
Conflict and Postcolonial Identities in East/the Horn of Africa

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Introduction: Colonial Background

Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa refer to a zone of countries stretching from Eritrea and Djibouti in the north to Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Sudan in the west, Tanzania in the south and fragmented Somalia and Kenya on the east. Ethiopia is in the middle surrounded by Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Kenya. All these countries were defined and shaped by European powers who had engaged in prolonged imperial ventures in which they had rewritten the past and created myths of their greatness that are still perpetuated in post-colonial Africa (Martin-Marquez 2008:12-16; Bessis 2003:12-14). They had also produced an imperial offspring, the United States of America. Together, Europeans and the North Americans are the Euro-powers, for short. The Euro-powers were full of socio-ideological contradictions between the professed ideals of liberty for white men and the reality of enslaving Africans (Duffield 2007:228).

Beginning in the later part of the 19th century, the Euro-powers considered Africa to be a rich source of needed raw materials and a potential market of last resort for manufactured goods that no one else wanted. This had led to the imperial urge for territorial colonization, and hence, the Euro-powers turned to Africa (Tuathail 1996:38) to create new empires. The English, the Italians, and the French led the way in eastern Africa in imposing colonialism through terror while claiming they were doing it for humanity and civilization (Cesaire 1970:9-12; Young 1994:165-166; Munene 1995:228).

In general, Euro-powers believed they had rights to enslave and reshape the Africans to suit imperial whims (Mbembe 2001:28-29; Bessis 2003:16). This included forcing Africans to 'disremember' their past and to imbibe the conqueror's heroism.

One method used to force forgetfulness was that of renaming everything (Thiong'o 2009:4). Another whim was the creation of famine as a control mechanism to ensure that Africans became *materially* and *mentally* poor. This involved blocking avenues of independent economic activities, destroying industries and lifestyles, and dehumanizing the Africans into submission (Waal 1997:27; Harrison 1993:45; Munene 2007:183-184).

In abrogating freedom, independence, and the right of Africans to be human, the Western powers planted the seeds of post-colonial identity crisis. They recruited African administrators, called 'chiefs', to be subordinate to Europeans (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998:44-47). Chiefs became part of a new legal system that lumped all Africans together as 'natives' serving colonial interests (Mamdani 2001:22-28). This system also helped to make 'tribal' distinctions amongst the natives when it came to political issues that challenged the colonial state (Munene 1992:2-6).

The Postcolonial Realities and Challenges

With the background of mental enslavement, orchestrated ethnic divisions, invented ethnicities and nations, and cultivated loyalty to colonial masters, colonies in the zone became states and plunged into prolonged disputes. Since the agitation for independence had aimed at removing white political rule in specific territories, it did not challenge the colonial structures that were inherently divisive. This inherent conflict between the remnants of colonial attitudes and the desire to cut clean from the colonial past constitutes an aspect of postcoloniality. It is a struggle on the cultural and political 'what' that should be acceptable from the two 'pasts' in the light of the present. The end result is a borrowing from both the pre-colonial and colonial past in order to shape new African futures. And this has been the problem, one of postcolonial identities designed to fit colonial structures.

Nowhere was this attempted fusing of the pre-colonial and the colonial past more pronounced than the discussions at the founding of the Organization of African Unity, the OAU, where delegates debated how much of colonial legacies they should accept. One group was aggressive as it adopted the concept of elasticity of new states and argued that colonial territorial boundaries needed dismantling because few Africans, if any, had participated in determining those boundaries. Such states had irredentist desires on their neighbours and they included Morocco, targeting Western Sahara and parts of Algeria. It also strangely included both Ethiopia and Somalia that were targeting each other. Ethiopia's intentions for Somalia were conveyed quietly but Somalia was loud in its desire to absorb all outlying ethnic Somali-occupied territories beyond the official Somali borders, namely, French Somaliland, the Ogaden in Ethiopia, and north-eastern Kenya.

The other side was defensive and it insisted on the sanctity of colonial boundaries as a way of preventing the eruption of conflicts not only over boundaries but also over what would exactly constitute the state. Such states rejected elasticity

and irredentism and instead believed in not only the concept of inelasticity of state but also in the incontractibility of the colonial state. The concept of inelasticity of state was essentially a defence against outsiders or neighbours who had irredentist ambitions. The concept of incontractibility, in contrast, was a defence against domestic challengers who refused to identify with the new postcolonial state and might even be encouraged by neighbouring states that had irredentist inclinations.

The new OAU, aware of the potential chaos that could arise in attempts to adjust boundaries, sided with those desiring to uphold the sanctity of colonial boundaries. This was a settlement that discouraged secession and interference in the internal affairs of a sister state (Woronoff 1970:329–330; Selassie 1980:4–5; Adar 1994:29–39). At the 1964 OAU meeting in Cairo, it was Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika who proposed the settlement because of three unpleasant experiences which, he said, ‘caused me move that resolution in Cairo in 64’. And I say, the resolution was accepted, two countries with reservations, and one was Somalia because Somalia wanted the Ogaden, Somalia wanted northern Kenya, Somalia wanted Djibouti’. The three episodes, Nyerere stated, were a visit by Kenyan Masai led by a white American missionary who wanted to dismantle Kenya, a suggestion by Kamuzu Banda that Nyasaland and Tanganyika should swallow Mozambique, and the Somali war on the Ogaden (Nyerere 2000:21).

Without external interference, each state then tried to become viable and acceptable to its ‘peoples’. Subsequently, each state tended to concentrate on keeping *the peace*, meaning law and order, at the expense of maintaining *generic peace* (Munene 2009:218–228). In the process of maintaining the *peace*, however, the idea of state ran into friction with the idea of nations within the state who refused to identify with the state. At times encouraged by outsiders, despite the OAU decision, internal disputes in one country tended to spread to neighbours and to become regional problems (Jackson 2006:426).

This was mainly the case in the eastern and Horn of Africa zone with an area of almost 6 million square kilometres and about 200 million inhabitants. The zone has not known much internal peace partly because of two reasons. First, the idea of state failed to converge with the idea of nation in many of the countries. Given that acceptance of the fact of any state is crucial to the survival of the state (Goldsmith and Posner 2005:4), the new states tended to remain fragile which made it difficult for them to protect people or adapt to new international realities that affected internal political and economic well-being (Ikpe 2007:86). Instead, as in the Congo, the president and the prime minister fired each other and, with external help, the prime minister died (Munene 2005:236–238).

Second is the influence of external players who, in colonial and postcolonial times, considered countries in the zone to be in their strategic interests, which presumably gave them a right to determine what should happen. In part, this is because the zone is hemmed in by a triangle of three large bodies of water that

are considered crucial to the survival or well being of other countries and regions. The bodies of water are the long River Nile in the west that is considered strategic to Egypt, the Red Sea in the north that is important to the oil-producing Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian Ocean in the east that is part of a shipping route from Asia to Africa and to the Western Hemisphere. By being considered 'strategic' to the interests of others, the people of the zone found themselves having to respond to those interests that in turn influenced their identity and orientation. There are three assets that seemingly attract external attention and make it difficult for countries of the zone to control their environment and resources. These are the Nile, oil and minerals, and land. Egypt, which controls the shipping lanes in the Red Sea, tries to have total control of the Nile by stopping riparian states from using the Nile waters. It has occasionally engineered instability against countries in the Horn. Saudi Arabia shows interests in the Horn mainly because Eritrea, Djibouti, and the Somalian mini-states of Puntland and Somaliland border the Red Sea and can affect oil shipping. Besides, Puntland and Somaliland provide safe haven to pirates that cause havoc to oil shipment.

Oil is the determinant of the current competition for supremacy between Euro-Americans on one side and the Indo-Chinese on the other. India would like to make the Indian Ocean really 'Indian' and thereby bury the notion of the ocean being a 'British lake' but it has to contend with the ever-growing presence of the United States whose naval activities in eastern Africa have intensified officially to fight terrorists and pirates. The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Sudan and Uganda has added to the region's strategic value as far as the extra-continental players are concerned.

But it is not simply oil that is attracting other regions. There are minerals and a growing belief that agricultural land is finite and increasingly in short supply and this has led to a new scramble for African land. Well-endowed countries that are worried about their food security have mounted a spree of land grabs in places like Ethiopia and Sudan with the arrangement of government officials. Arab and Asian countries have taken to leasing huge tracts of land to grow the food in African countries that is then shipped directly out, to their own consumers (Cotula *et al.* 2009). After the agreement, the African country loses control of the said territory thereby creating a strange phenomenon in which a country pleads for food aid while a lot of food is shipped out to another country as export. What this implies is that the leasing countries have thought strategically about food security (Borger 2009) and this has made African countries geo-strategic to the interests of Arab and Asian countries. It is also a reflection of the culture of dependency and lack of forward thinking on the part of many government officials who, from colonial times, were and are conditioned to depend on 'aid' from 'development partners' or 'donors' rather than be self-reliant (Moyo 2009:31-32; Polman 2010:16-17, 167-168; Bolton 2007:12-14, 22-24).

The Two Clusters

Eastern African and the Horn of Africa Zone, almost a microcosm of all the conflicts in Africa, can be split into two overlapping clusters, the Horn and the Great Lakes. They have some similarities and differences. Countries in both clusters experienced European territorial colonialism that split peoples and thereby forced the emergence of new identities. Even Ethiopia, which was not directly colonized, experienced a bit of Italian and British rule in the 1930s and 1940s. The end of colonialism in both clusters was accompanied by chaos in Sudan, the Horn, Congo, and the Great Lakes. Both clusters attract a lot of extra-continental forces in part because of their natural wealth that is considered strategic. The differences are also clear. There is more of the Asiatic and Arab influence in the Horn than in the Great Lakes. The Horn also tends to attract more attention than the Great Lakes in part because it is at the crossroads of commerce between the Euro-West and the Oriental-East. In addition, international terrorism is more pronounced in the Horn than in the Great Lakes cluster. Attractions in the Great Lakes are centred in Congo, which started as a personal property of Leopold of Belgium who incited other Europeans to scramble for territories in Africa. The presence of minerals that are considered strategic, particularly uranium that was used in developing the atomic bomb, makes external forces want to control the Great Lakes cluster and to influence those who officially run the countries, to impose neocolonial relationships. In both clusters, however, the problem of postcoloniality lingers and greatly influences conflict structures and conflict management behaviour.

The Horn of Africa Cluster

In the Horn of Africa cluster, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which started as a body concerned with the effects of drought but then turned to security matters (Nabudere 2006:73), is trying to reconcile conflicting claims and identities. This applies particularly to Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia: countries that occasionally engage in 'proxy wars' against each other (Abbink 2003:409; Kornprobst 2002:369). The Horn also attracts extra-continental forces that consider it geostrategic to their interests. During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union sought proxies in the region and established bases in Ethiopia and Somalia. This was to safeguard the oil routes or to challenge the supremacy of the other in the region. The end of the Cold War removed the props from proxies, helped to intensify regional instability, and seemingly promoted non-state actors to international prominence.

Sudan

Postcolonial identity in Sudan is compounded by the fact that Sudan and its peoples experienced multiple-colonialism. The largest country in Africa with almost one million square miles of land and a small population of roughly 41 million people,

Sudan has a profound postcolonial identity problem. The country is divided along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. It is a country where the idea of state is in conflict with the idea of nation. A cultural mix of historical and religious interactions of Africans and Arabs, some of its peoples, especially the leadership, have appeared to be confused as to whether Sudan is an African or an Arab country. Independence, in 1956, had different meanings for Arabs and for Africans.

Africans were disappointed because independence had simply removed British and Egyptian rule while leaving Arab 'colonialism' intact. Consequently, they, particularly in the south, challenged the legitimacy of the state and took up arms to demand the rights they believed were denied by their Arab rulers. From the start, therefore, Sudan had an identity challenge as it became a place of continuing warfare because Arab rulers tried to assert authority in creating an Islamic state. Resistance to Islamization was symbolized by the rise of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and its military wing the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), based in the South. In response, the government encouraged Arab militias initially to counter the advances of the SPLA. The fighting spread to the neighbours where Uganda supported the SPLA and Sudan supported the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement that originated in northern Uganda and was led by Joseph Kony.

The tendency to transnationalize Sudan's war worries its neighbours. Through IGAD, the neighbours facilitated a peace process between the government and the SPLA that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Nairobi in 2005 as a long-term way out of the prolonged conflict (Jambo 2006:149–159; Samatar and Machaka 2006:35–38, 46). Recognizing that there are some profoundly adversarial identity groups in Sudan, the Agreement called for a constitutional restructuring by instituting power-sharing at the national level while giving autonomy to the south to organize a government that is virtually independent. It also called for elections and a referendum in 2011 on the possibility of the south seceding from the state of Sudan.

In its attempt to ensure that the desire of the peoples of southern Sudan to determine their own distinct political identity, through a referendum, would become a reality, the AU/IGAD differed with extra-continental forces. Concern for long-term security and a successful referendum made AU/IGAD engage all the sides of the Sudan conflict and urge the International Criminal Court (ICC), through the United Nations, to postpone its indictment of President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan. While not condoning impunity, commented Tete Antonio, the AU Observer at the UN, Al-Bashir's indictment 'came at a critical juncture in the process to promote lasting peace, reconciliation and democratic governance in the Sudan' (Lederer 2010). One of the countries with a direct interest in *peace* prevailing in Southern Sudan is Kenya, which hosted al-Bashir in Nairobi to discuss the referendum and was fully supported by the AU (Munene 2010a). The interest

that Kenya has in Sudan is immediate in terms of security and long-term in terms of regional development and security.

The unsuccessful AU appeal to the United Nations on the Sudan issue is an indication of parallel perceptions of what the priorities should be. The United Nations, controlled by the Euro-powers, is part of the extra-continental forces whose perception of threat is different from that of the Africans. The irony is that the extra-continental powers led by the United States are in constant touch with al-Bashir and have the capacity to arrest him but apparently they do not consider his arrest a worthwhile political risk.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia poses a special problem when it comes to discussing postcoloniality because it hardly experienced Euro-colonialism. For the rest of Africa during colonial days, Ethiopia had been the symbol of many things. It was the inspiration to Africans to resist colonialism, having defeated the Italians at Adowa in 1896. It inspired Pan-Africanism in the 1930s when the Italians forestalled its independence in the prelude to World War II. During and after World War II, it successfully opposed British plans for a Greater Somaliland that included parts of Ethiopia. A founder member of the United Nations, it persuaded the UN to link Eritrea to Ethiopia and to reject the British-inspired Greater Somaliland idea.

Although Ethiopia was presumably adversely affected by Euro repression, despite the brief Italian occupation between 1935 and 1941 followed by British supervision up to 1944 (Gilkes 2004:231-232), it has also exhibited aspects of post coloniality. While it wanted to be recognized as an anti-colonial force in Africa, Ethiopia displayed colonial tendencies towards Eritrea and even towards Somalia. It, therefore, found itself caught between resisting Somalia's irredentism and its own desire to absorb both Eritrea and Somalia. Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere remembered Emperor Haile Selassie "quietly saying to us 'that the whole of Somalia was part of Ethiopia'" (Nyerere 2000:21). Ethiopia and Somalia therefore accepted the concept of elasticity of state but they differed on the direction of that elasticity. While Ethiopia wanted elasticity towards Eritrea and Somalia in order to swallow them, Somalia wanted to annex parts of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (Nyerere 2000:21; Munene 2010b).

In the early 1960s, therefore, Ethiopia and independent Somalia found themselves having to deal with two similar postcolonial environments. First, from different angles, both countries adopted the concept of elasticity of state, which ultimately failed. Second, both stressed presumed pre-colonial uniformity and tried to ignore the reality of the identity created by different colonial experiences. The Ethiopian government tried to force unity by insisting that Italian-ruled Eritreans were Ethiopians whilst the people in Eritrea considered themselves differently. The result of that difference in perception of identity was a prolonged war in

which Ethiopia struggled to contain Eritrean secessionism while for the Eritreans it was a war of national liberation. Similarly, the new Somali state ignored the different colonial experiences between British and Italian Somalilands as it tried to forge a sense of Somali unity by claiming territories in neighbouring states.

The Ethiopian contradiction was solved through the action of the OAU, as proposed by Nyerere that member states should respect colonial boundaries, and eventually through conceptual adjustments. The OAU resolution dealt a blow to Ethiopia's 'quiet' dreams of Somalia but not the Eritrean issue that was regarded as part of Ethiopia's internal affairs. The conceptual adjustment dealt with Eritrea and it was due to internal political pressures that brought together like-minded Ethiopian and Eritrean officials. First, to stop the application of Somali elasticity, Ethiopia had found it necessary to engage in defensive alliances with Kenya and most importantly, with extra-continental forces. It fought wars with Somalia, particularly the 1977 Ogaden war, and thus helped to destroy the possible application of the idea of Greater Somalia (Mburu 2005:173–229; Selassie 1980:5, 117–125). And this was at a time when it insisted on being elastic towards Eritrea. Second, there was an internal adjustment of the concept of incontractibility and the acceptance of the fact that states can contract. Ethiopia had to let Eritrea go and thereby end similarities between Ethiopia and Somalia on the issue of elasticity of state. In a popular referendum in 1993 after 30 years of war, Eritreans chose to separate from Ethiopia and become independent. Separation was amicable in part because Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi and Eritrea's Issaias Afwerki had been allies against Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Letting Eritrea go did two things. It opened up a different problem, that of being so occupied with perceived national interests that former allies quickly become enemies once the immediate objective has been achieved. The simmering differences on ideology and statecraft took centre-stage and the friendship between the two leaders, Zenawi and Afwerki, deteriorated into state rivalry (Plaut 2004:1–19). When Eritrea unlinked its Nafka from the Ethiopia currency, Ethiopia accused Eritrea of occupying Badne, a border town, and a two-year war erupted in 1998. In 2000, the two submitted rival claims to The Hague for arbitration and in 2002 The Hague decided in favour of Eritrea. Thereafter, Ethiopia failed to cooperate with the court decision and the tension between the two projected itself into other countries in the region (Beehner 2005). The fragmented Somalia is one of the countries where Eritrea and Ethiopia have taken opposite sides (Hanson 2006). The IGAD has not been able to reconcile the two and has virtually declared Eritrea to be a renegade state.

At the continental level, the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia undermined the concept of states as being incontractible which, in turn, made secessionism increasingly acceptable as a conflict management technique. In a way, Eritrea opened

the way for the possible independence of Southern Sudan. While in the 1960s, as was evident in the separatist wars waged by Katanga in the DRC and Biafra in Nigeria, such an idea would not have been condoned, partitioning states whose peoples appear to be incompatible is becoming cautiously acceptable in Africa. In addition, this acceptability is increasingly being pushed by extra-continental forces particularly in fragmented Somalia where there are calls for recognition of Puntland and Somaliland as independent states.

Eritrea

Eritrea, barely 20 years old as a country, struggles to find relevance in the Horn and has attracted attention as the regional renegade, defying IGAD, the AU, and the United Nations and seemingly getting away with it. Its postcolonial experience is a contest between a pre-colonial pastor the period before the Italian conquest, and a colonial past that is Italian, British, and Ethiopian. It is also a contest involving forcing the acceptance of the Eritrean identity by suppressing ethnic differences within the state (Gilkes 2004:249-250). In the process, it appears to accept mainly its Italian colonial past while rejecting the Ethiopian colonial past. In part, this is because the Ethiopian colonialism is more recent and involved a 30-year war of liberation because the Eritreans refused to accept that they were part of the Ethiopian empire. The fact that peoples in both Eritrea and Ethiopia are mostly of Tigrean background is subsumed in the reality of different colonial experiences. To a large extent, the modern Eritrean identity was shaped by the Italians and Eritreans tend to think of their capital city, Asmara, as a small Rome (Berhe 2010; Rodwell 2004; Triulzi 2006). Ethiopian identity is hinged on resistance against Italian occupation. The attempt by Ethiopia to ignore the Italian-induced Eritrean identity while stressing the supposed pre-Italian commonality in the two places failed. The Eritrean elite, mainly the descendants of the *ascari* or the African troops used by Italian conquerors, glorify the Italian colonial experience. They tend to look down on 'backward' Ethiopians and simply refuse to accept an identity that is not Italian-based (Dirar 2004; Triulzi 2006).

Eritrea seems to enjoy playing renegade in the Horn and going against the wishes of IGAD, the AU and the UN. Eritrea started as a darling of the Euro-powers with its leader, Aferwaki, along with Uganda's Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, Laurent Kabila of DRC, and Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi were portrayed as the 'new leaders' of Africa. They were new in the sense that they were used by the Euro-powers to get rid of old 'African leaders' who had outlived their usefulness and had therefore become irrelevant as tools of control and exploitation. These men, who initially appeared to be close, then turned on each other and fought wars they rationalized on the basis of their countries' national interests. Some of the wars were fought through proxies.

Somalia

Fragmented Somalia is one of the countries where the feud between Eritrea and Ethiopia is playing itself out in the open as the two have taken opposite sides (Hanson 2006). No other country in the Horn cluster has become as problematic as Somalia in part because Somalia has ceased being a functioning state. It is also a country in which the problematic of neocolonialism was so glaring that it ultimately led to the collapse of the new state. After World War II, and influenced by the growing Cold War, the United Nations had returned Somalia to Italy in 1950 with instructions to prepare the colony for independence in ten years. The British had decided to give their Somaliland independence at the same time so as to encourage a new united Somalia. The British and Italian Somalilands then mounted a joint venture to fuse together a myth of pre-colonial unity of Somali people using a World War II British colonial notion of Greater Somaliland with the idea of a new elastic Somali state. This implied that wherever there were people of Somali ethnic background, that territory was part of the Somali state.

At independence in 1960, therefore, the political leaders of the new Somali state tried to forge a sense of Somali unity to cover up differences arising out of competing pre-colonial and colonial experiences. It had adopted the concept of elasticity of state as a unifying ideology to create, instil, and perpetuate a sense of Somali homogeneity across boundaries. This had the effect of hiding the fact that there are people in Somalia whose ethnic identity is not Somali. Among such people are the Oromo and the Somali Bantu groups that are estimated at over 600,000 people. The Oromo and the Bantu could not identify with the new Somalia because they remained oppressed by the Somali people and state. The Bantu, for instance, were dispossessed of their land, enslaved, and derisively referred to as 'tiimojereer' (hard hair) or 'adoon' (slave) (Lindley 2010:187-189; Phillips 1994; Menkhaus 2003:323-339). Still, the ideology helped to create the myth of Somali unity (Menkhaus 2003:323).

This ideology of elasticity collided directly with the concept of incontractibility of colonial state. This led Somalia into a quasi-war with Kenya, known as the Shifta, and a real war with Ethiopia, the Ogaden War (Mburu 2005:173-229; Selassie 1980:5, 117-125). The collision also seemingly encouraged Kenya to enter the 1964 Anglo-Kenya Defence Agreement enabling Britain to continue to 'enjoy military facilities' in the country (Percox 2004:209-210).

Successive Somali governments invented and tried to apply the ideology of Somali expansionism but they ultimately failed. The epitome of the Somali contradiction between dreams of external grandeur and internal weakness was Mohammed Siad Barre who grabbed power in 1969 and initiated efforts to 'liberate' the Ogaden in 1977. The failure to liberate the Ogaden shattered the dream of expansionism, which made him turn inward. In the process, his internal repression destroyed the very sense of Somali unity he had tried to promote and

gave rise to various militants opposed to his regime. The militants had no illusions about Somali unity. Instead of achieving its dream, Somalia eventually disintegrated after 1991 when President Barre was ousted by forces of the United Somali Congress (Zewde 2006:13–25; Menkhaus 2003:323).

By the time of Barre's ousting in 1991, the idea of Somali homogeneity had disappeared as Somalia fragmented into warring entities, each demanding autonomy or independence. Since then, few of the Somali factions have been willing or able to reinstate a viable Somali state, partly because it is not in their perceived interests. Instead, the former British Somaliland has mothered Puntland and Somaliland who are often at loggerheads with each other over boundaries. The two also jointly provide safe haven to local pirates operating in the high seas in the belief that piracy safeguards Somali interests against international fish theft and waste dumping.

Somalia thereafter became an international security problem as it fragmented into warlord fiefdoms. The issue was handled in two ways. First, the US led a UN-attempted intervention to restore order by disarming Somali warlords. This was poorly executed and forced the UN to leave in an embarrassing manner (Patman 1997:509–533). Thereafter, extra-continental powers have tended to deal with Somalia through proxies. Ethiopia appears like an American proxy in Somalia (Nduru 2007) and receives of a lot of Western aid (Polman 2010:122). Eritrea supports Islamist al-Shabaab and therefore is perceived by many external observers as an al-Qaida proxy.

With the challenge of Somalia being a theatre for proxy warfare, the OAU encouraged IGAD to deal with Somalia. IGAD seemingly adopted a two-track strategy: on the one hand restoring central authority and on the other keeping the peace. To restore governance, IGAD facilitated the creation of a federal transitional government. After extensive haggling in Kenya from 2002 to 2004 between the Somali supporting the Transitional National Government, TNG, and those supporting the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC), the delegates compromised on a Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), comprising 275 members. Taking their oath by August 2004, the new MPs proceeded, still in Kenya, to elect Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of Putland as President in October 2004 (Ahmed 2006:169; Spilker 2008:22; Cornwell 2004). Transferring the Somali government from Nairobi to Mogadishu required security because the number of warlords was increasing, and some were comfortable in Nairobi (Mills 2004). IGAD authorized the creation of a peacekeeping force, first known as the IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia, which did not take place because of logistical failures. Next, IGAD authorized the AU Mission to Somalia, which was partially realized in 2007 and is trying to keep the Federal Transitional Government afloat in the midst of opposition from Al Shabaab and the warlords who are responsible for piracy along the Somali coast (Macintyre 2009).

The two AU/IGAD strategies appear to have failed because they seemingly ignored the problem of postcolonial identities in Somalia. Without the unifying ideology of Greater Somalia to cover up contradictions in colonial identities, peoples in Somalia insisted on translating differences into political autonomies. In addition, the two decades of fragmentation have produced a generation of people whose only experience is warlord politics. For such people, the idea of a unitary Somali state is a myth that runs counter to their new war-related identities.

The Great Lakes Cluster

Like the Horn with which they overlap, countries in the Great Lakes cluster also struggle due to pre-colonial and colonial identities and the confusion is intense. This cluster comprises Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi. They have had structural conflicts in terms of the constitutional designs but also in terms of the people in each state accepting their new postcolonial identity. Only Tanzania appears to have been able to create an acceptable postcolonial identity that has minimized pre-colonial distinctions. Rejecting the concept of elasticity of state at the possible expense of Kenya and Mozambique, Tanzania sought to forge a sense of national unity within the existing colonial boundaries (Nyerere 2000:20). This was clear after the 1967 Arusha Declaration that stressed Ujamaa (familyhood) and everyone became Ndugu (brother) in an effort to eliminate class distinctions as well as ethnic proclivities.

In the process, Tanzania crafted a new postcolonial identity for itself as the haven of revolutionary ideologies for would-be African liberators. The liberators were of two types, those fighting the remnants of white settler colonialism and those fighting African postcolonial tyrants. It therefore developed a reputation as the ideological training ground for leaders who derived their 'revolutionary' identity from Tanzania. In Southern Africa, beneficiaries of Tanzania's revolutionary identity included freedom fighters from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. But it was in the Great Lakes that Tanzania's role in creating postcolonial 'revolutionary' identities became vivid in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in Congo and Uganda.

The rest of the Great Lakes countries seemed chaotic and incapable of developing acceptable postcolonial identities. Eastern Congo, seemingly detached from the rest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, appears to be the focal point of the cluster and also symbolic of the crisis of postcolonial identity and external manipulation. At independence in 1960, Congo had a flawed constitution providing two centres of powers that were in structural conflict, President Joseph Kasavubu and Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Extra-continental forces overthrew Lumumba and then imposed Joseph Mobutu as their ruling proxy in Congo and Mobutu plunged the country into protracted chaos that affected the neighbours (Rikhye 1993:1–2, 318; Depelchin 1992:85–86; Villiers and Hirtle 1997:186; Weiss 2000). By the 1990s Mobutu had become a liability to his sponsors and

therefore had to be dumped (French 2004:154-157). He was also an embarrassment to other leaders in the Great Lakes cluster who did not want to be identified with him.

The leaders in the cluster first united and second they turned on each other. Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and José dos Santos of Angola formed a temporary alliance (Wrong 2000:237, 257–289) in support of ‘revolutionary’ Laurent-Désiré Kabila’s efforts to capture power in Congo. They were seen as ‘liberators’. On achieving their objective, however, their mission changed from ‘liberation’ to one of feuding over the exploitation of Congo’s resources. The alliance collapsed as individual state’s interests took centre-stage. They traded accusations and competed to exploit Congo’s natural wealth. In the depth of it all was Uganda.

Postcolonial Uganda was equally chaotic with its various peoples challenging the new identity. Gaining independence in 1962 with a flawed constitutional structure that created a divided government between the president and an executive prime minister, just like Congo before it, it plunged into chaos within four years. Prime Minister Apollo Milton Obote overthrew President Edward Muteesa, abolished the post of prime minister, and became an executive president. He annoyed the ‘capitalist’ West with the ‘socialistic’ policies, outlined in his Common Man’s Charter. General Idi Amin Dada overthrew Obote in 1971 only to be ousted in 1979 with the help of Tanzania. Kenya’s effort to mediate subsequent feuds was not successful as Museveni’s National Resistance Movement grabbed power in 1986 (Mugaju 1999:17-33; McDonough 2008:361–362) with the help of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF).

Members of the RPF were Rwandese exiles, mostly from a Tutsi background, who right from independence were victims of postcolonial identity. In many ways, postcoloniality in Rwanda, and the neighbouring Burundi, is a struggle over which historical account, as shaped by both German and Belgian colonialism, is to take precedent. One account is that the main groups in both countries, Hutu and Tutsi, are socio-cultural divisions shaped by the economic mode of production. In that argument, it was possible in pre-colonial days, to move up and down the socio-cultural ladder rather than be stuck in a position permanently. It is this claim that credits Germans and mostly Belgians with artificially creating solid ethnic groups that ultimately became antagonistic to each other. The identities so created remained intact and continued to affect the postcolonial period, which has been so chaotic in both places that they have experienced bouts of massacres and genocide based on those artificial creations. The other account is that both the Hutu and the Tutsi, in pre-colonial days, were actually distinct peoples having a socio-cultural relationship that was virtually master-servant oriented. In that relationship, the Tutsi were the rulers and the owners of cattle. They had supposedly come from the north by crossing the Kagera River and then lording it over the

agriculturally-minded Hutu who became dominated as servants. All that Euro-colonialism did, therefore, was to reinforce an existing reality to suit their interests and this appeared to work for a while. By initially privileging, and then turning around against the Tutsi in the name of democracy just when they were about to leave the two little colonies, the Belgians laid the ground for the political chaos that followed.

In both narratives, the primacy of colonial experience dominates a contested pre-colonial experience that is struggling to find space in modern history as the legitimate identity of peoples in postcolonial Africa. This became extreme in Rwanda when President Juvenal Habyarimana's government started sponsoring such militias as the *Interahamwe*. Following the assassination of Habyarimana, there was genocide of the Tutsi with a government-sponsored, and French trained/armed, *Interahamwe* militia going on a killing spree in 1994 that wiped out more than 800,000 people, mostly Tutsi and moderate Hutu (Quinn 2004:119; *Rwanda News Agency* 2006; Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998:7). The rampage stopped only when the RPF took over control of the country and displaced former government officials as well as the *Interahamwe* into eastern Congo largely inhabited by their kinsmen, the Banyarwanda.

Other kinsmen who cut across state boundaries include the Banyamulenge and the Twa and they all tend to pose identity problems for the Great Lakes cluster. In pre-colonial times, there was no identity crisis that was geopolitically determined because colonial states did not exist. By splitting peoples into different colonial compacts, colonialism created identity confusion that provoked postcolonial identity crisis. People had problems accepting that they were Congolese, Rwandese, Burundians, Ugandans, or Tanzanians and were supposedly different from their relatives across the state borders.

This confusion was evident elsewhere in the Great Lakes cluster. For instance, Kenya has experienced a typical crisis of postcolonial identity. Acceptance of an African identity had been made problematic in the colonial days when to be an African, often called 'native', was to be victimized and forced to pay odious taxes while being non-native was to be privileged (Salim 1976:65-85). This manifested itself in the north-east province where people of Somali background heeded the call of the Somali state to demand that they be united with Somalia rather than be part of a new African-controlled Kenya (Adar 1994:159-187). Dealing with Somali irredentism led to the Shifta war that remained a headache for independent Kenya. It was the same with people of Arab extraction along the Kenya coast who through the *Mwambao* Movement wanted to unite with their Arab brethren in Zanzibar rather than accept rule by Africans. They wanted none of the new post-colonial Kenyan identity (Adar 1994:164-165; Kindy 1972:184-187; Ogot 1995:67). There was even an extra-continental interest in dismantling Kenya. When as Chief Minister in 1960, Julius Nyerere later remarked, 'I received a delegation of Maasai

elders from Kenya, led by an American missionary. And they came to persuade me to invoke something called the Anglo-Masai Agreement so that that section of the Masai in Kenya should become part of Tanganyika.... I suspected the American missionary was responsible for that idea. I don't remember that I was particularly polite to him'. To Nyerere, the missionary's logic was ridiculous (Nyerere 2000:20; Chachage and Chachage 2004:160).

Leaders in the Great Lakes cluster have tried to resolve the identity crisis using such organisations as the International Conference on the Great Lakes, (ICGLR), and the East African Community, (EAC), often under the umbrella of the African Union. They first accepted the necessity of creating one postcolonial identity for various peoples within the boundaries of each colonial state. They also agreed not to interfere with the forging of that identity. This explains the 2004 declaration by the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), which was signed in Dar es Salaam by presidents of 11 African countries. The declaration stressed that member states should not allow the use of their territories as bases for aggression and subversion. They committed themselves to preventing 'any direct or indirect support, delivery of arms or any other form of assistance to armed groups operating in the region' (Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, 19–20 November 2004). To prove it was serious, ICGLR officials facilitated the collection of evidence leading to arrest and transfer to The Hague for trial by the ICC of Jean Pierre Bemba, for crimes against humanity and crimes of war (Kazooba 2009). The Dar es Salaam Declaration was one of the regional responses to developments mainly in the Great Lakes cluster that involved Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and particularly Congo.

Conclusion

Postcolonial Africa has had to struggle with identity and, using an assortment of such organs as the African Union, IGAD, and ICGLR, has attempted to resolve the arising disputes. It has largely succeeded in settling the competing notions of elasticity and inelasticity of states generally in favour of inelasticity. Colonial states, therefore, could not be dismantled whether to accommodate problems of identity within a new state or to entertain irredentist desires of a neighbouring state claiming identity with people in another state. In many ways, this meant downplaying supposed pre-colonial identities that had been drastically influenced by having different colonial experiences even when the colonial power was the same. The identity of the Kenyan Maasai, for instance, is different from that of the Tanzanian Maasai. The Tigrean in Eritrea believes he is different from the Tigrean in Ethiopia. Clearly, this (pre)colonial identity fragmentation continues to have negative implications for both national and regional integration.

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