition. Through these and other tactics he succeeded in abolishing the federation in 1972 in blatant disregard of constitutional provisions. His justification for this 'glorious revolution' was that federalism fostered regionalism and impeded economic development.

A growing number of Anglophones were, however, inclined to attribute the emergence of regionalism and the lack of economic development not to federalism *per se* but to the hegemonic tendencies of the Francophone-dominated state. For them, the nation-state project after reunification was driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate the Anglophone minority and erase the cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity (Eyoh 1998). Several studies have shown that Anglophones have regularly been relegated to inferior positions in the national decision-making process and have been constantly underrepresented in ministerial as well as senior- and middle-management positions in the administration, the military and parastatals (Kofele-Kale 1986; Takougang & Krieger 1998). There is also general agreement that Anglophones have been exposed to a carefully considered policy aimed at eroding their language and institutions, even though Francophone political leaders assured their Anglophone counterparts during constitutional talks on reunification that the inherited colonial differences in language and institutions would be respected in the bilingual union. And last but not least, the relative under-development of the Anglophone region shows that it has not benefited sufficiently from its rich agricultural potential and its oil resources. Oil revenues were alleged to have been used by those in power to feed 'the bellies' of their allies (Bayart 1989) and to stimulate the economy in other regions. This gradually created an Anglophone consciousness: feelings of being recolonised and marginalised in all spheres of public life and thus of being second-class citizens in their own country.

To reduce the danger of any united Anglophone action against the Francophone-dominated state, Ahidjo decided after the 'revolution' of 20 May 1972 to divide the Anglophone territory into two provinces, South West and North West Provinces. When making this decision, he was well aware of the internal contradictions within the Anglophone community between the coastal-forest people in the South West Province and the Grassfields people in the North West Province. One of the major reasons for these internal conflicts was the transfer of political power from the South West to the North West elite at the end of the 1950s. Following this, the North West elite began to assert its newly acquired position of power, something that soon became ubiquitous in higher levels of government and in senior non-governmental positions. In pre-empting for itself the top jobs as well as the best lands in the South West, it provoked strong resentment of North West domination among South Westerners (Kofele-Kale 1981). South West sentiments were intensified by the fact that the entrepreneurial North Westerners were gradually succeeding in dominating most sectors of the South West economy, particularly trade, transport and housing (Rowlands 1993). Another reason for the South West-North West divide was the 1961 UN plebiscite when the South West showed considerable sympathy for alignment with Nigeria, but the choice for Cameroon prevailed, mainly on the strength of the North West votes. A final source of tension was the massive labour migration from the North West to southwestern plantations and the subsequent settlement of northwestern workers in the South West (Konings 2001).

Lack of unity and severe repression precluded the Anglophone elite from openly expressing its grievances about Francophone domination until 1982 when Paul Biya took power. Following the limited degree of liberalisation introduced by the new president (Takougang & Krieger 1998), the Anglophone elite began to voice their long-standing grievances (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). There was vehement Anglophone protest when the new president changed the country's official name from the 'United Republic of Cameroon' to simply the 'Republic of Cameroon' in February 1984. The new name was not only similar to that of independent Francophone Cameroon prior to reunification but also appeared to ignore the fact that the Cameroonian state was composed of two distinct entities. In Anglophone circles, Biya's unilateral name change seems to have given rise to two different interpretations. Some Anglophones considered this action as the boldest step yet taken towards their assimilation and disappearance as a distinct founding community. For

them, the new name was clear evidence that, as far as Biya was concerned, the Anglophone territory and its people had lost their identity and become an indistinguishable part of the former Republic of Cameroon, thus allowing Ahidjo's designs for absorbing and assimilating the Anglophone minority into the Francophone-dominated state to be fulfilled (Biya 1987).

Other Anglophones argued that, by this action, *La République du Cameroun* had unilaterally seceded from the union and thus lacked any constitutional base from which to continue ruling the former Southern Cameroons.[4] They are inclined to appeal to the UN to assist its former trust territory in peacefully separating from *La République* (Anyangwe 2008). This view was first expressed by Fon Gorji Dinka, the eminent Anglophone lawyer and first president of the Cameroon Bar Association. On 10 March 1985, Dinka addressed a memorandum to Paul Biya entitled 'The New Social Order',[5] in which he declared the Biya government to be unconstitutional and called for Southern Cameroons to become independent and be renamed the Republic of Ambazonia.[6] Dinka was arrested and imprisoned without trial until January 1986, which earned him the status of martyr for the Anglophone cause.

As the Biya government was increasingly stepping up repression in a situation of deepening economic and political crisis, it was not until political liberalisation in the early 1990s that Anglophones openly started to organise in defence of their interests.

Political Liberalisation and the Anglophone Movements' Struggle for Secession

Anglophones have not only played a leading role in accomplishing political liberalisation in Cameroon but have also used the liberalisation of political space to create or reactivate various organisations to represent their interests.

Given Anglophone frustration with the Francophone-dominated state, it is not surprising that the country's first opposition party emerged in Anglophone Cameroon in 1990. Capitalising on Anglophone disenchantment with the regime, the Social

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[4] Reference to the incumbent regime as the government of *La République du Cameroun*, the name adopted by Francophone Cameroon at independence, has become a key signifier in the replotting of the nation's constitutional history as a progressive consolidation of the recolonisation of Anglophone Cameroon by the post-colonial Francophone-dominated state. See Eyoh (1998: 264).

[5] 'The New Social Order' by Fon Gorji Dinka, 20 March 1985, reproduced in Mukong (1990: 98-99).

[6] The name is derived from Ambas Bay at the foot of Mount Cameroon, which was the area of permanent British settlement in the present-day Anglophone region. In 1858, the British Baptist missionary, Alfred Saker, purchased land from the King of Bimbia and became the *de facto* governor of the small colony of Victoria that was named after the British Queen. See Ardener (1968).

Democratic Front (SDF) was formed in Bamenda, the capital of North West Province, and demanded the liberalisation of political space. Its chairman was John Fru Ndi who was to enjoy widespread popularity among the urban masses because of his courage and populist style of leadership (Krieger 2008). After a massive rally to launch the SDF on 26 May 1990 ended in the deaths of six young Anglophones, the state-controlled media tried to deny government responsibility for this bloody event and to distort the true facts (Nyamnjoh 2005). Anglophone students at the University of Yaoundé who demonstrated in support of the SDF and political liberalisation on the same day were falsely accused by the regime of having marched in favour of the re-integration of Anglophone Cameroon into Nigeria and of singing the Nigerian national anthem and raising the Nigerian flag (Konings 2002). Leading members of the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), strongly condemned Anglophones for such treacherous actions and called on the government to mete out exemplary sanctions. Anglophones were openly provoked by being called 'Biafrans', meaning secessionists, were referred to as 'enemies in the house', and were requested by then Minister of Territorial Administration, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, 'to go elsewhere'. Indignant at his own party's behaviour, John Ngu Foncha, the principal Anglophone architect of the federal state, resigned as the CPDM's first vice-president in June 1990. He lamented the fact that the constitutional provisions that had protected Anglophones in the 1961 federal constitution had been discarded and their voices drowned out, while the rule of the gun had replaced the dialogue that Anglophones so cherished (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 77-78).

Under considerable internal and external pressure, the Biya government eventually introduced a measure of political liberalisation. In December 1990 it declared multipartyism as well as a degree of freedom in mass communication, association and the holding of public meetings and demonstrations. As a result, several political parties, associations, pressure groups and private newspapers were established in Anglophone Cameroon and they began to express and represent Anglophone interests. SDF influence spread from North West Province to South West Province, soon becoming the major opposition party in Anglophone Cameroon. Informed by not-so-distant experience of perceived domination by North Westerners, the South West elite nevertheless continued to be suspicious of the aspirations of SDF leaders, fearing renewed North West domination.

The leaders of the SDF helped turn the Anglophone region into a veritable hotbed of rebellion, leading to several fierce confrontations with the regime in power, especially during the 1991-1992 'ghost-town' campaign, which was essentially a prolonged demonstration of civil disobedience organised by the SDF and the allied opposition parties to force the Biya government to hold a sovereign national conference (Mbu 1993). Evidently, Biya's declared victory in the October 1992 presidential elections was a traumatic experience in Anglophone Cameroon, with violent protests being held against his 'theft of Fru Ndi's victory' throughout North West Province.

Paradoxically and despite its contribution to Anglophone consciousness and action, the party began presenting itself as a national rather than as an Anglophone party, as was evidenced by its growing Francophone membership of mostly Bamileke living in the Francophone part of the Grassfields and who are ethnically related to groups in North West Province. Since the SDF adopted a half-hearted stand towards the Anglophone problem (Konings 2004), Anglophone interests came to be first and foremost represented by associations and pressure groups created and reactivated by the Anglophone elite with the introduction of political liberalisation in 1990. Some of them, such as the Free West Cameroon Movement (FWCM) and the Ambazonian Movement of Fon Gorji Dinka, advocated outright secession. Most, however, initially championed a return to the federal state, especially the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM). This was the only Anglophone association operating legally in the country and was the most important Anglophone pressure group for some time.

In addition to these associations that aimed to represent broad-based Anglophone interests, a large number of other associations emerged in the hope of representing specific Anglophone interests. These included the Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC), the Confederation of Anglophone Parents-Teachers Associations of Cameroon (CAPTAC), the Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association (CANSA), the Anglophone Common Law Association, the Association of Anglophone Journalists, the Cameroon Public Servants' Union (CAPSU), the Anglophone Youth Council and the Anglophone Women's League. Some of these scored significant success in their struggle against the Francophone-dominated state and its subsidiaries. For example, the TAC and CAPTAC forced the government to create a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Board in 1993, which signified an important victory for

Anglophones in their ten-year struggle against determined government efforts to abolish GCE exams (Nyamnjoh & Akum 2008).

Besides the different Anglophone organisations and political parties, various social groups in Anglophone Cameroon have played a significant role in sensitising the local population to Francophone domination and mobilising it in defence of its interests, notably writers, journalists and church leaders (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 142-148).

A major challenge to the Francophone-dominated state was the All Anglophone Conference (AAC) that was held in Buea, the former capital of Southern Cameroons, on 2-3 April 1993 'for the purpose of adopting a common Anglophone stand on constitutional reform and of examining several other matters relating to its welfare of ourselves, our posterity, our territory and the entire Cameroon nation' (All Anglophone Conference 1993: 8). Its conveners were the four Anglophone members of the technical committee on constitutional matters that was to determine the outline of a new constitution in accordance with the resolutions of the Tripartite Conference held between 30 October and 18 November 1991 in the wake of the protracted 'ghost-town' campaign. Three members, Benjamin Itoe, Simon Munzu and Sam Ekontang Elad came from South West Province, while the fourth, Carlson Anyangwe, was the only North Westerner in the group.

The AAC turned out to be a landmark in the history of Anglophone Cameroon. It brought together over 5,000 members of the Anglophone elite and all the Anglophone associations and organisations were represented. After two days of deliberations, the conference issued the Buea Declaration that listed the multiple Anglophone grievances about Francophone domination and called for a return to the federal form of government due to the allegedly unbridgeable cultural differences between Anglophones and Francophones after more than thirty years of reunification.

From then onwards, the AAC became the main Anglophone association and its mouthpiece, and was responsible for the representation of Anglophone interests in general. All existing and newly emerging Anglophone associations became auxiliary organisations of the AAC and under its umbrella they continued to carry out their own specific responsibilities. They were represented in the 65-member Anglophone Standing Committee created by the AAC, which submitted a draft federal constitution to the Biya government on 27 May 1993 (Konings 1999). It was simply ignored by

the regime and, in a series of interviews in Cameroon and France, Biya stated that federalism was inappropriate for a country like Cameroon.

The government's persistent refusal to enter into negotiations on the federal option created a growing radicalisation among the Anglophone movements. In the Bamenda Proclamation adopted by the Second All Anglophone Conference (AAC II), which was held in Bamenda from 29 April to 1 May 1994, it was stipulated that 'should the government either persist in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks or fail to engage in such talks *within a reasonable time*', the Anglophone Council should 'proclaim the revival of the independence and sovereignty of the Anglophone territory and take all measures necessary to secure, defend and preserve the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the said country' (All Anglophone Conference 1994).

After the AAC II, the Anglophone movements provocatively re-introduced the name of Southern Cameroons when referring to the Anglophone territory to 'make it clear that our struggles are neither of an essentially linguistic character nor in defence of an alien colonial culture … but are aimed at the restoration of the autonomy of the former Southern Cameroons which has been annexed by *La République du Cameroun*'.[7] The Anglophone movements' umbrella organisation was subsequently named the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC).

The Biya government's continued refusal to entertain its federal proposal pushed the SCNC to consider the possibility of outright secession. The SCNC leadership actually set 1 October 1996 as the date to declare the independence of Southern Cameroons. However this turned out to be a bluff since nothing happened on that day except an 'Independence Day' address by the new SCNC chairman, Ambassador (retired) Henry Fossung, who called upon Southern Cameroonians to use their National Day as a 'day of prayer', asking God 'to save us from political bondage'. He reiterated that independence was 'irreversible and non-negotiable'.[8]

After embracing a secessionist stand, the SCNC adopted the following motto: 'The force of argument, and not the argument of force'. This demonstrated that it was pursuing independence for Southern Cameroons through peaceful negotiation and not through armed struggle. Given the Francophone-dominated state's unitary approach to the post-colonial nation-state project and its condemnation of any secessionist claims,

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[7] See SCNC press release reprinted in *Cameroon Post,* 16-23 August 1994, p. 3. See also Anyangwe (2008).
[8] *Cameroon Post,* 8-14 October 1996 and *The Witness,* 12-18 November 1996.

the SCNC leadership developed two strategies for the peaceful establishment of Southern Cameroons: (i) to seek international recognition, and (ii) to sensitise and mobilise the Anglophone population.

The SCNC Leadership's Pursuit of International Recognition for its Secessionist Claims

The SCNC leadership has made strenuous efforts to gain formal international recognition of the Anglophone cause through diplomatic and legal channels. Only the most important undertakings are mentioned here (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003; Anyefru 2010).

One of the SCNC's most impressive activities was to send a nine-man delegation, including two of the main Anglophone architects of reunification, John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna, to the UN in New York on 19 May 1995. This mission was to file a petition against 'the annexation of the Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun* and to commit the international community to the Southern Cameroons' and search for a peaceful solution to head off the dangerous conflict that was brewing between *La République du Cameroun* and Southern Cameroons.[9] In its London Communiqué,[10] issued after this historic mission, the SCNC delegation stated that following the Republic of Cameroon's unilateral secession from the union in 1984, the Southern Cameroons question was no longer an internal problem of *La République du Cameroun* since there were now two distinct *de facto* entities that were no longer bound by any legal or constitutional ties, with Southern Cameroons having reverted to its pre-independence situation, i.e. as a UN Trust Territory. In these circumstances, Southern Cameroons demanded that the UN terminate its annexation to *La République du Cameroun* and grant full independence to its Trust Territory, in accordance with Article 76 of the UN Charter. It was only after gaining full independence that Southern Cameroons would enter into negotiations with *La République du Cameroun* on future constitutional and bilateral links under the auspices of the UN.

The various missions by Anglophone leaders to the UN undoubtedly contributed to a growing awareness of the Anglophone problem in UN circles. There is sufficient

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[9] See SCNC, Petition against the Annexation of the Southern Cameroons, Buea, May 1995 (mimeo).
[10] SCNC, The London Communiqué, London, 22 June 1995 (mimeo).

evidence that UN leaders had become increasingly concerned about the possible outbreak of another violent ethno-regional conflict in West-Central Africa but they appear not to have supported SCNC secessionist claims. During his visit to Cameroon in May 2000, then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pleaded for dialogue between Francophone and Anglophone leaders and at a press conference shortly before leaving Cameroon, he said:

> I leave Cameroon with the impression that there is only one Cameroon, multilingual and multi-ethnic. I encourage a dialogue of these stakeholders. In every country there are problems of marginalisation. The way it has to be solved is by dialogue and not by walking away.[11]

Of late, the SCNC succeeded in approaching the UN through an intermediary channel. In 2004, it became a member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) in The Hague, an international organisation of 'nations, peoples and minorities striving for recognition and protection of their identity, culture, human rights and their environment'.[12] The organisation provides a legitimate and established international forum for members to present their grievances at an international level and through the UNPO, SCNC leaders have been able to address certain UN organs regarding the plight of Anglophones. For example, in 2005 Anglophone leaders made a first representation to the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) (Anyefru 2010: 94-99).

SCNC leaders also engaged in intensive lobbying to forestall the Republic of Cameroon's admission to the Commonwealth and to instead file an application for Commonwealth membership for Southern Cameroons. However the Biya government duly applied for Commonwealth membership in 1989 and, to the consternation of Anglophone leaders, it was announced on 16 October 1995 that the Republic of Cameroon had been admitted into the Commonwealth. In reaction, the SCNC strongly condemned the Commonwealth for Cameroon's admission, accusing it of a blatant lack of sensitivity in a complex and explosive situation and of frustrating the political aspirations of Southern Cameroonian people. Britain in particular was blamed for its 'second treachery' towards the Southern Cameroons cause, the first having been in the

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[11] See 'Annan Ends African Tour, Seeks Cameroon Dialogue' on scncforum website, 4 May 2000.
[12] See http://www.unpo.org.

pre-reunification period. The SCNC then pleaded for a Quebec-style referendum on independence for Southern Cameroons and for separate Commonwealth membership (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 96-99).

The decision by the Nigerian and Cameroonian governments to submit their dispute over the oil-rich peninsula of Bakassi to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for adjudication in 1994 offered Anglophone leaders the opportunity to access the legality of their defence of Southern Cameroons statehood (Jua & Konings 2004; Gumne 2006; Anyefru 2010). They claimed that Bakassi was a part neither of Cameroon nor of Nigeria but that it belonged to Southern Cameroons.

In 2001, a new Anglophone body was formed under the banner of the SCNC, the so-called Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO) with the specific goal of pursuing legal avenues to address 'the claims of the peoples of Southern Cameroons to self-determination and independence from *La République du Cameroun*'. It soon filed a lawsuit against the Nigerian government in the Federal High Court in Abuja for its continuing disregard of the statehood and sovereignty of Southern Cameroons (Jua & Konings 2004: 624). SCAPO had several reasons for taking Nigeria to court in its battle for recognition of an independent Southern Cameroons state. First, the legal representation of the Southern Cameroons case could not be taken up in Cameroon itself. Second, like the Cameroonian government, the Nigerian government failed to recognise the statehood of Southern Cameroons and its ownership of the Bakassi peninsula. Third, the Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons had been administered by Britain as an integral part of Nigeria. SCAPO was thus inclined to regard Nigeria as a co-conspirator with Britain in the process that had led to the annexation of Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun*. And finally, Nigeria had ratified the AU's Banjul Charter of Human Rights that lays down in Article 20 the right of all colonised or oppressed people to free themselves from the bonds of domination by resorting to any means recognised by the international community.

In March 2002, SCAPO scored a landmark victory when the Nigerian Federal High Court ruled that 'the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be compelled to place before the ICJ and the UN General Assembly and ensure diligent persecution to the conclusion the claims of the people of Southern Cameroons to self-determination and their declaration of independence'. It also placed a permanent injunction restraining 'the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from treating the Southern

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Cameroons and all the people of the territory as an integral part of *La République du Cameroun*' (Jua & Konings 2004: 624-25).

This ruling was considered by the Anglophone leadership as a significant step towards international recognition of the Anglophone secessionist claims. However Nigeria had an interest in the court's ruling if one considers the ongoing hearings on the Bakassi case at the ICJ. This was clearly recognised by the Nigerian Federal High Court when it ordered the Nigerian government to ask the ICJ to rule on whether it was Southern Cameroons or the Republic of Cameroon that shared a maritime boundary with the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

This victory inspired the SCNC and SCAPO to start another legal action at AU level. They made a formal complaint against the Republic of Cameroon to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) in Banjul in 2003 (Dicklitch 2010). In addition to the historic 'illegal annexation' of Southern Cameroons by Francophone Cameroon in 1961, they highlighted the political, economic, social and cultural marginalisation of Anglophone Cameroonians, claiming that Anglophones were a 'separate and distinct' people who deserved not only the right to development, but also to self-government.

In its 2009 ruling, the ACHPR affirmed Anglophone grievances against the Biya government and recognised Southern Cameroons as a distinct 'people', but it did not support Southern Cameroons secessionist claims. It was evidently bound by Article 4(b) of the AU's Constitutive Act that calls for respect of existing borders at the time of independence. Consequently, it recommended 'comprehensive national dialogue' (Eban 2009). The Biya government has not yet, however, shown any willingness to honour this recommendation.

The SCNC also failed to enlist the support of Cameroon's former colonial masters in its secessionist claims (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003: 99-101). Generally speaking, France has continued to support the Francophone-dominated regime in Cameroon during the current economic and political crisis. Besides the various agreements of cooperation between the two countries, there are other factors explaining French support too, such as the emergence of Anglophone opposition parties, in particular the SDF, during the political liberalisation process. The growing popularity of the Anglophone movements was regarded as an additional threat to France's superior interests in Cameroon: they fuelled existing anti-French sentiments, and their calls for federalism or secession formed a major challenge to French control over Cameroon

and its stake in the oil industry in Anglophone Cameroon. With France's support, the Biya government is unlikely to concede any ground to the Anglophones.

While the British government has shown more sympathy than France for the Anglophone cause, it has constantly rejected the SCNC's secessionist claims.[13]

The Anglophone Leadership's Sensitisation and Mobilisation Campaign

From the start, the Anglophone leadership made considerable efforts to transform Anglophone organisations from elitist movements into mass movements. It attempted to raise the consciousness of the Anglophone people regarding their region's subordinate position within the Francophone-dominated state and to mobilise them for action in its pursuit of federalism and secession. To this end, frequent meetings and rallies were organised throughout the Anglophone territory to make the population aware of the organisations' goals, programmes and strategies.

Of great importance to the sensitisation campaign were the regular strikes, demonstrations and boycotts organised by the leadership of the various Anglophone movements to protest against injustices committed by the Francophone-dominated state. Interestingly, some of these were directed at the myths and symbols of the unitary state. For example, Anglophone nationalists have refused to recognise the government's designation of 20 May, the date of the inauguration of the unitary state in 1972, as the country's National Day. Since the early 1990s, they have continued to boycott celebrations, declaring it a 'Day of Mourning' and a 'Day of Shame'. They have also indicted the regime for declaring 11 February, the day of the 1961 plebiscite, as Youth Day, seeing the continued failure of the government to highlight the historical significance of this day as a conscious attempt to reconfigure the nation's history. They have therefore called upon the Anglophone population to mark 11 February as the 'Day of the Plebiscite' and 1 October as the 'Day of Independence' as alternative days of national celebration. Anglophone activists have attempted to hoist federation, UN or independent Southern Cameroons flags on these days, but their attempts were often challenged by the security forces.

The Anglophone leadership's sensitisation campaign was quite successful between 1992 and 1995 and a sense of euphoria spread through Anglophone Cameroon when the SCNC delegation returned from its mission to the UN in 1995. At

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[13] See *Star Headlines,*19 March 2006, 'The British Government Condemns Anglophone Secession'.

rallies attended by large crowds in various Anglophone towns, the delegation displayed a huge UN flag, claiming it had received it from the UN itself to show that Southern Cameroons was still a UN trust territory and that independence was only a matter of time (Jua & Konings 2004).

Since 1996, however, the Anglophone leadership's sensitisation campaign has come to a virtual standstill as a result of a general loss of momentum. Following the resignation of the founding fathers among the SCNC leadership, the new leadership, under the chairmanship of Ambassador (retired) Henry Fossung, has appeared incapable of devising a strategy to counteract the government's increasingly divisive and repressive tactics. Given this leadership problem and the government's persistent reluctance to enter into negotiations, a conflict developed within the Anglophone movements between the doves – those who continued to adhere to a negotiated separation from *La République du Cameroun* – and the hawks – those who had concluded that the independence of Southern Cameroons could only be achieved through armed struggle. The Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) in particular opted for the latter strategy, as is manifest in its motto: 'The argument of force'.

The SCYL emerged in the mid-1990s as one of the many Anglophone associations operating under the umbrella of the SCNC. Composed of 'young people who do not see any future for themselves and would prefer to die fighting than continue to submit to the fate imposed on Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun* (Konings 2005b: 176), the SCYL soon came to be seen by the Biya government as the most dangerous Anglophone movement. Little wonder therefore, that the government's reaction to an ill-planned SCYL attack on military and civil establishments in North West Province between 27 and 31 March 1997 was out of all proportion when it ruthlessly killed, tortured, raped and arrested several local men and women, and forced others into exile. Some SCYL members died while in prison and others were not brought to trial until 1999 when they were not treated as political prisoners but were charged with criminal offences. Having become painfully aware that their organisation still lacked the necessary weapons and training to engage in regular guerrilla warfare against the large and well-equipped Cameroonian armed forces, SCYL leaders apparently decided after the dismal failure of the 1997 revolt to temporarily resort to less easily controlled forms of action, in particular the use of the Internet and the organisation of symbolic actions.

Following this revolt, the SCNC leadership appeared even less inclined to sensitise and mobilise the Anglophone population, leading to a general lethargy and internal divisions among the leadership. It was in these circumstances and with a sense of despair that Justice Frederick Alobwede Ebong, chairman of the SCNC's High Command Council, took over the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) station in Buea on 30 December 1999, proclaiming the restoration of the independence of the Federal Republic of Southern Cameroons (FRSC). He was subsequently detained in Yaoundé. At an SCNC meeting on 1 April 2000, Ebong was nominated as chairman of the SCNC and the first head of state of the FRSC.

With a view to endowing the FRSC with all the attributes of statehood as well as guaranteeing state continuity, the FRSC Constituent Assembly meeting in Bamenda in May 2000 adopted resolutions on the coat of arms, the flag and the national anthem. A flag was subsequently designed and the national anthem entitled 'Freedom Land' was released.[14] These developments gave new impetus to the Anglophone struggle as was evidenced by the fact that after years of vehement conflict about policies and strategies, four of the major Anglophone organisations, namely the SCNC, the SCYL, the Ambazonian Movement (AM), and the Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement (SCARM),[15] agreed to form an alliance to achieve the independence of the territory of the ex-British Southern Cameroons in 2001. At a summit in Washington in June 2001, representatives of the territory adopted the so-called Washington Proclamation of the Statehood of the ex-British Southern Cameroons, 'confirming the declaration of separate independence already made by Justice Ebong in Buea on 30 December 1999', and decided to set up the British Southern Cameroons Provisional Administration.[16]

And last but not least, one should not overlook the indispensable role Anglophone Cameroonians in the diaspora are playing in the SCNC sensitisation and mobilisation campaign. They have not only contributed immensely by supporting the Anglophone movements' activities financially, but have also underscored the importance of the Internet, especially at times when Anglophone voices critical of the government have been largely silenced in Cameroon (Jua & Konings 2004; Nyamnjoh 2005; Anyefru

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[14] *The Post,* 13 November 2000, p. 3.
[15] SCARM was the successor of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), which was originally the most important Anglophone movement.
[16] See British Southern Cameroons Summit, Resolutions, Washington, 17 June 2001 (mimeo); and Washington Proclamation of the Statehood of Ex-British Southern Cameroons, Washington, 17 June 2001 (mimeo).

2008). They are maintaining a plethora of websites such as the homepages of the SCNC, the SCYL, the AM and the FRSC. Their online activities clearly demonstrate the considerable differences in their political agendas and ideologies and this has, unfortunately, resulted in minimal cooperation between the various cyber communities.

Prospects for Anglophone Secessionist Claims

The Anglophone movements have booked several successes in their attempts to gain international recognition of their secessionist claims and in their regional sensitisation and mobilisation campaign. Nevertheless, the prospects for their ultimate aim, i.e. the independence of Southern Cameroons, presently appear bleak. In addition to the fact that the principal international organisations, like the UN, the Commonwealth and the AU, are inclined to reject secessionist claims on the grounds of their respect for the sovereignty and integrity of member states, there are a number of other factors that are hampering Anglophone chances of success. These include the Cameroonian government's persistent refusal to negotiate with secessionist movements and its tactics to contain the Anglophone danger as well as the internal divisions among the Anglophone leadership and the elite.

The Biya government has proved to be increasingly capable of neutralising the Anglophone movements by employing long-standing tactics such as divide-and-rule, co-opting ethno-regional leaders into the regime, and severe repression. Its main strategy has been to divide the Anglophone elite by capitalising on existing rivalries between the South West and North West elites. Seeing themselves as having suffered in the distribution of state power, the South West elite have been inclined to see more political capital in the promotion of regional identity and organisation than in working to consolidate an Anglophone identity and organisation (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands 1998). The government has found it increasingly worthwhile to tempt the South West elite away from Anglophone solidarity with strategic appointments and the idea that the North West elite rather than the Francophone-dominated state is their primary enemy (Eyoh 1998; Mbile 2000). Following the 1996 Constitution that provided state protection to autochthonous minorities, it became instrumental in cementing an alliance between the South West elite and the ethnically related Francophone coastal elite, the so-called Sawa movement, an alliance that transcends the Francophone-

Anglophone divide (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003). In addition to its divisive strategies, the government has enhanced its repressive tactics after the SCNC's adoption of a secessionist programme.

Significantly, the Anglophone secessionist stand is not only strongly opposed by the Biya regime but also faces a great deal of resistance in the Anglophone community itself. While most Anglophones tend to support the Anglophone movements' grievances about Francophone domination, they are deeply divided over which path to take to resolve the problem. Besides the leadership of the Anglophone movements that advocate peaceful secession with an agreement about the sharing of assets belonging to each side, there are a considerable number in the Anglophone elite who favour federalism, albeit differing on the number of states. Since the 1996 Constitution, the Cameroonian government seems to be willing to concede to a certain degree of decentralisation. As a consequence, the pro-government Anglophone elite are strongly in favour of decentralisation based on the country's ten existing provinces.

There are clear differences within and between the various Anglophone movements. Since the resignation of the founding fathers (Sam Ekontang Elad, Simon Munzu and Carlson Anyangwe) from its leadership, the SCNC has been plagued by growing factionalisation. At times, the leaders appear to be more concerned with contesting each other's position of power than promoting the Anglophone cause. Currently, there are at least four factions in the SCNC, with each one claiming to be authentic (Owono 2010). The main faction is chaired by Chief Ayamba Ette Otun from the Manyu Division in South West Province, but because of his advancing age and relatively low level of education, the real holder of power in this faction is its North Western vice-president, Nfor Ngala Nfor. Curiously, the Biya government has created its own SCNC faction to counter the Southern Cameroons struggle. This pro-government faction is led by Chief Isaac Oben, another chief from the Manyu Division, and was rewarded by the regime for trying to challenge the SCAPO representation during the ACHPR sessions in Banjul.

There has also been a lot of in-fighting over the control of the SCNC's relatively scarce financial resources. Apart from the traditional financial contributions from the diaspora, the SCNC leadership has devised an ingenious source of income-generating activities. They offer Cameroonian migrants, regardless of whether they have actually participated in the Anglophone struggles, certificates claiming they are SCNC

activists in order to make them eligible for political asylum in the host countries. Nfor Ngala Nfor and one of his lieutenants, Prince Mbinglo Hitler, have regularly been accused by other SCNC leaders of having appropriated part of the organisation's income for personal use (Owono 2010).

In addition, there are regular problems of disunity among the Anglophone organisations and a certain ambiguity in their objectives. Subsidiary organisations are developing objectives and strategies different from those of the SCNC, the umbrella organisation. Although most of them nowadays champion the independence of Southern Cameroons, some appear never to have altogether dropped the idea of the return to a federal state. This ambivalence is creating confusion among the Anglophone population. In June 2001, four of these organisations, namely the SCNC, the AM, SCARM and SCYL, agreed to form an alliance to gain independence for the former British Southern Cameroons. Strikingly, the AM immediately withdrew from the alliance when its leader, Fon Gorji Dinka, was not elected as head of the British Southern Cameroons Provisional Administration.

And finally, there is the problem of strategy. Although the government has persistently refused to enter into negotiations on either a return to a federal state or peaceful separation, the SCNC has never been prepared to drop its motto of 'The force of argument' and adopt a more confrontational strategy or even armed struggle as propagated by the SCYL. Such a strategy is unlikely to bring about a change in government position or international recognition and there is ample evidence that appeals and petitions of separatist movements to the UN, the Commonwealth, the AU and other international organisations are ineffective. The case of Eritrea is a clear example. The right to Eritrean self-determination was never recognised despite the fact that Eritrea had an excellent case for self-rule based on the abrogation of international agreements by successive governments in Addis Ababa and the fact that they had physical control over at least some of the land they claimed. Instead, Eritrea was only recognised as an independent state once a military victory had been won over the government in Addis Ababa. This is the traditional way in which international society recognises new states.

With their tendency to make the entire Francophone community responsible for the Anglophone predicament, the Anglophone movements have even managed to alienate the Francophones who had shown sympathy for their cause (All Anglophone Conference 1993). Obviously, this has been harmful to their plans and to the

formation of alliances with Francophone groups that sympathise with the Anglophone cause.

Some desperate SCNC members were once heard to complain at a meeting: 'With no money, no foreign support, no arms, little grassroots support and most of the fighting and activism taking place on the Internet instead of on the ground, are we not wasting our time?' This may be somewhat exaggerated as the SCNC and other Anglophone organisations are far from dead, as their various actions show, but more unity and solidarity among Anglophones is needed, as is also a change of tactics.

Conclusion

The Anglophone call for secession and the concomitant establishment of an independent state has a long history. It was the most popular option in Southern Cameroons in the period preceding reunification but the local population was never given the chance to vote for it in the 1961 plebiscite. The Anglophone call for secession remerged in the mid-1980s when a prominent Anglophone chief and lawyer, Fon Gorji Dinka, demanded the immediate promulgation of an independent Anglophone state, which he called the Republic of Ambazonia.

Anglophone movements renewed this call during political liberalisation in the early 1990s but unlike the pre-reunification period, the renewed pursuit of an independent state was initially a minority option, with most Anglophone movements striving for the return to a federal state. It was not until the Biya government refused to discuss the federal option that the leadership of the Anglophone movements started championing the separation of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon into two sovereign states along the lines of what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1992. It was envisaged that this kind of peaceful separation could be accompanied by an equitable sharing of assets and liabilities, and be supported by the establishment of other cross-border confidence-building institutions. Most of the leaders of the Anglophone movements now agree that this solution holds the best chance for peace in the long run because any attempts to engage belatedly in democratic and institutional reforms just to placate Anglophones and preserve international appearances will only postpone the day of reckoning and prolong the misery. An increasing number of scholars (Ghai 1998; Sandbrook 2000) also regard secession as the best solution in cases where there are no prospects for peaceful co-existence of territorial units within dysfunctional and

deeply divided nation-states. Eritrea's peaceful separation from Ethiopia in 1994 following a referendum in the previous year reassured those who feared that the secession of an African country would automatically open a Pandora's box of violence and fragmentation.

The question, however, remains as to whether there is sufficient support for the Anglophone secessionist call. In sharp contrast to their leadership's claim of widespread regional support, our own research has provided evidence that the majority of the Anglophone elite favour a form of federation. Even some SCNC leaders, like the late John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna who were Anglophone architects of reunification, appear never to have abandoned their federalist ideal although they continued to support the SCNC line for strategic reasons.

It is unlikely that the Anglophone movements' call for an independent Southern Cameroons state will receive any support from the Francophone elite and the international community. The majority of the Francophone elite are clearly in favour of a decentralised unitary state and are determined to keep control of Anglophone Cameroon's rich natural resources in an area that has become the country's breadbasket and the source of considerable oil wealth.

The positive outcome of some of the Anglophone leadership's international representations of its cause has boosted Anglophone national sentiments. Nevertheless, the multiple initiatives for international recognition seem as yet to offer little prospect of success. International organisations continue to respect the territorial integrity of member states and disapprove moves towards any further Balkanisation. During his visit to Cameroon in 2000, the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan made the Anglophone movements understand in no uncertain terms that dialogue and reconciliation rather than separation would be instrumental to solving the Anglophone problem. A similar appeal was made in the 2009 ACHPR ruling.

Although the struggle for an independent Southern Cameroons state remains alive, especially as a result of the financial contributions and Internet activities of Anglophones in the diaspora, the prospects of success, if measured in terms of achieving a sovereign state, remain remote and Anglophone nationalists need to rethink their political objectives as well as their strategies. Given the Francophone-dominated state and the AU's steadfast refusal to consider Anglophone secessionist

claims, more Anglophone nationalists are now proposing embracing armed struggle on the grounds that freedom is never freely given.

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Secessionism in Africa? Clues and Questions for Reflection

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(Translation of the introductory chapter "¿Secesionismo en África? Pistas y preguntas para una reflexión", in *Secesionismo en África*, Jordi Tomàs (Ed.), Biblioteca de Estudios Africanos, Edicions Bellaterra: Barcelona, 2010, pp. 11-47.)

This book presents thirteen regions of the continent of Africa where there has been some or other kind of secessionist or pro-independence claim in recent decades. With this introduction, then, the aim is not to offer an overview of studies on ethnic identity in Africa. For some years now, a number of Africa specialists in the Iberian Peninsula have been working on issues related with so-called ethnicity in Black Africa, in particular through the ARDA/RIDA network.[2] Studies such as those edited by Christian Coulon and Ferran Iniesta (1995), Alicia Gili (2002), Albert Roca (2005), Mbuyi Kabunda (2006) and Ferran Iniesta (2007), or the works published by Alfred Bosch (1997) are good examples of this. At the international level, the pioneering research of Anglo-Saxon anthropologists in Africa in the 1940s, the interactionist studies from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, through the works of the French deconstructivists in the 1980s and 1990s, to several more recent works published by Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka (2006), to cite just a few authors, have all focused on the ample theme of ethnicity in Africa.[3]

On this occasion, we are approaching a very specific case of identity dynamics: the formation and evolution of a number of organised movements that are struggling for

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[2] The intention in this introduction is not to enter into the many ways of defining what many authors call "ethnic group" and others call "nation", "ethnonation", "nationality", "socio-culture" and so on. For the debate on the terms "ethnic group" and "nation" as they pertain to Africa one may consult the texts included in Coulon and Iniesta (1995). Neither does this text aspire to enter into the debate on the difference between ethnicity and nationalism. From the standpoint of the present book, many of the secessionist movements discussed in this volume could also come under the heading of nationalism without a State or, in some cases, as Massó suggests for the Caprivi Strip (2009), they might be seen as nationalising projects. Taking up Clua's idea (1998), I would suggest that nationalism is a political proposal of ethnicity or, from the standpoint of the present book, of several ethnicities. See also the points of view of Guibernau and Rex (1997).

[3] Recall, as Guibernau and Rex (1997) point out, that ethnicity is the positive feeling of belonging to a cultural group. Emphasising difference does not mean stirring up hostility against people who do not belong to the group.

independence against the State to which, administratively speaking, they belong. Practically all the cases dealt with in this volume present or have presented in recent decades pro-secession movements seeking total separation of their territory from the State of which they are part. This very specific aspect of feelings and expressions of belonging has been dealt with in the international domain with books by such authors as Albert Wirz (1982), Marie-Christine Aquarone (1987) and Joshua Forrest (2004).[4]

Although we have opted to title the present book *Secesionismo en África* (Secessionism in Africa), some of the cases presented herein would doubtless fit better under the headings of independence movements, separatism, nationalism without a State, and a long list of other possibilities that take us to similar although not identical realities. The bottom line is that we are talking about conflicts over a nation's sovereignty, each one of them with a thousand nuances. No analytical label is guaranteed unanimous acceptance by all the players involved. In no case does the title imply a theoretical or ideological stance with regard to any of the situations presented – far from it. Our basic aim in producing this book has been to give each author space to present his or her research using, of course, the concepts that he or she finds most apt for making the case.[5] This diversity is underpinned by the fact that these studies are signed by a whole range of specialists coming from an assortment of disciplines (anthropologists, historians, political scientists, journalists et cetera), specialists who in their great majority have come a long way over this ground. Some were even born in the zones dealt with here. In the absence of pre-established scientific consensus, this multidisciplinary reality comes with a high degree of rigour, along with a logical and desirable plurality of theoretical approaches, from the economics-oriented authors through those who favour the historical standpoint, to those who turn to interactionist dynamics in considering the construction of identity.

Whether it is at the general level or in the sphere of Africa, the question of secessionist movements is a delicate one. Accordingly, several of the authors have opted to protect their sources and do not cite their informants by name, or do so ambiguously. Likewise, when we began the process of seeking authors to contribute to this book, some local

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[4] Naturally, a number of articles on the matter have been published as well, for example those by Trzcinski (2004), Engelbert (2007) and Keller (2007).
[5] This assertion applies to several of the cases presented in this volume, especially that of Western Sahara, but also those of Somaliland, Eritrea and Anglophone Cameroon.

researchers declined the offer for fear of possible negative repercussions in their countries of origin.

Although the book offers a good sample of cases of secessionist movements, most of them present-day, we must also say that it does not include some regions in which there have been secessionist proposals in the past half century – although at times they were short-lived or merely rhetorical – or those where the secessionist possibility, if not explicit was indeed latent. Notable in their absence are Ogaden (Ethiopia), the islands of Bioko and Annobon (Equatorial Guinea), the Anjouan and Moheli Islands (Comoros), Bundu Dia Kongo (Lower Congo), Kivu and Kasai (Democratic Republic of the Congo), the kingdom of the Baganda people (Buganda, Uganda), Pemba Island (Tanzania), Zululand (Republic of South Africa), and Puntland (Somalia), which is partially dealt with by Hoehne in his article on Somaliland, and others.[6]

Although the thirteen regions covered here share a common denominator in the fact of having one or more movements that are struggling, or that have struggled, for the independence of their region, the origins of these endeavours are markedly diverse. In this regard, the differences are more than evident between the case of Western Sahara (still unresolved from the point of view of international law and with origins unquestionably going back to the eve of the era of independence struggles, a struggle that can hardly be classified as secessionist given the present political situation), the Eritrean case (the only African secessionist movement that has achieved its goals after almost three decades of armed struggle), Somaliland (dealt with in this volume by Markus Hoehne as a *de facto* State after Somalia became a failed State[7]), the cases of Biafra, Katanga and Rwenzururu (which proclaim, in very different fashions, unilateral secession), and the long-drawn-out claims of the Tuareg, or of South Sudan, to cite just a few instances dealt with in this volume.[8]

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[6] Another example might be the so-called Republic of Logone (Chad). A case apart is the question of Mayotte and the Union of the Comoros. Mayotte is recognised as an integral part of France (as DOM-TOM) by the European Union, while it is claimed as an integral part of Africa by the African Union. In this study we also leave aside the question of irredentism.

[7] In fact, for the government of Somaliland, as Hoehne explains, separation from Somalia is not an act of secession but the dissolution of a voluntary union of both States that occurred in 1960.

[8] Given the enormous differences between these movements we make no attempt to offer any typology. Some authors, however, designate secessionist movements with longstanding political mobilisation and far-reaching political repercussions in their day (Eritrea, South Sudan, Biafra) as "Great Secessionist Movements in Africa" (Keller, idem).

Although this book – following the advice of Aquarone, Keller and Forrest to deal painstakingly with each case – offers very specific examples and strives to avoid generalisations that may lead to imprecision and misunderstanding, the aim of this introduction is to throw out a few clues and, more than anything else, questions that encourage reflection in the broad sense on the phenomenon of secession, even if by means of thumbnail sketches.

The Colonising Process and the Legacy of Colonial Borders

There can be no doubt about the fact that secessionist movements cannot be understood without the factor of colonial borders. With the exception of only a few cases, for example the Bakassi Peninsula between Cameroon and Nigeria, or the formation of Eritrea, African borders have undergone little modification since the decolonisation period. The borders bequeathed by colonialism to the African States were approved by the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) in 1963 (Art. 3, paragraph III, OAU Charter) and are frequently ratified at AU (African Union, the successor of OAU) meetings even today. Indeed, with regard to our concern here, the AU only contemplates the possibility that any particular region might aspire to secession if and only if it can demonstrate that, in colonial times, it was administered by the metropolis – at least for a certain period of time – separately from the rest of the territories (see Beck and Foucher, 2009). This proviso means that the vast majority of secessionist movements attempt to claim that their regions had autonomous status in the colonial period. On some occasions, these claims have been based on solid historical argument, as in the cases of Western Sahara (where the Moroccan Green March interfered with the decolonisation process *vis-à-vis* Spain), Somaliland (which was under British colonial rule, as against the Italian colony of Somalia), Anglophone South Cameroon (as against the Francophone République du Cameroun), or Cabinda, which was a "protectorate", "colony" and later "province of Portugal".[9] In others, the political strategy of going back to certain colonial borders with their own completely autonomous administration is much more complicated, as is the case of Casamance (which – in a failed attempt – asked France in 1993 for a ruling confirming that this region was administered separately from Senegal), or almost baseless, which might describe the claim of the Ruwenzori slopes, described here by Albert Farré.

[9] In fact, the Cabindese secessionists go back to the Treaty of Simulambuco of 1885, thanks to which the Governor of Angola, Ferreira do Amaral, came to an agreement with local African authorities whereby Cabinda became a Portuguese "protectorate".

Whatever the case, just as postcolonial States were governed as States in colonial times, the great majority of areas in which there are secessionist movements today originated as administrative regions in this selfsame period.[10] The cases of Cabinda, Casamance, Caprivi, Barotseland, South Cameroon, South Sudan, Somaliland,[11] *inter alia* are paradigmatic in this regard. They existed nominally and administratively at the same time that Angola, Senegal, Namibia, Zambia, the Republic of Cameroon, Sudan, Somalia … existed. Moreover, though it might appear anecdotal, many of the toponyms of these regions were thought up by the colonial regimes. Here, the most flagrant case, although not the only one, is the Caprivi Strip which, as Ester Massó explains in these pages, received its name from the German Chancellor from 1890 to 1894, Georg Leo Graf von Caprivi de Caprara de Montecuccoli.[12]

The immutability of African borders and the consequences of this in the social, political, economic and cultural domains have led some researchers to speak of the "curse of colonial borders". Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten – as Nugent and Asiwaju (1998) and other writers have pointed out – that the population frequently uses and manipulates the fact of the border and, rather than barriers, frontiers tend to be channels through which flow people, products and ideas.

One of the questions that crop up when one is considering so many cases of secessionist movements scattered all over the continent is whether, besides what is touched on above, there exists some common variable linked with the colonising process. For example, does the fact that several of the regions presented here were successively colonised throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by different western metropolitan powers, changing hands by means of treaties signed in Europe, affect in a way that is somehow specific the feelings of identity of the inhabitants of these regions, or is this fact merely one element more in the strategic and discursive repertoire of

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[10] This does not prevent either States or the regions discussed in this book from going back to the precolonial period in order to establish their origins, as frequently happens.

[11] For the colonial origins of Somaliland and the use of this by the elites of the secessionist regions, see Hoehne's description of the telling ceremony organised in Hargeisa on the occasion of the arrival of a delegation of British members of parliament in January 2004.

[12] It should be noted in passing that in some cases like that of Casamance in Senegal and Barotseland in Zambia, the postcolonial administrations set about removing from the map the names of these regions. While the former was divided into two (the Ziguinchor and Kolda regions), the latter's name was changed to Western Region.

present-day secessionist movements? Although the cases of South Cameroon (which passed from German to British hands after the First World War), Caprivi (which appeared on German, British and South African colonial maps), Barotseland (which, as of the nineteenth century was subjected to colonisation and partition by the British, German and Portuguese), Eritrea (first under Italian rule, then United Nations tutelage and finally administered by the British) and part of Casamance (the capital of which was Portuguese before coming to be absorbed into the French empire in 1886) might be symptomatic, the articles in this book do not offer conclusive data on the phenomenon, and still less when it is not exclusive – by any stretch of the imagination – to the zones in which breakaway movements exist today. In any case, it is a clue to keep track of.

A further question arises from all this. How did the historical moment of the colonising process affect zones where there is a breakaway tendency today? In other words, does a belated colonial presence in a certain region (tardy with regard to the rest of the future "national territory") and hence a delayed introduction of the colonial administration in comparison with the rest of the territory of the future postcolonial State, have any repercussions in perceptions of identity of the populations of these regions coming within the framework of postcolonial independent African States? Cases such as South Sudan, Casamance and Caprivi can be instructive here.

There is another matter that has often come up with respect to the colonial context in these regions, although we have very little information about it. This is the question of the regional origins both of colonial administrators and of European missionaries who disembarked in the continent. As we shall see below, the influence that these representatives of the colonial order might have had over part of the population, especially future political elites, is evident. For instance, in the case of Casamance it is known that there was a considerable presence of Alsatian missionaries. Did the vision they had of their own State, in this case, France, come to have an influence among the local Joola population? An even clearer case is that of the Walloon and Flemish presence in the Congo, where people from these zones transferred the political and identity-based tensions they had known in Europe. While the former – French-speaking – generally occupied the senior positions in the administration of the Congo, the latter – Dutch-speaking – tended to be sent to the more recondite corners of the colony. What kind of influence did these people, who had perhaps been disenchanted with their

situation in the Belgian metropolis, and conceivably feeling that they were being "punished" in the furthest-flung reaches of the colony but also beyond the reach of Walloon control, have over the Congolese?

Whatever the case, it is important to recall that the colonial process directly influences the creation of some kind of nationalism, not only in recognised postcolonial States but also, and with the same "modern" creativity, in those peripheral regions that would subsequently struggle for their own State.

The "Betrayed Region"

In the most usual discourse of leaders of secessionist or pro-independence groups, and among some of the people they claim to represent, one frequently find the notion of the "betrayed region" which takes one directly back to the historical period of Africa's decolonisation. The argument is that the postcolonial African governments failed to respect the agreements – in some cases verbal and in others ratified by the new Constitutions – that had been forged at the dawn of the purported independence of the African countries. Many cases discussed in this book describe how this circumstance is wielded by secessionist representatives. One example of this would be the reunification of the Republic of Cameroon and South Cameroon. As Willibroad Dze-Ngwa explains, the agreements established by way of the Constitution that was approved after reunification were not honoured. For instance, there was no observance of the norm that a certain representative parity in the government should be maintained, so that if the President of the Republic was of Francophone origin, the Prime Minister would have to be from Anglophone South Cameroon. Other grievances of the Anglophone people include scant investment in the zone in contrast with the money allocated for infrastructure, for example, in the Francophone zone. Then again, there is the total contempt manifested for the English language in the State apparatus although the Constitution stipulates that it is equal in status to French. A further illustration is offered with Somaliland (formerly British Somalia), a region that, as Hoehne explains, existed as the independent State of Somaliland for a mere five days between 26 June and 1 July 1960, when it joined the former Italian Somalia. One year later, through a referendum on the Somali Constitution, the two Somalias were united in the Somali Republic. However, although the union was rejected by between 50% and 60% of the population of Somaliland, it ended up as consummated because it was accepted by the majority of

the population of the Republic, which takes one right back to the crucial matter of sovereignty (and sheds light on one of the thorniest issues in other regions, for example Western Sahara). Hoehne writes that it was not long before the people of Somaliland began to feel that the government, installed in Mogadishu, looked down on the people of the north, noting also that they were only allowed meagre political representation (33 seats out of a possible 90). The top positions in the Somali government (President, Prime Minister, the ministers for the Interior and Finance, army and police commanders …) went to Somali "southerners". Another interesting case is that of Barotseland. As Zeller explains in his article, the National Council of Barotseland signed an agreement in May 1964 with the British Government and that of Northern Rhodesia, according to which, after Zambia's independence, the new Zambian government would respect the right of the *litunga*, Barotseland's main traditional authority, to promulgate laws on local matters, including land and natural resource management. Nonetheless, the accord was not enshrined in Zambia's first Constitution and, once independence was accomplished in October that year, it was openly flouted by the Zambian powers-that-be and no longer worth the paper it was written on. Also thought-provoking is the situation of South Sudan. As Castel writes in his article, the southern authorities agreed at the 1947 Juba Conference that the South would be part of Sudan providing that the peoples' cultures were respected, their representation guaranteed and investment made in the region. Eight years later, the first sign of revolt appeared in Torit, Eastern Equatoria, in the form of a mutiny protesting at the transfer of soldiers to the North and, by extension, expressing their unease at the "Sudanisation" – an expression referring to the State but somewhat confused in etymological and ethnographic terms – the region was being subjected to, especially the province of Equatoria. However, at least from the autochthonous standpoint, perhaps the clearest case of the "betrayed region" is that of Eritrea, which Alexandra Dias describes.[13] Federated with Ethiopia as an autonomous entity in 1952, it was subsequently hit by the consequences of Haile Selassie's destruction of federal government, the suspension of the Ethiopian Constitution, the transfer to Addis Ababa of industries established on Eritrean soil, the ban on using Arabic and Tigrinya (the languages spoken in Eritrea) in favour of Amharic, and much more (Keller, idem).

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[13] In fact, in Eritrea, what one finds is not so much the concept of the region betrayed by a central government but rather, as Reid – cited by Dias in her article – points out, Eritrea sees itself as "alone against the world", betrayed by everybody.

The idea of the "betrayed region" also appeared with the beginning of Casamance nationalism. However, in this case, unlike the examples cited hitherto, according to the historic Casamance leader Augustin Diamacoune, it was a verbal agreement that was broken. On the eve of Senegal's independence, the future president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, assured the Casamance leaders that their region would have special status – a promise he was eventually to break.

Whether it was through flagrant violation of the first postcolonial Constitution, or the alleged scorning of a tacit agreement, secessionist discourse frequently harks back both to the decolonisation process and to the political practice of the first independent governments in Africa. This latter aspect is practically universal in all the cases under discussion here. The fact of the new postcolonial administration's revealing itself in the eyes of one sector of the people as a "new colonisation" is corroborated by several authors of the present work, at least with some of the populations under discussion. This is still more the case when, on the eve of independence, part of the population was unsure about the prospect of joining with the new States born of the decolonisation process (the cases of Barotseland and Zambia; Eritrea and Ethiopia; South Cameroon and the Republic of Cameroon; Sudan and South Sudan being paradigmatic). One frequently wielded argument is that the State representatives did not know or did not respect the local way of doing things, whether this was with regard to customary law, autochthonous languages, traditional religions, or whatever. Sometimes, the mere fact that the administrative personnel were not local people was sufficient to be perceived as a kind of aggression. The case of South Sudan where, as Castel explains in his article, only six of the 734 Sudanese administrators were from the South Sudan, is food for thought in this regard and still more so when the differences between the legislation of the Arabised north and the customary law of the South can be very accentuated.[14]

Another interesting element, as we see it, is how the newly-independent States legislated the sociocultural differences coexisting within the same territory – independently of the fact that the postcolonial governments subsequently infringed even the Constitution. In these matters, the new States took their inspiration from – not to say virtually copied in some cases – the Constitutions of the European metropolitan powers.

[14] As Leonardi (2009) notes, citing Vandewint (2004), there are some fifty different bodies of customary law in South Sudan.

The example of several countries, former French colonies, whose Constitutions do not permit parties formed on an ethnic or territorial basis, says a lot about the uneasy fit of minorities in the political arenas of their respective States.

Nonetheless, we should not forget that while autochthonous customary law is not recognised by some Constitutions of African States – especially in the Francophone countries, since in the Lusophone and Anglophone zones there do exist some attempts at recognition – it is frequently respected in everyday practice by the immense majority of the population (including politicians based in the capital when they travel to the peripheral regions) and it coexists pragmatically with State laws in what has come to be called "legal pluralism".[15]

Land and the Struggle for Resources

While the political science approach speaks both of the legislation of difference, of political and legal practice in specific cases and how the populace might experience the affronts of the administration – or at least the way the secessionist leaders talk about them – the standpoint of economics which, in any case, is necessarily linked to the above, also sheds light on part of the matter. Nearly half a century ago, Glazer and Moynihan pointed out (in their study of New York City) that ethnicity can be tied up with claims on resources within the framework of the welfare state (1963). In this sense, such issues as land ownership, control over resources (minerals in particular), and influence on trade-related practices are significant elements in several of the cases presented here.

There are several illustrative examples of questions related with land ownership. In some of the regions dealt with in this book, the central government of the State concerned approved a law conferring land ownership on the government, thereby ignoring the customary law involved, not only bringing about a clash between two systems of law, and two different ways of seeing the world, but also kindling far-reaching conflict in the economic domain. In most cases – but not all – this happened a few years before the appearance of secessionist movements. The land laws approved in

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[15] The idea of legal pluralism is related with many other concepts provided by legal anthropology. For further information one may consult the texts of the late Van Rouveroy Van Nieuwaal and Zips, W., eds., (1998); Sack and Aleck (1992); Rösel and von Trotha (2005); or Klute, Embaló, Borszik, and Embaló, eds. (2008), among many others.

Senegal in 1964 and, in particular, in 1972, which led to appropriations of land in Casamance throughout the 1970s, are deemed by the specialists to be one of the key factors for understanding the emergence of the MFDC (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) in 1982. In Barotseland, as Zeller shows here, the central government of Zambia flouted the 1964 agreements, according to which land tenure was to be under the control of the local Lozi authorities, and nationalised land ownership in 1966. As Ortuño notes, in Nigeria, in 1978, just after the Biafra War, the government promulgated a decree on land use with which it arrogated the right to appropriate land in the name of "public interest".

This is doubtless an essential variable that must always be kept in mind, not only because of the already-noted relationship of land with economic resources but also, as Penrose (2002) wrote, because of the ideological and ritual bonds between the inhabitants of the affected communities and their land. This takes one back to the apt concept of "holism", which is used by Iniesta and Roca, as well as other writers, to refer to this reality that is so widespread in Africa.

As different authors show in this book, mineral resources are a key element in several conflict zones. Hence, some regions where there are secessionist movements, as in the south of Nigeria, South Cameroon, Cabinda or South Sudan (in the border zone of Abyei) have had to adapt to the exploitation of oil-fields in their territory. As Mabeko-Tali says in his article on Cabinda – which may be extrapolated for the cases of Anglophone Cameroon and the south of Nigeria – this fact has caused endless problems for communities that have traditionally lived off fishing and family-based agriculture. Also noteworthy is the fact that, in the majority of the cases cited here, as in South Sudan or Cabinda, the discovery of oil fields came after the beginning of difference-based claims.

In other regions, different kinds of subsoil wealth have had a major part to play in tensions between central governments and peripheral populations and their leaders. Hence we have phosphates in Western Sahara (see Alberich's text), diamonds and copper in Katanga (see Kabunda and Tshibambe) and uranium in Tuareg lands in the north of Niger. In the latter case, Aghali stresses the fact that it was precisely just after the central government of Niger gave permission for uranium exploration and mining in

Tuareg lands that the MNJ (Niger Movement for Justice) sprang up with new strength. The MNJ unsuccessfully demanded from the Niamey government that 90% of the workers should be contracted from the zone, and that 50% of the income accruing to the companies concerned should be revert to local groups. Indeed, on some occasions, the armed attacks of the Tuareg groups have targeted the mines. In 2007 they attacked the branch of a French mining company working in Imouraren. Shortly afterwards, the MNJ leader stated that his group, one of many operating in Tuareg lands, does not seek independence for the region but rather a more equitable share of the wealth. This economic claim is, unsurprisingly, one of the most recurrent, from Casamance to South Sudan, through Caprivi and Ruwenzori.

In some cases, as one sees in the following section, the interest of local elites in resources is identified by our authors as the main – and almost only – thrust of secessionist claims. Elsewhere, the story is more nuanced and one sees local disillusionment with State management of the resources and the benefits they bring. As Dze-Ngwa explains, the politicians of Anglophone Cameroon complained that when oil drilling began on the Atlantic coast, the refinery was located in Limbe (in the Anglophone zone) yet the refinery royalties were paid in Duala (Francophone Cameroon).

Control of trade also enters on to the scene of some of the conflicts discussed here. However, while sometimes it is a matter of competition between groups of similar economic ideology, other cases described in this book show two ways of seeing and experiencing trade relations. Here, this is not competition between equals and from the same economic perspective on the circulation of products and the monetary benefits this may bring, but rather a situation of political, economic and cultural tension that can arise from different perceptions people have of trade. One example is Casamance where, in colonial times and even today – although in a very different form – the notion of trade held by the Muslim brotherhood of the Mourides with origins in the north of the country, which was closely related with central power in both colonial and postcolonial times, totally clashes with that of the Joola people of Casamance.[16] The case of South Sudan and the northern traders is also pertinent in this regard.

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[16] Apart from the article on Casamance in this book, see Tomàs (forthcoming).

Whatever the case, although one should always bear in mind the economic situation of the regions in question, neither should it be overlooked that, in their great majority, secessionist movements have overdetermined origins so that, from our point of view at least, any explanation based only on competition over resources falls short of the reality.

Local Politicians: Ambition or Disappointment?

Some approaches to identity conflicts in Africa suggest that the elite members of breakaway movements, making instrumental use of the sense of belonging of the population are, at bottom, competing for control of natural and economic resources of a particular region (see, for example, Collier and Hoeffer, 2002[17]). Much has been written on how African elites, and not only those of secessionist groups, have manipulated power, and the State administration, to their own advantage. To cite just a few examples, each with its own slant, we have Jean François Medard's account of how clientelism works (1982), Jean François Bayart's notion of "politics of the belly" (1999) and the practices of neo-patrimonialism as described by Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (2001).[18]

In the present book there is one very clear case of this focus on the role of elites: the article on Katanga by Mbuyi Kabunda Badi and Germain Ngoie Tshibambe strongly emphasises the role of Katanga politicians – especially Moïse Tshombe who – against the Cold War backdrop and with the support of several mining companies, along with Belgium and the United States – proclaimed the secession of the region in 1960, before the Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was assassinated (1961).

Another case fitting into this framework would be that of the leader of the Caprivi Liberation Front. While it is by no means such a clear example as the previous one – and much less comparable – the leader of the Caprivi secessionists, Mishake Muyongo, is considered by part of the population as someone who, over the years, has changed his political stripes in his efforts to come to power while, for many others he is a cultivated,

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[17] "The Political Economy of Secession", World Bank Development Research Group (23 December, 2002), cited by Keller (idem).

[18] The two latter books are published in the same collection as the present study. We might also recall numerous authors who have approached ethnicity from the instrumentalist standpoint, looking at interest groups that are organised so as to compete in the political and economic domains, among them Gordon, Gellner, Cohen, Blauner, Thompson, Hannertz, Herzog, Banton, *inter alia* (see Poutignat and Streiff-Fenard, 1995).

hard-working and charismatic leader who is widely respected for his personal track record. As Massó says in her article, he first fought with CANU (Caprivi African National Union) of which he was paramount leader and then in the independence struggle. In 1964 CANU merged with SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) led by Sam Nujoma, who was to become President of Namibia, while Muyongo was vice-president of the party. With the coming of independence in 1989 today's Caprivi secessionist leader signed the Namibian Constitution as an ex-combatant and member of the constitutional assembly. Ten years later, he led the Caprivi Strip's attempted secession attempt against the Namibian government. In any case, his political record has many explanations even if some Caprivi people might label him as calculating and opportunistic.

Perhaps the issue at stake is not so much knowing what moves these leaders whose political profiles may seem chameleonic as looking into how the population experiences such changes, and how followers and contrarians alike use their personal lives and stories to legitimate or discredit the ideas they espouse. The political itinerary of the late leader from Casamance, Augustin Diamacoune, offers another example here. At the end of the 1950s, as he himself stated, he supported Leopold Sedar Senghor in his struggle against France for Senegal's independence. Observing Senghor's political behaviour throughout the decade of the 1960s, he moved increasingly away from this line to reach the point of becoming – in his own words – "disappointed by Senghorism". Then, after years of activism in associations fostering Joola culture and working in a centre running a youth reinsertion programme in Ziguinchor, he agreed to be the first leader of the Casamance independence movement, the MFDC, in 1982. The idea of disappointment also appears with some other secessionist leaders from Casamance.

Whether they are ambitious or idealist, it is interesting to confirm that several leaders of African secessionist movements have, at some or other point of their political careers, espoused one of the forms of socialism or communism (and let us recall that most of the secessionist movements have their origins in the Cold War period). This is the case with several leaders from Western Sahara – along the lines of an ostensible progressive Arab

socialism, as Alberich explains – and also with the Tuaregs, and the peoples of Casamance and Cabinda, et cetera.[19]

Pacifist Claims, Violent Repression?

Among the usual clichés one reads in the press on identity conflicts in Africa one frequently finds the link between secessionist movements and violence. While some cases dealt with in this volume overwhelmingly confirm this idea – and we might cite Katanga with the death not only of Lumumba but of many Kasaians, or Eritrea, the most militarised State in the world, according to *Global Militarization Index* (cited by Dias) – others, the majority, reveal a significant particularity: before resorting to arms, many local movements turned to pacifism in making their claims, whether in the form of democratic politics, activities of cultural associations, pro-autonomy movements, popular protest or other peaceful means.[20]

The MFDC (Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance) began to make its claims peacefully in 1982 and it was not until 1990 when, after years of repression by the Senegalese government (from the *casamançais* point of view), it turned to arms, forming a military wing named "Atika", which in the Joola language means "combatant". As Dze-Ngwa shows, in 1982 the Anglophone people of Cameroon regrouped in the Cameroon Anglophone Movement with a view to exerting political pressure on the government. Shortly afterwards, the Anglophone elite sent messages to President Biya, one of which, for example, reminded him of "... the humiliating and revolting colonial status that is gradually but systematically being imposed on English-Speaking Cameroonians by the administration". Ten years later, the case was taken to the United Nations and a plea was presented against the unification of Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon. The Cabinda separatists, too, began making their claims pacifically. As Mabeko-Tali indicates, between the mid-1950s and 1974 – still in the colonial setting – the leaders of MLEC (Freedom Movement for the State of Cabinda), first, and subsequently those of FLEC (Liberation Front for the Enclave of Cabinda) were principally engaged in diplomatic missions. There are even cases, such as that of Barotseland, as described by Zeller, that have not resorted to arms but have rather

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[19] In fact, some breakaway leaders devoted years of their lives participating actively in projects supporting minority groups.

[20] Again, some regions gave warnings that they would end up using violence, as was the case of the Torit mutiny (Eastern Equatoria, Sudan) in 1955.

channelled their claims through cultural associations (such as the Barotse Cultural Association, which was founded in 1992) or the Barotse Patriotic Front, founded in 1996.

In some cases, moreover, the breakaway option was not the first possibility contemplated by the dissident group. For instance, as Castel explains, at first the SPLA called for a multi-ethnic, multi-religious democratic Sudan (see also Keller).

Nonetheless, in other cases, the pro-independence option of a region was gestated years before the independence of the present-day African States. Mabeko-Tali, for example, states that the first Cabinda associations, going back to the 1950s, were already championing the idea of an independent Cabinda, beyond the scope of Angola's control, at the very time that Angolans were fighting for their independence from Portugal.

Then again, the nonconformity of peripheral regions, which was expressed in many ways, was already perceived by politicians as a worrying warning about national integrity before the outbreak of conflict. For example, in 1981, a year before the founding of MFDC in Casamance, the former Senegalese prime minister, Mamadou Dia, had begun to sound the alarm that the region, "thanks to aberrant policy, has turned into a powder keg" (see the article on Casamance in these pages).

Despite all the alerts being sounded, many of the central governments did not know about, or did not wish to satisfy local demands, and eventually the secessionist option fell into place in many territories with the formation of movements proclaiming their desire for independence. One quite general – though not unanimous – antidote to the proclamation of secessionist aspirations is political and military repression. There are hair-raising examples of this, denounced by different associations concerned with human rights in Casamance, South Sudan, Cabinda, Caprivi, Western Sahara and the Tuareg territory of Niger.

It is also significant to find another constant, although far from general factor: despite the political and military repression, in some cases very disproportionate, visited not only on secessionist leaders but also on anybody who might look like a sympathiser, many opposition politicians in the State parliament at the time did not dare to speak out

against such excesses or to demand explanations from the government. The cases of Cabinda and Casamance are quite illustrative in this sense.

Education and the Elites

One very interesting variable that one finds in several of the regions with secessionist movements is that linked with formal education. Literacy and schooling rates in such zones are, in several cases included in this volume, quite a lot higher than the "national" average. Some of the significant cases are Caprivi, with literacy rates, according to Massó, as high as 78% when Namibia achieved its independence, a figure that far surpasses that for the rest of the State of Namibia; Casamance where, in the main towns and cities, the quality of primary and secondary schooling has been well above the Senegalese average for decades; and the south of Nigeria where, as Ortuño relates, there were hundreds of university graduates in comparison with the very low figure for degree holders in the north and where, too, as early as the 1930s, the Ibo were a group with a good educational background and highly-qualified personnel (Keller, 2007). In fact, one of the main leaders of the Biafra movement was Emeka Ojukwu, an Ibo catholic born in a Muslim environment in the north of the country and who, after studying in the best English schools in Nigeria, went on to Oxford University and obtained a Master's Degree in Modern History (Boutet, 1992).

This clue unquestionably leads us to several spheres of reflection. To begin with, one should wonder about the correlation between formal education and political participation. In the first decades after the achievement of so-called independence in the African countries, in some corners of the continent – always depending on the postcolonial past and many socio-cultural variables – one finds that the better the record of training in the educational domain the higher the levels of electoral participation. A high level of political participation is another variable that appears in some regions where there is a secessionist movement. In some of the cases presented here, these regions are the first in the State to express their nonconformity with the government in elections. The case of Casamance is paradigmatic. In 1978, four years before the founding of the MFDC and after the Socialist Party (PS) had enjoyed almost two decades in power in the Senegalese Government, some municipalities of Casamance were the first in Senegal to vote for the opposition Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS).

Second, it would seem plausible to think – as some authors in this book confirm – that it is through western schooling that awareness of the marginalisation being imposed by part of any one administration becomes more acute. Farré describes in his article how, on the slopes of the Ruwenzori mountains, the Konzo and Amba people who had gone to school became aware after the 1950s of the deep discrimination to which they were being subjected by the colonial administration which favoured other regions of Uganda a lot more, even charging them much less in taxes. In fact, as Mahmood Mamdani notes (1998), the main Konzo leader was a school teacher who had founded the Bakonzo Life History Research Society in 1954.

Finally, this existence of a well-trained local elite now brings us to speak of the *lumpen intellektuellen*, in the inspired coinage of Vincent Foucher (2002) in his study of the birth of nationalism in Casamance: a lot of students who are very well trained in academic terms and hence conscious of the values and functions that should characterise a State, and who after finishing their studies – very often in the capital – find that they are not being absorbed into the public administration, may present a combination of solid educational background and very fecund frustration in the realm of identity. Many historic leaders of the different factions of the secessionist movement of Casamance, along with their supporters, have an impressive western educational baggage, as happens with the leaders of the "first independences",[21] which is to say they completed secondary school or even university studies,[22] went abroad for further education (see below the section devoted to the diaspora) and had extensive experience in political institutions, trade unions, cultural associations and organisations concerned with the defence of human rights and so on. This whole combination can foster better knowledge and greater comprehension of the limits of State power and the rights of citizens which, in turn, can mean greater facility when it comes to organising people into a certain kind of formation for expressing claims (in the nation-state context), with the capacity for entering into the political arena one way or another, using a certain ideological language, a certain discursive style and also new technologies (see below the section devoted to this aspect) et cetera.

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[21] For the role of intellectuals, see also Falola (2002).
[22] See the painstaking work of Marut on the leaders of the Casamance movement in his recently-published work (2010, especially pp. 391 – 404).

Missions and Nationalism

The variable of missions with regard to the birth of secessionist movements is a very suggestive clue.[23] To begin with, one should recall that some colonial governments – of the Catholic or Protestant tradition – found it easier to forge political agreements with Muslim peoples (in Senegal, Nigeria, Sudan …) than with heterogeneous ethnic groups that practised traditional religions in their small villages where, throughout the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, missionaries tried to spread the Catholic and Protestant religions, engaging, even explicitly, in competition with Islam in their mission of "civilising" these people of traditional religious beliefs, which were often labelled as "animist".

While, in such cases, the colonial State was consolidating through the Muslim elites, the missionaries, through the church and schools in the most tucked-away corners of colony, were able to nurture certain dynamics that are of interest for the concerns of this book. This was particularly the case in places that bordered on Islamic zones. First – and although several authors of this book are poles apart from deconstructivist discourse – one should not overlook the role of these missionaries in the formation of a certain (usually defined as "seamless", monolithic, uniform …) cultural or regional identity. Ortuño describes in these pages the role of the missionaries in forming identities (like those of the Ibo and the Ogoni peoples) in the south of Nigeria and also, citing Peel (2000), describes the shaping of a certain Yoruba identity thanks to the role played by education in the missions. Foucher (2002) suggests that something similar occurred with the Joola in Casamance, and Jacquin Berdal (cited here by Dias), does much the same referring to Christian missions in Eritrea, although the process here was very different. Perhaps in other zones with a Christian majority, such as Cabinda or Caprivi, one might find a similar clue to follow.

Second, from among those members of the population who attended mission schools, some people – at times offspring of lineages with no family ties to the traditional authorities – set out on the long road that took them to the capital and even to the metropolis to further their studies. In brief, some became the new elites who in a number of cases, on the eve of so-called independence, could meet two requisites that

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[23] Recall, that as Iniesta and Ndaw *inter alia* have noted, religion in Africa is not just a certain belief associated with specific rituals but it also embraces a great number of social, political and economic matters.

we have already mentioned in the preceding section: a solid academic training and a sensibility in terms of identity that considerably departed from the prevailing model, these being the two basic ingredients for the gestation of peripheral nationalism.

Third, some missionaries clearly struggled against exploitation, discrimination and injustice, which they saw as being perpetrated by the central authority in the regions they inhabited. Good examples of this are Cabinda, Casamance – at least by part of the church sector – and South Sudan (at least in the early period).

Traditional Authorities and Secessionism

One field open for debate is the question of how traditional authority, an institution of pre-colonial origins, and the formal education of secessionist leaders come together. In some cases, the secessionist leader with a university education and the traditional authority practically coincide in one and the same figure, as exemplified by Barotseland in Zeller's description. In other cases, some of the leaders with a good educational background in colonial schools also have their roots in royal lineages, even though they may not exercise this authority. This is the case of Muyongo, the secessionist leader of Caprivi, who, as Massó points out, was in the royal line of succession of the Mafwe people. Similar again, in some sense, is the story of Augustin Diamacoune Senghor of Casamance, who claimed to be a descendent of a Joola-Huluf queen although, from the local point of view, this did not put him in the position of becoming king and neither did he claim any such prerogative. In other cases, like those of the people of Western Sahara or the Tuaregs, the leaders at the head of the independence struggle have not emerged from traditional institutions but, rather, they are young university-educated people who are quite detached from the ruling lineages. Indeed, it is interesting to confirm that, in some cases, the breakaway movements are organised more in a form resembling the political party, a "modern" association or an army than established within the older autochthonous systems of organisation based, for example in religious and traditional structures,

While it may be easy to imagine that defining oneself as a member of a royal family could have a strategic component in many senses, it would be interesting to inquire further into the past of secessionist leaders and how their followers may or may not

value that past, not so much as a legitimate political option but for the symbolic charge it involves.

Another theme is how the different secessionist movements use a particular religion – and its leaders – as an identifying sign of the region they are seemingly defending, in contrast with and in opposition to the majority religion espoused by the State. Such is the case of Casamance where, in the early days of the MFDC's claims, the region was defined as Catholic and, in particular, as being of traditional religion in opposition to the majority Muslim region in the north of Senegal. Also typical is the use by the MFDC of the sacred Joola kings (Sihalebé) and priests of the traditional religion (Aliin Situé, Sibeth …) of the past as identifying markers for Casamance. Indisputably, Casamance, along with Eastern Senegal, is the land where Catholicism and traditional religion are – by comparison with the northern zone – much more practised. Nonetheless, in Casamance, too, Islam is the majority religion. The difference is to be found in proportions. In the north of Senegal more than 96% of the population is Muslim, while in Casamance the figure does not exceed 70%.[24] Given the importance of religion in so many African societies, it is foreseeable that it should become the marker of some or other particular identity. In any case, there is no doubt that, from the local perspective of ordinary people, the traditional and Catholic religions are not only defining markers of their identity but also, especially for followers of traditional religion, a way of organising one's life and seeing the world. This does not explain the fact that many Joola of traditional beliefs, and not just those who define themselves as supporters of secessionism, feel ill-treated by the Muslim Wolofs of the north. What this feeling does illustrate is the attitude of some members of the Islamic religion – and especially that of some members of Senegalese ruling circles – towards the followers of traditional religion. As several of the authors of the work *Ètnia i nació als móns Africans* (Ethnic Group and Nation in the African Worlds) sagely note, the way the government manages religious (as well as linguistic, geographical et cetera) difference is crucial. As Castel notes, one paradigmatic case is that of South Sudan, where the last civil war arose in part because the Khartoum government, riding roughshod over the fact that, in the South, traditional religions and Christianity have the most followers, decided to impose Sharia law throughout Sudanese territory.

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[24] In fact, the proportions of traditional religion and Catholicism are higher in Lower Casamance, while in Middle and Upper Casamance the percentage of Muslims is much higher, almost the same as the national average for Senegal.

"Primitivising" Local Cultures and "Modernising" Secessionist Regions?

In many countries around the world and not just in Africa, one frequently hears how, in many milieus of the State capital, the peoples of the periphery are labelled as "primitive". This tendency is almost general in all the cases treated here. As Albert Farré writes, for the flat land people of Uganda, the Amba and Konzo mountain peoples were considered to be the country's most "backward". Some Wolofs in the north of Senegal consider that the Joola and other peoples of Casamance are "*ñaak*", savages. The pattern is repeated in South Sudan, the south of Nigeria, Barotseland, and so on.

One should recall, as Christian Coulon (1978) judiciously indicates, that primitivisation of peripheral cultures is inscribed within the Jacobin ideal of incorporating the rural economy into the market economy. Moreover, such primitivisation comes under the heading of a clash of cosmologies: not only does it target certain kinds of behaviour and customs such as clothing, consumption of certain products like palm wine, characteristic traditions of marriage alliances, et cetera, but it is also frequently aimed at traditional religion, the mainstay of several African societies, without which it is impossible to understand their functioning. It is paradoxical that, as noted in one of the preceding sections, it is precisely in these zones that are "primitivised" by the centre that the elites tend to have a solid western academic background.

Perhaps it is in reaction to this tendency of city dwellers in the capital to primitivise peoples of the periphery on account of difference, or perhaps it is because of a certain viewpoint of the elite members of secessionist movements *vis-à-vis* the culture of their families of origin, conceivably because of the biographical background of these leaders and frequently – as we shall see below – in relation with the experience of migration, or perhaps as mere political strategy, that some secessionist movements have defined their model of society ignoring or even prohibiting any functional structures based on what some call "tradition". One of the clearest cases of this is that of the secessionist party in Caprivi, the UPD, which in Point 3 of its constitution (cited by Ester Massó) declares that its aim is to abolish "tribalism". Yet this is not the only case. As Alberich points out, some Western Sahara leaders broke with the *qabila* model and attempted to establish a society on new foundations. In independent Eritrea, too, Dias notes (citing Conrad, 2006) that it was proposed that the more locally-based identities should be left behind in

the project of constructing the State. In the case of the Ruwenzururu people, Mamdani (idem) points to reforms carried out by the leader Mkirani at the level of local administration. Along these lines, one should not lose sight of the fact that many secessionist movements function in ways that are closer to that of the modern political party than to any traditional and religious organisation of pre-colonial origins, although sometimes the discourse seeks legitimacy by referring to some or other local traditional reality. Indeed, in most cases, the names of the breakaway movements are in languages of European origin. As Deutsch (1962) remarked almost half a century ago, ethnicity is bound to modernity. Without a doubt, secession is too.

Pluri-ethnic Secessionist Movements?

In general, the non-specialist press tends to resort to ethnicity as the ultimate explanation for many of Africa's social phenomena, especially if they are violent. It is no longer unusual to hear such terms as "inter-ethnic conflict", "ethnic rivalries", and "inter-ethnic tensions". It is evident that ethnicity (or other terms that are probably more appropriate when one is speaking of the nation without a State) might shed light on many phenomena inasmuch as it comes within the framework of a specific culture that correspondingly produces certain perceptions of the world. In this book, however, many of the cases discussed lead us to reflect on the point that several secessionist movements are clearly pluri-ethnic, which is to say they bring together people of diverse sociocultural origins. Such would be the case with South Cameroon, South Sudan, Casamance, Caprivi, Eritrea, Biafra, Rwenzururu, et cetera. In many situations, for all this plurality, the movements are mainly comprised by one ethnic group. For example the Mafwe are the majority in the Caprivi movement, although many Masubia people of Caprivi have joined the cause; the Ibo were the majority in the self-proclaimed Republic of Biafra, but people from other minority groups such as the Efiks also participated in the armed struggle; the Joola people make up the majority in the MFDC in Casamance but there are also some Manding, Manjack and Mankanya people, *inter alia*.

This pluri-ethnic characteristic of several secessionist movements takes one into a cul-de-sac full of questions. Is this agglutinating propensity – at least in discourse – a way of understanding and respecting cultural plurality or is it just another a political strategy for presenting the movement in public and thereby avoiding such labels as "ethnic-based", "tribalist" and even "racist"? Is this form of collaboration between different

ethnic groups or nationalities – as Mamdani (idem) calls them – imbued with some sort of inter-ethnic relationship harking back to pre-colonial times? Do the groups that come together under the banner of a shared secessionist project share more cultural and religious features among themselves than with the predominant society of the State from which they wish to separate? At what point does one find the appearance of identity markers that these movements say define them as a "nation without a State"? In colonial times? In the post-colonial period? Are they "artificially" created, which Hobsbawm and Ranger would seem to suggest, to the extent that the secessionist movement continues to consolidate among the population?

After all the ground that has been covered in the above four sections, this would seem to be a good point to discuss the question of identity markers (or identity labels).

The Use of Identity Markers

As we have noted above, any nationalist discourse, whether it comes from the level of the State, or whether it is independence- or secessionist-minded, tends to adopt a series of identity markers that define, from its point of view, some particular nation or region. The nation-state, which is as much in vogue in Africa as in Europe, is a great identity producer. So too, although with many fewer resources than the State, are secessionist movements.

Identity markers, as San Román (1990) explains, are elements selected from a culture to present the society as a whole. Language and religion are among the most employed. Yet there are many more, including historic figures, music, dances, culinary traditions, and even football teams.

However, as Garay (cited by Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart, 1995) pointed out, since all societies have their contradictions, it is easy to find in any one culture two identity markers that are somehow in opposition. This is what Garay dubbed "the identity paradox". Given the cultural plurality of several secessionist movements, one commonly finds this kind of incongruity in Africa. In fact, people from the predominant group within a secessionist movement frequently select elements that, for them, are symbolically important in their culture, which does not necessarily mean that they are so for other populations living in the same region, even though their members might

share their secessionist ideas. Normally such elements are selected because they heighten the differences with the prevailing State society, while elements in common with the culture from which they wish to break away are ignored or camouflaged. The case of Casamance is a good example. At first, almost all the identity markers flourished by the MFDC were chosen from Joola culture (traditional religion, Catholicism, Joola religious leaders, absence of casts …), thereby excluding the Manding and Peul peoples who, taken together, account for about 60% of the population of Casamance. On the one hand, this happened because the intellectuals in the MFDC were mostly Joola and, on the other, because the important thing was to distinguish themselves from the "northerners" who, as noted above, are generally Muslim, with whom the Manding and Peul peoples of Casamance share some features. Later on, further elements were incorporated with a view to including other groups. Hence, people spoke of the importance of having been born in Casamance and of respecting each other's cultures because they were from Casamance; a publication was given the name of a word in Manding language; non-Joola leaders who had struggled against the French were incorporated into the historiography of Casamance by means of a sort of collective marker based on "resistance against the foreign power" where the category of "foreign", from the MFDC point of view, was also included for use when referring to people born in the north of Senegal, et cetera.

Those cases in which peripheral nationalism has a long history make it possible to observe how the identity markers keep consolidating in a process not unlike sedimentation. The creation of a more or less operative administration in the regions wholly under the control of the secessionist movements expedited the introduction of a certain sort of nationalist discourse. This was possible in the regions in which there existed a *de facto* form of statehood, as with refugee camps of Western Sahara, in Somaliland after the collapse of Somalia, and in the "liberated" (from the Eritrean point of view) zones of Eritrea. Thus, as Neus Alberich explains, in the refugee camps of Western Sahara, the Polisario Front set up its own educational system after 1975 with the aim of promoting a certain kind of *Sahrawiness*; in Somaliland, Hoehne writes, the government brought in a new educational system in 1997 so as to reinforce Somaliland identity, while simultaneously introducing a new flag and national anthem (1996),

constructing new national monuments (2001) and so on;[25] and in the zones liberated in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea schools and infrastructure were established. Furthermore, the ELPF launched an international campaign in 1988 to explain the situation in Eritrea. In these three cases, especially that of Eritrea, but also Western Sahara and Somaliland, one of the foundational myths to be introduced was that of the war for independence (not concluded in the case of Western Sahara and not recognised internationally in the case of Somaliland). In Eritrea and Western Sahara, this shaping of identity comes at the level of State or administration so that it is difficult, as both Alberich and Dias remark, to separate the party that is struggling or that struggled for independence and the new "national identity", just as happened for decades in other African countries after decolonisation. In short, on several occasions, in order to produce and/or reproduce identity markers, the secessionist movements were inspired by the very state-based nationalism they were combating.

Trans-border Movements and Diaspora

On one occasion, a Senegalese intellectual and politician, when speaking of the case of Casamance, criticised the secessionist option, alleging that today's world is one of openness to the outside, and the pro-independence people in Casamance were going in the opposite direction, closing themselves off from the world. Many of the cases presented in this book would contradict our Senegalese interlocutor. One clue offered by several articles here is that of the migratory experience and its link with secessionist movements, a number of cases showing how, before joining the struggle, some secessionist leaders lived for relatively long periods outside the country, whether it was to study or for reasons of work. Neus Alberich describes in her article how one of the most prominent Western Sahara leaders, El-Oali Mustapha Sayed, studied political science and law in Morocco and then went to Holland, France, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania. He died in combat and is seen by the Sahrawi people as a martyr (*shahid*) and one of the fathers of the country. Another leader, Mohamed Sidi Brahim Basir, known as Basiri, had studied journalism in Cairo and Damascus and worked in Casablanca. Abdelkader Aghali reports that some Tuaregs from Niger, who later joined the Aïr and Azawagh Liberation Front (FLAA), spent several years in Algeria and Libya where they were also imbued with the ideas of the revolution led by Gaddafi after 1969.

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[25] Although some writers, in discussing this process, go back to Anderson's concept of imagined communities (1983), it is important to bear in mind that, as Cahen (1994) and Otayek (1999) suggest, while they may be imagined, they still create effects of reality.

A further example is that of the Eritrean secessionists as described by Alexandra Dias: in 1958, a number of Eritrean exiles in Sudan founded the short-lived Eritrean Liberation Movement. Not long afterwards, the Eritrean Liberation Front was established in Egypt by several Muslim groups who, not much later, received the support of Orthodox Eritreans in 1966. Castel's account provides a further example with South Sudanese leaders, many of whom, after being educated in mission schools in the South, did not continue their studies in Khartoum but in Kampala (Uganda) and Nairobi (Kenya). Zeller also speaks of the influence in Barotseland of the Lozi workers who had emigrated to work in the mines.

In addition, there can be no doubt that, apart from contributing new points of view, the diaspora has also played an economic role that has often been essential for secessionist causes. As Alexandra Dias states in her article here, one of the clearest cases is that of Eritreans living abroad and their financing of the EPLF for many years. Something similar, although with less intensity, happened with the Somaliland diaspora.

Another aspect of the migratory experience as it pertains to secessionist movements – although radically different from what is discussed above – is that of leaders who are forced into exile. Examples of this are the present-day cases of N'Krumah Sane from Casamance and Mishake Muyongo from Caprivi. How does this situation affect the internal dynamics of the movement? To what extent does it feed back into a certain type of "betrayed region" discourse or complaints of socio-political marginalisation? Or, on the contrary, does it undermine the figure of the leader who is far removed from local "suffering" while also favouring fragmentation of the movement?

Internationalisation

In all the cases we are concerned with here, secessionist claims have their repercussions, one way or another, in neighbouring states. This internationalisation of the conflict is expressed in a whole range of forms.[26]

First, it frequently happens that part of the population of a given peripheral region considers that the societies with which they have most cultural affinities are in

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[26] Internationalisation is a relative term and still more so in the contexts discussed here where there is no agreement on what "nation" or "nations" are involved.

neighbouring states. This means that, in everyday life, crossing the border – if it physically exists – can be a mere administrative formality that is not experienced by the local population as a change of territory in any cultural sense. After all, they have relatives in the neighbouring village (neighbouring State), they attend their marriage alliance ceremonies, they go there to express condolence, work in its fields or fish in its waters … However, this can happen with almost all of the African borders and it does not necessarily incubate a secessionist movement. Cultural affinity is one thing and political affinity – in the sense of State politics – is another and the former does not have to entail the latter. Moreover, in some cases, secessionist claims have not managed to unite lands that were separated by colonialism. For example, the neighbouring territories of Barotseland, now in Zambia, and Caprivi, now in Namibia, were part of the Lozi cultural world. Today each one has its own secessionist movement but they are not struggling to re-establish the Lozi empire but rather to have two independent states, Barotseland and Caprivi. Along similar lines, Casamance is another example. Some Joola sub-groups living in Senegal have relatives in Guinea Bissau and Gambia, yet when one speaks with Joola people from the north of Guinea Bissau some say they only have links with certain Joola villages but this does not make them feel as if they are from Casamance (a Senegalese region inhabited by several ethnic groups whom they see as being at a much greater remove in cultural terms than their immediate, ethnically-different neighbours who, like them, are from Guinea Bissau).[27] The case of Casamance introduces further elements into the story: some members of the pro-independence movement, several of whom believe in a Greater Casamance taking in part of Gambia and Guinea Bissau, have mined stretches of the international borders thereby preventing pursuit by the army but also movements by the local population for family, trade, ritual and other purposes. Paradox of paradoxes, this means that in this case of Casamance, the state borders have been reinforced above all by a secessionist movement that is seeking just the opposite.

To sum up, the political and military evolution of such conflicts involves a constant – one might say almost daily – rethinking of the notion of the State border and how it is experienced by part of the population. In this sense, an unavoidable aspect of the secessionist conflict – and so many other armed conflicts – is the use of borders by part of the population to flee and seek refuge after fighting against the State army. We refer

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[27] There are also some who, as Marut (2010) notes, support the MFDC.

not only to secessionist guerrilla fighters but also to members of the civilian population crossing the same border along with them, people who may have no reason to share their political ideas and who, as refugees, end up spending many years away from their homes, whether it is trying to start a new life, or staying with relatives, or in a refugee camp. In some cases, this situation may come about with the consent of the governments of neighbouring countries while, in others, it may occur because of the difficulty of exerting control over many corners of the border zones. In most cases, such situations give rise to tensions between governments of neighbouring states although, depending on the political context, it may also happen that they join forces in an attempt to put an end to pro-independence claims.

Whatever the case, as the great number of cases described in this volume reveal, secessionist movements find a place in international agendas, and this is more than symptomatic. Again, as the following section shows, internationalisation is also patent in the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by means of which, in the place of origin or from exile (with the active and even militant participation of the diaspora) secessionist movements strive to make their claims heard.

Local Claims and New Technologies

The relationship between the mass media and identity has been identified by several writers, for example Linda Leung (2007) and Kimani Njogu and John Middleton (eds., 2009). Several of the pieces in the present book demonstrate the increasing use of the new technologies in identity-forming processes, though it may be more in their methodological approach than as the focus of interest in the research.

Hence, on Web pages, in chat groups, in Internet forums, and so on, one may see how a number of secessionist movements disseminate their ideas and their versions of the conflict. One of the more suggestive cases is that of the Rwenzururu Kingdom, as described by Albert Farré. The official Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu website not only offers images of Rwenzururu along with its version of the history of the kingdom, but also permits Internet users to send economic support to the king through the more popular systems of on-line payment. Other movements have websites, these including the MFDC of Casamance (not updated), the SCNC of South Cameroon, the FLEC movement of Cabinda (presenting Cabinda as an independent Republic), the Tuareg

MNJ blog, et cetera. Many websites offer information about the conflict which, they claim, has been censored by the State government and the "national" press. Thus, besides texts, speeches, information on changes in the cupola of a movement, proclamations in defence of its ideas, links to news items published in other branches of the media, photographs and so on, there is also information on cases of torture, disappearances, mass graves and other abuses. Independently of the different degrees of credibility the reader might attribute to such websites, what seems most significant to us is simply their existence and, in particular, their dynamism, two factors that demonstrate how quickly the new information technologies caught on throughout the continent or, in some cases, among the diaspora.

Peace Agreements

In some of the cases presented in this book several attempts have been made at reaching peace agreements (Casamance, 2004; Cabinda, 2006; that signed by the Government of Niger with three Tuareg groups in 2009; the agreement on the future referendum of 2011 in South Sudan …). In any case, secessionist or sovereignty-based conflicts figure among the longest-lived of the continent, whether bubbling away in latent form, in virulent explosions or in situations of structural blockage. This, too, is the case for several regions that have signed peace accords. The first Senegalese president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, said that peace is a path, not an end in itself. Later one must construct, or reconstruct, a certain model of society. Such construction would probably not be possible without peace, but peace agreements by no means guarantee the end of a conflict. In fact, many peace agreements have been broken for several reasons linked with local, national and international politics and, just as the origins of a secessionist movement are multiple so too are the reasons for the failure of a peace agreement. These factors concern all parties, from the breakaway groups, which are often very fragmented, with strong personalities and all sorts of interests (recall the cases of South Sudan, the south of Nigeria, Casamance, the Tuaregs of Niger …), through to the government involved with its failure to honour the agreement and the resort to party-based politicisation by presidential candidates.

In this regard, one might infer from some of the cases described here the notion of a "politics of deterioration" by means of which, as some analysts suggest, governments opt, once the peace agreements have been signed, to let the new situation of ostensible

peace languish away without fulfilling the promises, or even a few of the promises, they have made to the local population; without setting up any in-depth political discussion; or asking, perhaps, for a single, and often impossible, valid interlocutor to represent a very diverse population; or biding their time, letting the local leaders grow old, or waiting for internal tensions to rekindle or become exacerbated; or trying to capitalise on the population's basic goal of achieving peace, persuading the people that for the time being they should shelve their struggle for whatever political ideas they may have about the nation (secession, self-determination, federalism, different degrees of autonomy, et cetera).[28] This is what one can see with Mabeko-Tali's account of Cabinda or, in part, Massó's of Caprivi, or Tomàs's (following Jean Claude Marut) of Casamance.

One should also highlight that, despite the long duration of these conflicts, several sectors of the populations involved have made a great number of attempts to attain peace. Indeed, in many cases, ordinary people, through a range of different associations (youth, student, cultural and religious groups, unions, NGOs and so on), or the most wide-ranging and highly imaginative formulas, have been working for years to put an end to the conflict in their territory, with peace marches, school workshops, inter-religious forums on peace in the villages, rituals and ceremonies and trying to heal the effects of sanguinary crimes and a long list of other ills.

This peace-seeking activity by a good part of the population is perhaps more general than the strictly militarised situation that defines the conflict, the only one that appears, if at all, in our mass media.

One More Note on the State in Africa

One repeatedly witnesses a debate as to whether the western-style nation-state has taken root in Africa and, if so, in what form.[29] The "modern" State in the African continent has been described in many different ways, each trying to contribute some originality in its nuances: ambiguous state, weak state, phantom state, semi-state, pseudo-state, and so

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[28] It is also important to remember that, in some cases, there are intermediaries who are theoretically working for peace and for whom the situation of neither peace nor war is advantageous, for pecuniary reasons.

[29] In fact, the State in Africa has a long history covering several centuries and, as a system of political organisation, it is older than that of the western world.

forth (see, among many others, the reflections on this matter by Christopher, 1997, and Roca, 2005).

One way or another, all these concepts refer to the difficulty of introducing the State in Africa and some approaches even suggest that the State in Africa is practically non-existent. All the cases presented in this book, each from its own theoretical standpoint, show quite the opposite. In many regions, as René Otayek (1999) said in his day, there is a need for a State, at least in some of its aspects. Along similar lines, we might recall, as Cherry Leonardi pointed out (2009) with regard to the traditional courts of South Sudan, the important or surprising thing is not so much the semi-autonomy of many African societies *vis-à-vis* the State but their semi-articulation with the State, however intermittent or arbitrary the latter's power may have been. The formulas proposed from within the secessionist movements, when all is said and done, are still a very interesting yet paradoxical reflection of Africa's immense political vitality.[30]

Since the first African countries gained their putative independence more than fifty years ago, the number of officially recognised States in the continent has now risen to a total of fifty-three. Throughout the postcolonial period some twenty-five regions have, in one way or another, produced secessionist tendencies. This means, *grosso modo*, that one in every two African States has within it a region which, at some or other point in the past five decades, has claimed the right to form its own State. This figure far exceeds what one might read in some studies on identity in Africa, in which some secessionist movements barely make an appearance. From another point of view, however, we could say that, given the overwhelming plurality of the cultural and political models that cohabit in any one African state, and when some States have over a hundred different ethnic groups or nations coexisting within them, the number of secessionist movements is, by comparison with what has happened in Europe, very low.

In any case, the existence of these secessionist groups shows, paradoxically, not only that the State has, in several aspects, taken root in Africa but that it has been deemed worthwhile to struggle for or against it, with everything that entails. As we shall see in the next section, this does not obviate the fact that sociocultural identities have many

[30] Thirteen years ago, Alfred Bosch (1997) demonstrated this political creativity in four different states of Africa and in their management of difference. The first edition of the book was in Catalan. In 1998 it was translated into Spanish and published in the present collection.

ways of being expressed and, in a large number of cases, can be expressed independently of the State of which they are administratively part.

The Endless Array of Identities

Although all the examples presented in this book share the common feature of the existence, at some time in their recent history, of a secessionist or pro-independence movement, one should not overlook the endless variety of identity options, and their cultural and political expressions, which are expressed in these territories. In many cases, secessionist proclivities are not general among the local population, although the people might agree with the secessionist leaders in criticising the government of the day. In other cases, the pro-independence option is more of a threat to exert political pressure than a long-term strategy. In still others, the struggle to achieve a State has majority support and a protracted history that is very deep-rooted among the population, independently of political class.

Neither should it be forgotten that these cultural and political identities overlap and combine with other identities (of gender, lineage, village, religion, et cetera) and their respective relations with the power or powers that have exercised authority over the territory throughout different historical periods. We believe it is important to note that in the continent of Africa, thanks to its tremendous plurality of cultures, we find an immense variety of expressions of identity, including pro-independence movements, which can coincide in a single region all of them feeding into each other. Hence, one should not confuse the expressions of identity of any one society – what some call ethnicity – with a highly specific political formula manifested through secessionist nationalism. In fact, as already noted, even though it may seem paradoxical, secessionist movements have often arisen in very fragmented societies, with a large number of ethnic sub-groups. Yet they have often joined together, in one form or another, in several breakaway groups or factions. The degree of complexity is very high. Such sociocultural fragmentation can also end up in great political fragmentation (Aghali describes five Tuareg movements in 1993; Castel, citing Woodward, describes how in 1969 there were five South Sudanese governments in exile; while Casamance has come to have six different factions of the MFDC, to give just a few examples).

Taking one step further, one can surmise that there is yet another paradox: fragmentation is a key factor for understanding both the fact of the State's not taking root and the appearance of secessionist claims, and why separatist movements have failed. This twofold fragmentation points to a crucial idea: not supporting secessionist movements does not automatically entail feeling part of the State against which these movements are fighting, or of any particular national community within that State. In many regions where there is still a secessionist movement today, some of the population is neither pro-State nor pro-independence but looks to the birthplace, to what is closest to hand, to the people, the ethnic group and even the village and lineage. As recent studies have shown, several African communities are recovering their more local identity, an ethnicity revisited and brought into line with the new times. As Eller and Coughlan remarked almost two decades ago (1993), the task is to see which cultural (and other) mechanisms sustain this feeling.

This entails not only a feeling of identity-based belonging but also a way of seeing the world and organising it. As already noted, the expressive baggage of secessionism is derived more from modern-day formulas, categories and political parties than from holistic African world-views, which are so popular in many corners of the continent.[31]

Ongoing Reflection

All the trails that have been left in this introduction are but paths for reflection, paths ventured along thanks to the authors of this book, each of whom has offered a chapter contributing very valuable ideas towards understanding a certain case that is very specific in time and place. To repeat, each case should be analysed in its own light. In addition, we should not overlook the interactionist and contextualist approaches, which remind us that secessionist movements, ideas and militants also change over the years in keeping with many factors, including family, professional and economic circumstances. They also point to the representatives one keeps finding over the years of conflict and the changes in these representatives; experiences with government and justice; the evolution over time of positions with regard to politics and violence; the different stages

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[31] The most paradigmatic case is that of Cameroon where, according to Ndwa, the inhabitants of the southern provinces are considered "Anglophones" in identity and not just linguistic terms. Indeed, many of them do not speak English but rather their own African mother tongue or tongues.

of the conflict both in its immediate setting and in the domain of the State; and many more aspects.[32]

Thus each case presented here should be examined minutely and constantly contrasted with others and revisited. This is our task too, as researchers: going back and back and back to the "field", to update, correct and criticise our ongoing work and thereby to keep learning from Africa's plural and fecund identity-based creativity, whether it is in its – minority – secessionist expression, or in any other of the great variety of its other manifestations.

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[32] As Lyman and Douglass have already noted (1972), the task to hand is that of cataloguing the repertoire of identities available in any one context.

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Articles and authors

Introducción. ¿Secesionimo en África? Pistas y preguntas para una reflexión, *Jordi Tomàs*

1. Movimiento independentista saharaui, un proceso de descolonización no acabado, *Neus Alberich*

2. Las rebeliones tuaregs en Níger, *Abdelkader Aghali*

3. Casamance: el particularismo inquietante, *Jordi Tomàs*

4. Acciones y dividendos en una sociedad fragmentada: Nacionalismo, etnicidad y secesionismo en la Nigeria postcolonial, *José María Ortuño Aix*

5. El caso del Camerún meridional: en busca de la cohesión interna y de una paz sostenible en Camerún, *Willibroad Dze-Ngwa*

6. Entre una economía de rentas y la violencia político-militar: la cuestión cabindesa y el proceso de paz angoleño, *Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali*

7. Caprivi independiente: ¿locura de unos pocos, parcial deseo colectivo o una posibilidad razonable? Reflexiones sobre la «franja» olvidada de Namibia, *Ester Massó Guijarro*

8. «No tenemos tiempo para esa gente». Separatismo lozi y la política de la Autoridad Tradicional en Zambia, *Wolfgang Zeller*

9. La secesión del Katanga revisitada o las incertidumbres de la creación del Estado-nación en el África postcolonial, *Mbuyi Kabunda Badi y Germain Ngoie Tshibambe*

10. ¡Ni acéfalos, ni feudales: Rwenzururu Kingdom! Las herencias del *indirect rule* en la frontera entre Uganda y la R.D.Congo, *Albert Farré*

11. Resistencia e identidades en el sur de Sudán, *Antoni Castel*

12. Somaliland. Un estado *de facto* en el Cuerno de África, *Markus Virgil Hoehne*

13. «No luchamos para esto»: claroscuros del proyecto político del EPLF/PFDJ para la construcción de la nación y del estado de Eritrea, *Alexandra M. Dias*

"Secessionism in Africa" panels convened by Wolfgang Zeller and Jordi Tomas,
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The Ogaden at the Heart of Transnational Conflict in the Horn

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Abstract

On April 24 2007, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) hit the headlines with an audacious attack on an oil exploration facility at Abole in the northeast of the Ethiopian Somali State (ESR), killing 65 Ethiopians and 9 Chinese. The military crackdown that ensued, coincident with Ethiopia's military operations in Somalia itself, drew international condemnation. It was a stark reminder of how far things had changed since the optimism of the early-1990s, when politics in the ESR, under a new federal dispensation, were briefly described as the country's most open, even democratic (Markakis, The Somali in Ethiopia, 1997). At the time of writing in mid-2010, peace negotiations over the Ogaden are again in the media. This paper explores the historical failures of successive Ethiopian and Somali regimes and movements to reconfigure the toxic constellation of Ethio-Somali relations: it locates the intractable issue of the fate of the Ogaden as a continuing source of poison at the geographical heart of the Horn of Africa. Seen from Ethiopia, the Ogaden is a periphery: geographically, economically, socially and politically. Ethiopian counter-insurgency has long attempted to detach its Somali links by force, cutting trade and other cross-border clan networks. For Ogaden clan members across the globe, meanwhile, the Ogaden region remains the natural heart of the Somali world, and its brutal impoverishment a source of deep grievance. After a historical review of a dispute that has rumbled on since 1948[1], the paper considers the complex contemporary strategies, narratives and motivations of Ogaden nationalists and of Ethiopian government actors, federal and regional. It explores the contradictory demands of the audiences to which they seek to play, from communities to diplomats, in the region and internationally. It analyses the multiple facets of an invidious constellation of constraints and interests that has reinforced conflict both within the ESR and beyond its borders, and that threatens to implicate and vitiate attempts to bring change to the wider region.

Introduction

If Africa has a "secessionist deficit" (Englebert & Hummel, 2005), the Horn of Africa has surely done more than its share to redress this imbalance. In a year in which elections finally transferred power in a still-unrecognized Somaliland[2], and Southern Sudan hurtles towards a referendum which few doubt will deliver a vote for independence[3], it is worth remembering that the two largest and bloodiest wars between African states in contemporary times have both been intimately connected with secessionism in the region. The Ethio-Eritrean War of 1998-2000 erupted only a few years after a 30-year conflict resulted in Eritrean independence *de facto* in 1991 and *de iure* in 1993.[4] It shattered the much-vaunted peace dividend, re-opened depths of bitterness in and between both countries, and re-fuelled the long-standing regional catechism that "my enemy's enemy is my friend". The Ethio-Somali war of 1977-78, meanwhile, represented the high-water mark of Somali irredentism, the spectacular attempt to wrest by force almost a third of Ethiopia's territory, centring on the Ogaden[5](Gebru Tareke,

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[1] Note that the text currently presented here focuses on this first half of the paper set out in the abstract.
[2] See Hoehne in this volume.
[3] See Schomerus in this volume.
[4] See Diaz in this volume.
[5] The name Ogaden, usually associated with the period of British Military Administration during and after World War II, was historically ill-defined, referring roughly to the central areas of the current Ethiopian

2000). It drove tens of thousands from their homes to remain as refugees over decades, poured new poison into the suspicion between the two states, and scarred the military and political elites of both. Civilian, military and insurgent deaths during these two wars, and the multiple conflicts which blazed in between them, have been estimated as in excess of a million (Gebru Tareke, 2009; de Waal, 2009).

If Eritrea provides a rare example of an African secessionist movement that succeeded in its goal of winning national independence, secessionism in the Ogaden has met with less success. There are suggestions, meanwhile, that the two projects, so different in many ways, continue to be intertwined. This month, in a story that – if true - illustrates some of the complex interconnectivity of regional geo-politics, senior Somaliland officials reported that they had surrounded 200-300 rebels of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), along with evidence that they had been trained in Eritrea and transported by boat to Somaliland, from where they were attempting to cross into Ethiopia (Garowe Online, 2010). The ONLF denies the allegations (Malone, 2010); the new President of the Ethiopian Somali Regional State (ESR), Abdi Mohamoud Oumer, meanwhile, endorsed the claims, adding that 123 had been killed and a further 90 surrounded (BBC, 2010).

This paper traces the politics of the Ogaden since its forcible incorporation within the Ethiopian Empire state by Menelik II at the end of the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the way in which regional and international factors have influenced actors and events. James Mayall and Mark Simpson argue that whilst ethnic difference *per se* does not explain prolonged secessionism, differential treatment of (ethnic) groups within a single territory (often during the colonial process), and subsequent government attempts to "eliminate cultural diversity and monopolize access to power" emerge as key drivers, which *may* be reinforced by economic grievances, and confessional divisions. They conclude, however, by stressing the seminal importance of a regional environment that is "strongly supportive of separatist nationalism" (Mayall & Simpson, 1992) (p.10). Whilst the prevailing "balance of power" (cold war or post-cold war international relations) is likely to be antipathetic to secession, prior to and more fundamental than this is the "pattern of power - in which geographical contiguity leads naturally to hostility":

> "The evidence of the Horn of Africa suggests that for the pattern of power to provide a life-line of support for secession, there needs to be a historical confrontation at its heart, not merely of states but of cultures and world views. In other words, it is not merely that ethnicity is not enough to explain protracted secessionism, nor is geography." (Mayall & Simpson, 1992) (p.22)

Talk of "historical confrontations" can often seem unfortunately resonant of Huntington's "clash of civilisations" discourse, recently critiqued again in an effective series of articles on the Horn of Africa(Prunier, 2009; Ostebo, 2009; Hansen, Somalia - Grievance, Religion, Clan and Profit, 2009) in (Hansen, Mesoy, & Kardas, The Borders of Islam: Exploring Samuel Huntingon's Faultlines from Al-Andalus to the Virtual Umma, 2009). In line with these authors' emphasis on local empirical nuance, this paper investigates and problematises the historical resources and experiences that shape the dynamics and variation of the confrontations in play in the Ogaden, in the wider context of the Horn.

Historical resources: conquest, colonies and Somalia irredenta

> "Ahmad Gran is for the Somalis a symbol of their past conquests; similarly, Muhammad Abdullah has become for modern Somalis a symbol of a national unity transcending tribal lines but true to Islam and the Somali's love of independence." (Hess, 1964) (p.415)

Somali Region, but importantly excluding the Haud grazing areas, along its north-eastern border with Somaliland and Puntland, and (apparently) some other non-Ogadeeni-inhabited areas to the north and south. Following common convention, I use 'Ogaden' to refer to the territory, and 'Ogadeen' of the clan. Somali orthography is not followed, with names rendered in forms in which they are commonly found in English [change?].

The Adal Emirate and Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi

Modern Ethiopia's relations with its eastern periphery and neighbours are profoundly influenced by the telling and retelling of the history of the 16th century invasion of Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi of the Adal Emirate at Harar, more commonly known in the Ethiopian highlands as Ahmed 'Gragn,' or 'Gurey' in the Somali areas[6]. Whilst Imam Ahmed and his force went to war with Christian Abyssinia primarily as Muslims, they are widely identified as ethnic Somalis (Muth, 2003). Ahmed's army destroyed a series of churches across a wide area of the highlands, reaching Lalibella, Axum, and the island monasteries of Hayk and Tana, and was defeated only with the help of a Portuguese expedition of 400 musketeers. Attitudes to this history are often treated as a litmus test of incompatible Somali and Ethiopian nationalisms: whilst in the lowlands Ahmed 'Gurey' is usually seen as a Somali national hero (complete with a post-independence statue erected in Mogadishu), for many in the highlands Ahmed 'Gragn' represents the archetype of the 'Muslim threat' to Ethiopia. As always with national symbols, the historicity of the story is less important than the contours and considerable power of its ubiquitous – and polarized - retelling (Henze, 2000).

Imperial incorporation of the Somali-lands

What is now the Ethiopian Somali Region (ESR) was forcibly incorporated into the expanding Ethiopian Empire state by Menelik II in the 1880s, part of a process that was explicitly competitive with European scrambles in the region. The imperial process was cemented in a series of agreements, concluded in the context of ongoing pressure (commercial and territorial) from Ethiopia's colonial neighbours. The Anglo-Ethiopia treaty of 1897, delimited the boundary between British Somaliland and Ethiopia (Bahru Zewde, 1991) (p.119). Whether or not the British intended to cede the strategic Haud dry season grazing lands to Ethiopia (Lewis, A Modern History of the Somali, 2002) (p.59), this was the effect of demarcation of the treaty boundary conducted in 1934. Meanwhile the Italo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1928, which established the border between Ethiopian and Italian Somali areas as parallel to the coast at "21 leagues" (73.5 miles) from the sea, was rapidly undermined when in 1930 Italy constructed and manned a garrison at Wal Wal, well within Ethiopian territory. Ethiopian protests and clashes in December 1934 saw discussion of the 'Abyssinia crisis' at the UN.

The Dervish Movement: a prototype of Ogadeen nationalism?

As a result of these late-nineteenth century competitive colonial processes, the other Somali-inhabited areas were parceled between France (Djibouti), Britain (Somaliland Protectorate, Northern Frontier District of Kenya) and Italy (Somalia). Reunification of these territories has been a goal of Somali nationalism ever since, and in its first iteration from 1900, the Ogadeen Sayyid Mohammed Abdilleh Hassan led a 20-year Somali rebellion, the Dervish movement, against both Ethiopians and Europeans (Hess, 1964). Early in the century, the movement had disrupted trade in the Ogaden and in British Somaliland. Many of its followers were from the Ogadeen clan, and their allegiance was consolidated by the Sayyid's judicious marriage alliance with a powerful Mohammed Zubeir clan family. By 1913 and the death of Menelik, Mohammed Abdilleh had consolidated a wider area of control, moving south across British, Ethiopian and Italian Somali areas, building forts including at Wardheer and Korahe in the Ogaden. By 1916 the Italians reported with alarm that he was negotiating a marriage alliance with the recent Muslim convert, the new Ethiopian Emperor *Lij* Iyasu, months before the latter's downfall.

When the British finally routed the Dervish forces in 1920, many escaped to the Ogaden, and, in a refuge taken by many subsequent Ogadeen insurgents, the Sayyid camped near Korahe on the Fafan River. He is remembered regionally as the "forerunner of contemporary Somali nationalism" (Hess, 1964) (p.433). In the Ogaden, meanwhile, his Ogadeen nationalist and Mohammed Zubeir credentials also resonate, with the memory of his expansion of Ogadeen raiding well into Ishaaq areas of the British Somaliland protectorate. Following the defeat of the Sayyid in 1920 and his death in 1921, British Ishaaq clans in turn moved deep into Ogaden, where they were increasingly seen by the Ogadeen as 'sub-imperialists' (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (Ch.4,p.25). Their effective penetration was a further indication of the weakness of the Ethiopian state, even in the Jigjiga

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[6] 'Left-handed' in Amharic and Somali.

region, and its abject failures of border protection. "During the twenties and thirties the British and the Italian territorial administrations were first and foremost rivals for the economic and political returns of Somali clans. Moreover when Hayla-Sellase's government failed Somali clans were quick to capitalise." (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (ch.5)

Internal and external challenges to Ethiopian rule in the Ogaden

In a nuanced and original investigation of the extent to which "Ethiopia was able to 'rule' the very unruly Somali periphery", Cedric Barnes investigates "what effects the subversive influence of surrounding European rule of other Somalis had on Somali clans under Ethiopian rule" (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (intro). Whilst the characterization of Menelik's state as "military-fiscal" (Tsegaye Tegenu, 1994) has been widely discussed and critiqued, it nevertheless identifies its enduring internal locus of tension: the forceful consolidation of a peripheral tax base to feed the centre simultaneously entrenched decentralized (military) centres of authority. Ras Mekonnen established the garrison town of Jigjiga in 1891, on the northern flanks of the escarpment near the strategic Marda Pass. In contrast with other newly incorporated areas of the Ethiopian empire, few highland settlers followed the army into the Somali lowlands, contenting themselves with land in the higher altitude and lucrative grain belt around Jigjiga. With the exception of small garrisons at Kebridehar and Degahabur, the state had little presence south of the town. Externally, meanwhile, the eastern periphery was vital to the modern Ethiopian state's political and economic communications with the outside world, and visibly key to the consolidation of its sovereignty (Bahru Zewde, 1991; Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005). The "increasing political and economic articulation of the eastern periphery with neighbouring colonial states, especially the growth of markets and improvement in infrastructure there, progressively weakened Ethiopian sovereignty and precipitated the Italian invasion." (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (Intro)

1936-1940 Italian Imperial East Africa

On 4 May 1936 Haile Selassie I left Djibouti aboard a British vessel bound for Europe; the following day, Mussolini declared in Rome that "Ethiopia is Italian: Italian in fact […] Italian in law." (Steiner, 1936). The Ethiopian Somali areas with the exception of Jigjiga, which were separately incorporated with Harar, were united with Italian Somaliland. The border between the two areas disappeared, boosting movement and trade. Roads between Harar, Dire Dawa and Jigjiga, as well as from Jigjiga to the British Somaliland border and towards Mogadishu were greatly improved by the Italians, notably linking previously divided Darood clan families and territories, those of the Ogadeen amongst them. Many Somalis had fought with the Italian invading force, and Italian imperial policies favoured Muslim areas, which had or were likely to support them against the Christian Ethiopian Emperor. Concessions included the reduction of taxation and the return of land taken by highland settlers: their initial popularity, however, seems to have been mitigated by bureaucratic restrictions that strangled trade in Jigjiga, Dire Dawa and Harar and muzzled exports to the coast (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (ch.6). If the Italian occupation of Ethiopia was, neither a colonial nor and economic success for Italy, it had a dramatic effect on Ethiopia.

> It was ironic that the Italian occupation since 1935, which had underlined the failure of Hayla-Sellase's attempted transition [of Ethiopia into a modern centralised, bureaucratic, and above all 'national' state], had done much to achieve these very ends.(Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (ch.6)

1941-1948: the British Military Administration and the "Reserved Areas"

In 1941, when the Italians were expelled, the areas they had occupied and colonized were placed under British Military Administration, and the northern border with the British Somaliland Protectorate was also abolished. At this point, the balance of power in the long-standing rivalry between the Ishaaq clans dominant in British Somaliland, and the Ogadeen to the south shifted again: between 1943 and 1944 the British pursued an aggressive campaign of disarmament against the Ogadeen. From an Ethiopian perspective, meanwhile, extended

British administration gave multiple causes for concern. At a very basic level, little economic support was forthcoming for post-occupation reconstruction or consolidation. The designation of the railway line, Harar, a corridor to Jigjiga, and the area along the border as a "reserved area" was particularly galling: this period saw a dramatic increase in grain prices, and the lucrative grain trade around Jigjiga remained outside the control of the Ethiopians. Secondly, although Anglo-Ethiopian agreements in 1942 and 1944 explicitly recognized Ethiopian sovereignty in the Ogaden and the reserved area, and "although the British never denied Ethiopian sovereignty of the Ogaden, by virtue of its continuing government from Mogadishu, its future became implicitly bound up with the disposal of ex-Italian Somaliland" (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005) (ch.6). The British presence and ongoing administrative arrangements, rendered explicit the coexistence of two different conceptualisations of the future of Somali-inhabited areas in Ethiopia: whilst the integration of the periphery – both in the north and in the east - was increasingly important to the nationalism of the restored imperial government, the Ogaden was also a "key location of Somali political, economic, and ultimately national aspirations" (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005). These were soon to be further and dramatically fuelled by the British.

The Bevin plan for a Greater Somalia

This issue of the fate of the Ogaden came to a head in June 1946 when the then British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin proposed that British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the Ethiopian Somali areas or Ogaden be united in one UN trusteeship, preferably under British administration. The proposal was controversial for two reasons: firstly because of Britain's legal recognition of Ethiopia's rights in the Ogaden in 1942 and 1944, mentioned above; and secondly because the Four Power Commission, which had been established three months earlier in April 1946 had a mandate only to consider the disposal of Italy's former colonial possessions (namely Eritrea and Italian Somalia). Haile Selassie I had lobbied for the return of the Ogaden and of Eritrea to Ethiopia in 1945 (Ethiopian objections could be taken for granted), and the plan was also immediately opposed by the other three of the Four Powers, namely France [check] the USA and USSR. Nevertheless, a number of British administrators in the region continued to endorse the idea, and it quickly resonated with the Somali Youth Club, driving its popularity, politicization, expansion, and reincarnation the following year as the Somali Youth League (SYL). (Barnes, The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis, and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946-1948, 2007)

Somali Youth League

The Somali Youth Club (SYC) was founded under British rule in Mogadishu on 15 May 1943. The SYC was, from the outset, a broadly and culturally nationalist organization, dedicated to the idea of 'Somalia for Somalis,' but seeking good and close relations with the British Military Administration in order to achieve this. A particular focus of friction with the British related to the SYC's determination to the breaking down of clan barriers between Somalis, and its resentment of the British strategic use of clan divisions in its approach to 'indirect rule' in the region. SYC became abruptly politicized and politically active in 1946 when the Bevin plan for the unification of all Somali areas was put forward. Its membership grew from around 1,000 primarily in Mogadishu, to more than 25,000 across the region in a matter of months, as the Greater Somalia issue galvanized the public mood (Barnes, The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis, and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946-1948, 2007). In early 1947 the SYC changed its name to the Somali Youth League, and became explicitly politically nationalist and anti-Ethiopian. Of particular concern to the Ethiopian state centre was the rapid spread of SYL popularity to what Ethiopia regarded as the much better integrated Ethiopian towns of Dire Dawa and Harar. SYL leaders, including its head in Jigjiga, Makhtal Tahir, as well as others, seem to have continued their ambivalent attitude towards the British and the Ethiopians, shifting ground according to their audience, and often apparently playing a double game against both. Whilst Makhtal himself apparently refused to co-operate with the Ethiopians, "for many of the Ogaadeen clans, the return to weak Ethiopian rule was better than unification under the British who they saw as strong rulers – 'if you give your stick to a blind man you will be able to take it back later.'" (Barnes, The Ethiopian State and its Somali periphery, c.1888-1848, 2005).

1948 & 1954: Restoration of Ethiopian Rule

The Ogaden, then, was finally returned to Ethiopian rule in 1948. Only the Haud and a small corridor to Jigjiga of "reserved area" were retained under the British Military Administration, which finally returned them to Ethiopia in 1954 – something which then became a focus of limited northern Somali nationalist resentment. In 1956, the Ethiopian government reorganized the administration of the area, creating a new Ogaden Administrative Region centred on Kebridehar [check details], and incorporating areas to the west of the Wabe Shebelle River into Bale *teklay gezat*. When the Emperor visited the area in 1957, Somali elders lobbied the government for schools, clinics, roads, water, and government employment, and 8 million Ethiopian Birr was allocated for the purpose (Markakis, National & Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa, 1987). Hoping to increase clan loyalty as neighbouring Somalia moved towards independence, in 1960 the Ethiopian government appointed Somali administrators in 4 *awraja* and 23 *wereda*, and appointed as series of others as advisors in the Ogaden. One Somali was made a Deputy Minister in the Ethiopian Government. A range of commentators agree that Somalis living in Ethiopia seemed to have little interest in or commitment to Somali nationalism as compared with their neighbours (Touval, 1963; Lewis, Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, 1958), with most acquiescing in the return of Ethiopian rule, and showing more concern to secure the imperative of unhindered movement than with which state claimed their territory.

1960 and after: Somali independence and irredentism

In 1960 Somalia became independent with the union of the former British and Italian Somali territories, and one of the first steps of the new government was to grant citizenship to all Somalis in the Horn of Africa. The five-pointed star on the new Somali national flag declared its irredentist intent to unite all five Somali-inhabited territories: those considered in the Bevin plan (British, Italian and Ethiopian Somalia areas, the latter now referred to as *soomaali galbeed* or 'Western Somalia') with the Issa areas of Djibouti, and the Kenyan Northern Frontier District. Radio Mogadishu provided strong irredentist encouragement, broadcasting the popular song "I shall not feel well until we go to war to unite the Somali" (Markakis, National & Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa, 1987; Legum, 1963) (p.505). Somalis from Ethiopia who visited the Somali Republic for trade or education came under the influence of the irredentist rhetoric.

In 1963 an organization called Nasrullah (Nasir Allah, sacrifice for the sake of Allah) was established in the Ogaden, apparently to fight for independence from Ethiopia(Markakis, National & Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa, 1987)[7], but with a strong religious rationale to its mobilization, and involving highly respected clerics amongst its leaders. Mohammed Mealin Seid comments that Nasrullah drew on religious tropes already familiar from the conceptualisations of Ethiopians framed by Ahmed Gragn/Gurey and Mohammed Abdilleh:

> "The Somalis began to consider other Ethiopians as their primary enemy and vice versa. Since the wars that spurred this enmity were strongly driven by religious undertones, religion was prominent in how the two sides framed each other. Socioeconomic and political factors both aggravated or eased tensions between the two." (Seid, 2009)

In 1963 a rebellion in Ethiopia's Bale province, to the south/west of the Wabe Shebelle River was triggered by the abrupt imposition of new taxes (Gebru Tareke, 1991). As the conflict dragged on it became enmeshed with the irredentist agenda of the Somali Republic who offered limited cross-border support. The Somali and Ethiopian military clashed on the border in 1964, and a settlement of the conflict was mediated by the OAU in March. Less than a year later in early 1965, Wako Gutu, one of the leaders of the Bale rebellion, and remembered as the "father or Oromo separatism" reportedly obtained a limited number of weapons from Somalia early in 1965 (Ottaway & Ottaway 1978:92ff).

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[7] Markakis also mentions a second organization, the Ogaden Company for Trade and Industry (check 1987 reference or 2007 report p.70)

The Western Somali Liberation Front

The Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) seems to have taken initial shape in 1973. The "creeping coup" which saw the removal of the Ethiopian imperial regime in 1974, and establishment of the *Dergue*[8] military government in 1975 "stirred Somali nationalism to a fever pitch" (Markakis 2007:72 – check other references). In 1975 the Somali Government reorganized the WSLF, putting it under the command of the National Army in Hargeisa, and organizing military training in Somalia and North Korea. Six months later it also established the Somali Abo Liberation Front, SALF, designed to operate west of the Wabe Shebelle (under the Somali Army Command in Baidoa), with its more ambivalent Somali – Oromo identity, and the involvement of Wako Gutu and Sheikh Hussein amongst other veterans from the 1960s. "Trained, armed, organized and otherwise supported by the Somalia State, the fronts were ancillaries of the Somali army" (Gebru Tareke, 2000) (p.340). As a result, the goals of the WSLF remained unclear, oscillating between independence for the Ogaden/Western Somalia, and autonomy within a wider Somalia. The SALF, meanwhile, seems to have been established simply to counter the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), whose territorial claims crossed those of the WSLF and Somali Government. The lack of autonomy of the WSLF from the Somali government was to haunt the organization, and the various strands of Ogaden nationalism to this day. From 1975 to 1977 the two organisations pursued a guerrilla strategy apparently aimed at pressuring the Ethiopians to negotiate, and wearing down Ethiopian troops before the intervention of the regular Somali Army. The WSLF was "universally and enthusiastically welcomed in Somali areas" (Gebru Tareke, 2000) (p.641), whilst the highland settlers fled, leaving a significant proportion of the eastern rural population under the WSLF by late 1976.

1977-78: the Ethio-Somali Ogaden War

Gebru Tareke has commented that the political and military circumstances in which Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1977 "could not have been more alluring": although Ethiopia's forces outnumbered Somalia's by around 47,000 to 35,000, they were logistically and organizationally disadvantaged, and heavily stretched in Eritrea. Meanwhile, what looked like an unstable new government was riven by factionalism as the Red Terror peaked(Gebru Tareke, 2000) (p.638). The Somali invasion began on 13 July 1977, and on 12 September in a crushing strategic and psychological blow (it was the third anniversary of the Ethiopian 'Revolution'), Jigjiga fell to the Somalis, where it remained until 5 March 1978. The rapid Somali advance in the lowlands, however, slowed as assaults on the towns of the Harar plateau slow and failed, and Harar and Dire Dawa held out. Ethiopian resistance turned to stalemate, and eventually the balance of outside intervention swiveled as the Soviets and their allies came in behind Ethiopia in January 1978 and a dramatic *volte face*. Somali failure to take Harar on 22 January 1978 became the tipping point of the war, and was the first time that Cuban troops fought with the Ethiopians. By the time Jigjiga was retaken, the war was almost over. "The invasion was almost universally welcomed by the Somalis of Eastern Ethiopia, who cherished the 8 months of occupation as a liberation" (Gebru Tareke, 2000) (p.607). Many still talk with enthusiasm of life in Jigjiga during this period (interviews 2009, 2010). Tens of thousands of Somalis fled to Somalia ahead of the returning Ethiopians.

If Ethiopia won the war, it lost the peace(Gebru Tareke, 2002). Operation Lash[9] was launched in mid-1980, to eradicate the insurgents (the OLF, Islamic Front for the Liberation of Oromia (IFLO) and and Sidama Liberation Movement (SLM) as well as WSLF and SALF), and expel the Somali army. Whilst villagisation became a mechanism of control in agricultural and highland areas, the use of proxies was a strategy in the Somali lowlands. The Majerteen-based Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), established in 1979 with Ethiopian support and weaponry to fight Siad Barre's regime, also attacked the WSLF and the Ogadeen in support of the Ethiopian military. The military occupation of the Ogaden was brutal and total, and the region remained under Emergency Military Rule from Harar (Hurso) and Kebridehar (Iz) until 1991, and the collapse of the *Dergue* regime. In April 1988, each faced with growing internal threats, Mengistu Haile Mariam and Siad Barre signed a Peace Accord, in which the government of Somalia renounced its claims on the Ogaden.

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[8] 'Committee' in Amharic: shorthand for Provisional Military Administrative Committee.
[9] 'Ringworm' in Amharic: designed to consume the insurgents as ringworm consumes human hair.

1984: The formation of the Ogaden National Liberation Front

In the wake of the rout in the Ogaden war, frustration at the WSLF's dependence on Mogadishu and its manipulation by the Somali government fuelled a reappraisal amongst the organisation's Ogadeen nationalists. The invasion by the Somali Army was itself seen as an attempt to undermine the WSLF's effective campaign of popular liberation. Siad Barrre's execution of 14 WSLF commanders in the wake of an abortive military coup in Mogadishu a month after the withdrawal from the Ogaden precipitated a further attempt to "loosen the regime's grip on the organization" (Markakis 2007: 73) at its second congress in 1982. The meeting claimed the right and goal of "self-determination," and briefly replaced its chairman. Nevertheless, in May 1982, the Somali government integrated all of its armed units within the Somali Defence Force, and by the time of its 20th anniversary on 16 June 1983 the WSLF "was already a phantom organization" (Markakis 2007:74).

The dissident Ogadeen nationalist faction emerged from the WSLF youth wing, established in 1979 and led by Mohammed Sirad Dolal. In August 1984 a leadership of six (Abdullahi Mohammed Saadi, Sheikh Ibrahim Abdellah, Mohammed Ismail Omar, Abdurahman Yusuf Magan, Abdurahman Mahdi, and Abdi Gelle) secretly formed the ONLF, only declaring its existence in March 1986 from Kuwait. The organization defined the issue of the Ogaden as one of unfinished "decolonisation," committing itself to the "liberation of Ogadenia by all possible means." It denounced the notion of Greater Somalia, asserting that by turning the issue into one of irredentism or secession it had undermined the potential for international and continental support. Unsurprisingly, then, the ONLF vigorously denounced the 1988 Ethio-Somali Peace Accord as "treachery". The definition and delimitation of both "Ogadenia" and "liberation," meanwhile, continue to be matters of great controversy.

More resources: federalism, self-determination and decolonisation

1991-1994 Ethnic federalism and the ONLF in government

Dramatic political changes followed the collapse of the military governments in Ethiopia and Somalia in early 1991. As the Somali State disintegrated, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) sought to usher in a federal system based on the principle of "self-determination of Ethiopia's nations, nationalities and peoples, up to and including secession." It made strenuous efforts to persuade the ethno-national groups that had opposed the *Dergue* to participate in the new political system (Vaughan, 1994). WSLF leaders, led by Sheikh Abdinasser Aden, were discovered "hiding from Hawiye revenge" in a Mogadishu basement, and brought with Sudanese assistance to Addis Ababa, where they accepted the new Charter, renamed the Front the Western Somali Democratic Party (WSDP) and were given two seats in parliament. Wako Gutu and his colleagues agreed to divide the SALF into two: an Oromo and a Somali organization.

The ONLF, meanwhile, proved more reluctant, ambivalent and divided about participation in the new Ethiopian federal dispensation. Meetings with the EPRDF in London and Khartoum had reportedly resulted in an agreement not to enter one another's territory; when the EPRDF then moved to Jigjiga, some elements of the diaspora-based ONLF leadership called for the continuation of armed struggle. Sheikh Ibrahim remained in Saudi Arabia, and a delegation sent to Addis in mid-1991 was reportedly advised to "merge with the WSLF." The ONLF did not participate in the July 1991 Addis Ababa Charter Conference. In January 1992, however, the organization held its first national congress in Gerbo in Fiq zone, which elected Sheikh Ibrahim Abdellah, who had by this time arrived from Saudi Arabia, as Chairman. He was known for his sophisticated Islamic education, strong religious views, and uncompromising resistance to Ethiopian rule in the Ogaden: he moved through Somalia between ESR and the Gulf, keeping out of the way of the Ethiopian state. Nevertheless the ONLF congress voted to participate in the forthcoming regional elections, citing the rights of self-determination and secession afforded by the Charter. The organisation's position remained "ragged and confused" (interviews), with a London-based representative announcing the following year that it would not participate in elections - only weeks before it did so.

As electoral competition advanced, two key faultlines emerged amongst more than a dozen political organisations: between the dominant Ogadeen and the other smaller Ethiopian Somali clans for overall control of the ESR (Markakis, The Somali in Ethiopia, 1997); and amongst the Ogadeen clans over the issue of secession from Ethiopia, with the ONLF for, and the WSDP against. The vote in early 1993 delivered the largest share, but not an outright majority to the ONLF, and "the results, including violations, were a fair reflection of local realities" (Markakis 2007:77). The new regional assembly renamed the region which had been known as Ogaden "Somali," and when its first choice of regional capital (Dire Dawa) was rejected by the federal government, chose Gode deep in the Ogadeen heartland. Although the ONLF seemed in the ascendant, internal ambivalence about the Ethiopian federal Charter arrangement, and recognition of Ethiopian sovereignty, continued to dog the organisation. Abdillahi Mohammed Saadi, a founder member of the ONLF, became the first regional President, albeit apparently not elected as an official ONLF's official representative, because of ongoing differences of view with the Chairman over co-operation with Ethiopia[10]. He was forced to resign 7 months later, after inter-clan and federal manoeuvring and amidst allegations of corruption and criminality, in the first iteration of a regular pattern which left the ESR "in governance limbo for fifteen years" (Markakis 2007:79).

The ONLF's return to armed struggle

On 26 January 1994, the ONLF with the support of 8 other Ethiopian Somali organisations declared themselves in favour of self-determination for Ogadenia. A month later, when Sheikh Ibrahim was due to address a rally in Wardheer, rising tension erupted into violence, and many were killed including senior members of the ONLF. The Sheikh escaped, and other ONLF members went into hiding or were killed by security forces. Regardless of the violence, the ONLF-led ESR assembly on 24 March 1994 resolved to negotiate self-determination and a referendum on secession with the federal government, who reacted swiftly and negatively. A month later the ESR President and 9 others had been imprisoned. From that point on the ONLF was split between a group of those who had been in the ESR government who were willing to continue to co-operate with EPRDF, and those in favour of the return to armed struggle, a division sealed when on 27 May 1995 the ONLF 'legal wing' denounced the leadership in exile, and on 6 June that leadership signed an agreement in London to co-operate with the OLF against the EPRDF. Some argue that the division was a result of federal manipulation (interviews), but this was clearly not the only driver (Samatar, 2004) (Brydon, 1995). The 'legal wing' of the ONLF now found it increasing difficult to operate, in competition with the newly formed and centrally backed Ethiopian Somali Democratic League (ESDL), led by Abdul Meijid Hussein, a prominent Ishaaq. It came away from elections in June 1995 with 30 out of 139 seats in the ESR assembly, and continued to hemorrhage frustrated members overseas. The rump was finally amalgamated with the ESDL to form the new Somali People's Democratic Party (SPDP) in June 1998, in another round of heavy federal intervention. Meanwhile, also in 1998 the ONLF held its second congress, replacing Sheikh Ibrahim Abdellah with the current chairman, 'Admiral' Mohammed Omar Osman, and bringing into the leadership alongside him a series of other former Generals of the Somali Republic.

Tadamun al Islaam and al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyya

Two Islamic organisations, which drew mainly on support from the Ogadeen clans, were also established in the region in 1991: the radical militant Ogaden Islamic Uniion, or Ogaden al-Itihaad al Islaamiyya (AIAI), and the more traditionalist Islamic Solidarity Party – Western Somalia – Ogaden, also known as "Tadamun" (solidarity) (Markakis, The Somali in Ethiopia, 1997). Tadamun Al Islaam was led by Abdirahman Yusuf Magan, one of the six founder members of the ONLF in 1984, and Mohammed Moalim Osman. Unlike AIAI, Tadamun did participate in elections in 1992, winning 7 seats (Markakis, The Somali in Ethiopia, 1997) (p.567). Tadamun was "mostly composed of religious traditionalists" (Perouse de Montclos, 2000), and represented conservative rather than radical Islam. It joined ranks with the WSLF/WSDP in 1994.

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[10] see UN. (2003). *Confidential Internal Report.* Addis Ababa: UN.; also Samatar, A. I. (2004). Ethiopian Federalism: Autonomy versus Control in the Somali Region. *Third World Quarterly, 25* (6), 1131-54.

Al-Itihaad al-Islaamiyya (AIAI) was "by far the largest [Somali] Islamist armed organization in the early 1990s."[11] When AIAI was first established in the Ogaden in 1991, it was reportedly invited into the political process by the ONLF, but refused to participate in elections in 1992, in line with the teaching of the wider international movement dedicated to the promotion of Wahabbism. The leading member of the AIAI in the Ogaden was Osman Abdisalaam, a learned religious figure, educated in Arabic, and the movement was linked with Hassan Turki in southern Somalia. AIAI drew on support in territory it controlled in Gedo and Bakol regions, including Dolo, Bladhawa, Bourdoobo and Koweibo, from where it conducted raids into the ESR. Some AIAI elements also seem to have had a degree of facilitation from General Mohammed Farah Aideed, who controlled the wider region in Somalia at that time[12]. Clan dynamics inherent in the relationship with Aideed contributed to AIAI's fragmentation into three different groups: "the Ethiopian branch [was] the most radical and already had endorsed a more Jihadi stance against the Ethiopian regime and enjoyed a warm relationship with the ONLF" (Marchal, 2009).

> "Heightened militarism on the part of the Ethiopian wing of the AIAI was no doubt linked to the fact that the AIAI in Ethiopia was fighting for very different objectives than the AIAI wing inside Somalia. The Ethiopian wing of AIAI was part of a long-standing irredentist armed insurgency by Somali Ethiopians. The movement's aim of imposing an Islamist state over all of Somali-inhabited East Africa required armed violence against one of Africa's largest and most seasoned militaries. By contrast, the AIAI wings inside Somalia were preoccupied with expanding their control in a country where they faced no government at all." (Counter Terrorism Centre at West Point, not dated) (p.43).

Immediately after Aideed was killed, and less than a month after the July 1996 attempt on the life of Ethiopian Somali federal minister and then Chairman of the ESDL, Abdul Meijid Hussein, ENDF forces ousted AIAI from the area around Luuq, killing many of its members[13]. The period of bombings in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, and mining of rural roads in ESR came to an end. From January 1997 AIAI turned its attention to political and welfare activities, and the emerging Islamic Courts movement in Somalia, retaining a presence where it could, but not very evident on the Ethiopian side of the border. A decade later, in 2004-5 AIAI Ogaden reemerged in a new guise, allied with WSLF personnel within the United Western Somali Liberation Front (UWSLF).

Intensification and regionalization of conflict
In the 'cold war' period that followed the Ethio-Eritrean conflict of 1998-2000, the Eritrean government intensified the support it gave to a number of movements fighting the Ethiopian government, including the ONLF. Internally, the scope and depth of this new alliance with Asmara was controversial, notably for a generation of leaders scarred by the experience of WSLF's manipulation by Mogadishu. Relations with Eritrea seem to have been central to the division that developed after 2001 between Admiral Osman and Dr Mohammed Sirad Dolal, then Foreign Spokesperson in London. Although this view is disputed (interviews) Dr Dolal was widely seen as more critical of the alliance with Eritrea fearing that (as the patronage of WSLF of the Somali government of Mohammed Siad Barre had done) it could threaten to undermine the struggle for an independent Ogadenia by complicating it with other regional

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[11] "set up in 1983 by the merger of four groups, it already had developed due to the mobilization of the Somali diaspora and its ideological agenda was reshaped by the internal conditions in Somalia […] and the growing influence of Salafi ideology, due to the involvement of many migrants established in the Gulf who generously funded the movement" Marchal, R. (2009). A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab. *Journal of East African Studies , 3* (3), 381-404.(p.5).

[12] Although not all commentators agree that Aideed was close to the radical Islmaists, some further believe that he channeled support from bin Laden's al-Quaeda. See for instance Counter Terrorism Centre at West Point. (not dated). *Al Quaeda's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa.* Retrieved May 2009 from Counter Terrorism Centre at the US Military Academy, West Point: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq/pdf/Al-Qa%27ida%27s%20MisAdventures%20in%20the%20Horn%20of%20Africa.pdf.

[13] It is reported that the bodies of a number of foreign fighters, with passports, were discovered in this operation.

dynamics. The split became irrevocable when a meeting in Asmara in June 2006 (at which Dr Dolal was not present) agreed to remove him from the leadership, and was sealed in 2007, when the two factions made separate claims to represent the ONLF, each denouncing the other. Dr Dolal retained some support in the Diaspora, notably from Germany-based communities including former ONLF Treasurer Salahaddin Ma'o, who during 2008 posted damaging financial material on the internet, seeking to discredit Admiral Osman.

In logistical terms, meanwhile, Eritrean and other support significantly boosted the military capacity of the ONLF in the region. With the government in Addis Ababa distracted by post-election security in 2005 and 2006, ONLF consolidated its forces and incorporated newly trained recruits, some flown in through Dusamareeb, whilst the cross-border airstrip was controlled by the Islamic Courts Union in mid-2006. By early 2007, even Ethiopian National Defence sources acknowledged that their own estimates put numbers of armed and trained ONLF fighters in the region at 2,500-3,000, over and above the irregular support of clan militia (interviews). On April 24 2007, after more than a decade of low-intensity conflict, the ONLF hit the headlines with an audacious attack on an oil exploration facility at Abole in the northeast of the ESR, killing 65 Ethiopians and 9 Chinese. The attack highlighted issue of exploration of natural resources in the Ogaden. Attempting to ensure that commercial companies working under licence with the government do not begin to extract oil and gas and other resources from the region was an explicitly articulated intermediate objective of the organization throughout 2009 and 2010: "If Ethiopia gets the oil and becomes self-sufficient they are 80 million and we are only 5-6 million. It will be our death warrant. So we are very adamant about this: we will not allow our oil to be exploited." (Interview, ONLF Spokesperson)

The Ethiopian military crackdown that ensued, coincident with its military operations in Somalia itself from December 2006, drew international condemnation, and an outpouring of Ogadeen and wider Somali support for the ONLF's resistance to the "Christian invader". A report by Human Rights Watch the following year graphically set out the fears of international observers about the strategies pursued by the contending parties, and the impact of the conflict on the population of the region (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

The UWSLF and the 2010 peace negotiations

In January 2009, Dr Dolal who had returned to the region in November 2008, was killed by Ethiopian troops in Denaan in the company of UWSLF fighters, with whom he was reported to be co-operating. UWSLF and government sources have claimed subsequently that the military were tipped-off by informants associated with Admiral Osman's ONLF, and these suspicions have been used by various Ethiopian government groups in an attempt to exacerbate divisions between the two important Ogadeen Mohammed Zubeir sub-clans: Dr Dolal's Rer Abdilleh and the Admiral's Rer Isaaq. This was a strategy vigorously spearheaded through 2009 by two SPDP Ogadeen politicians: Regional President Dawoud Mohammed, and Security Chief Abdi Mohammed Omar, who replaced him as President in mid-2010. Its explicit articulation by Ethiopian politicians, as in August 2010, infuriates many Somalis inside and outside the region. Another controversial counter insurgency strategy of this period was the replacement of the (largely highland) Ethiopian National Defence Forces with a newly established Somali "Special Forces" police, which changed the dynamics of conflict, pitting Somali against Somali, increasing reported levels of brutality as well as concomitant community and diaspora pressure for peace.

Little was known about the UWSLF until the organisation entered into negotiations with the Ethiopian government earlier in 2010. It surfaced in 2006, when two aid workers were briefly taken hostage, apparently unintentionally (Human Rights Watch, 2008), and in November 2008 pledged to co-operate with the ONLF and a Front for the Independence of Oromia (UWSLF, ONLF, & FIO, etc., 2008). In February 2009, the UWSLF were mentioned in connection with the detention of two Italian nuns who had been kidnapped in El Waq in November 2008:

> "There are UWSLF forces stationed in the former Italian-held Somalia to fight Ethiopian troops that invaded the country in 2006 in support of the extremely weak federal transition government. Their base is Bardere, on the road from El Wak to

Mogadishu, and that is where they took the nuns. To get to Bardere, you have to cross the Giuba river and there are at least three bridges. The Americans keep a discreet eye on them via satellite but a barge can slip across the river at night." (Corriere della Sera, 2009)

The organization is led by Sheikh Ibrahim Dheere, and maintains an active Foreign Relations Spokesman in Denmark. In June 2010 the organization signed an agreement with the Ethiopian Government, renouncing its commitment to armed struggle. Whilst still committed to the implementation of Ethiopian constitutional Article 39, giving the right to secession, "when the time is appropriate" the organization now plans to engage in economic activities and religious proselytism in the region, rather than joining the government or political campaigning (interviews). At the time of writing UWSLF and the Salahaddin Ma'o faction of the ONLF emerge as engaged in negotiations with the Ethiopian government, whilst the ONLF led by Admiral Osman apparently continues the struggle by violent means.

Conclusions

The historical review sketched above has sought to establish that Mayall and Simpson's requirements for chronic secession are very clearly in place in the the Horn of Africa, in relation to the Ogaden. Ethiopian Somalis experienced and in many ways continue to experience differential treatment at the hands of the Ethiopian state, experiences often thrown into sharp relief by those of their fellow Somalis under neighbouring colonial and independent jurisdictions. Ethiopian centralism under imperial and military regimes explicitly sought to eliminate cultural diversity. Whilst this may have changed under Ethiopian federalism, questions remain over the pattern of access to power. Economic grievances, and confessional divisions have emerged as clear drivers of Ogaden secessionism, morphing and reforming under different historical circumstances. The over-riding importance of the regional environment, meanwhile, emerges with particular clarity in this pastoral context. The practical prospect of *Somalia irredenta* may have diminished with the collapse of the Somali Republic, but the resentment of perceived Ethiopian policy towards Somalis has not. Likewise, new "enemy's enemies" have become friends, as regional relationships shift and strain.

The ongoing conflict between the ONLF and the GoE is only the latest round in "a century-old conflict between highland rulers of Ethiopia and Somali/Ogadeni secession movements". Viewed from this longer-term perspective, EPRDF is only the "current post-holder" in a series of highland governments, and as such "it is in charge of and logically interested in maintaining Ethiopian cohesion and uses its armed forces to that end" (UN, 2003) (p.21). At the nub of the ONLF's shifting and disparate aims and objectives has always been the desire for a referendum on the Ethiopian Somali or Ogadeeni political dispensation. It was the dispute over a referendum on independence in 1994 that pushed the core of the ONLF back into armed struggle in 1995. If there is ever to be a shift from violent to political means of addressing the issue, some such assessment of popular opinion will have to be part of the process. Yet, how is a government in Addis Ababa to reconcile this with the overriding impetus to 'maintain Ethiopian cohesion'? Any Ethiopian government would find it a challenge. Ironically, it is particularly difficult for this government (with its commitments to "self-determination for nations, nationalities, and peoples") to do so. In the early 1990s, EPRDF facilitated Eritrean independence and introduced constitutional Article 39 in the teeth of vigorous resistance, only to find itself hobbled by a brutal war with its newly independent neighbour at the end of the decade, and stunned by the violence of electoral (and non-electoral) opposition to the system of ethnic federalism that crystallized in 2005. As a result of these developments, and with Ethiopian nationalism more sensitive than ever, a sustainable political solution to the situation in the Ogaden requires a degree of political courage, creativity, and conviction that has seemed less and less in evidence in the polarized Ethiopia of post-2005.

Amidst all the claims and counter claims, lurid rumours, frank fabrications, and extravagant propaganda associated with the struggle for the Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia, currently fought between the Government of Ethiopia and the ONLF, and until recently the UWSLF, only a few things are known for sure. One is that this conflict will be resolved only by some

kind of political settlement, and not through military or violent means. Another is that, in the meantime, over and above those killed or injured, it is the poorest stratum of the inhabitants of the ESR who are being further impoverished and marginalized by its continuation.

On the face of it, over the last few years it has seemed unlikely that either the GoE or the ONLF would push for a negotiated settlement. The military crackdown that followed the 2007 Awole attack, coincident with Ethiopia's military operations in Somalia itself, drew international condemnation. Until recently, both sides have been publicly committed to seeking an outright military victory. In 2009 and 2010 ESR and federal officials repeated that the ONLF 'has been defeated' over the period since early/mid-2007, and that what remains is only a 'mopping up' operation against a number of small, scattered, acephalous guerrilla groups, with the organization militarily 'entirely destroyed'. ONLF sources, meanwhile, asserted that their numbers and support had grown exponentially over the same period, to the extent that they were confident of 'comprehensively defeating' the military forces of the Ethiopian state within the next five years.

Regardless of the extent to which the two sides genuinely believe them, neither of these sets of claims will be borne out by events. Instead, there is reason to believe that, without an inclusive and comprehensive settlement, this conflict could continue, at significant if lower levels of violence, for a long time: the state of "neither peace nor all-out war" (UN, 2003) (p.29), the best that has been achieved for more than a century, which continues to undermine Ethiopia's attempts at social and political transformation, blighting the lives of its citizens, and shaming the ideals of all of those involved.

Firstly, although contemporary conflict in the Ogaden is, at one level, a straightforward secular nationalist 'self-determination' struggle (secessionist or not) for control of the Somali-inhabited - or Ogadeen-inhabited - areas of Ethiopia, it isn't just that. It is mixed up in the perceptions of those involved with a whole series of other complicating dynamics to do with demographics, clans, territory, natural resources, trade, histories of Abyssinian colonialism and pan-Somali irredentism, human rights violations, Islamism, terrorism, and the regional balance of power.

Secondly, as had always been the case in the histories described in this paper, the conflict is not being fought between two disciplined, monolithic, and consistent parties – whether thought of as Government and Front, clan and 'coloniser,' Christian and Muslim - each with a stable base of popular support lined up behind it. There are intricate ranges of interests, influences, factions and alliances on both sides and moving between them. They are in continuous flux temporally and spatially, and their shifting constellations look very different at local, regional, national, and international levels. Thus whilst it seems clear that widespread assumptions about the macro-level "historical confrontations" in play in this case do indeed fuel chronic secessionism, nevertheless these confrontations perhaps do rather less to account for the micro-sociology of conflict and the desire for peace, as experienced by communities and individuals.

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