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Centres in the Periphery: Negotiating Territoriality and Identification in Harar and Jijiga from 1942

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Abstract

Shifts in centre-periphery relations in Ethiopia and the complex relationships between the Ethiopian state and neighbouring countries motivate this thesis to contribute a nuanced historical reading of the relationship between Ethiopia's eastern periphery and the central state and the wider regional implications of this relationship. It does so by examining the interplay between the state projects of controlling territory and asserting authority and the experiences and responses of local populations to these attempts in the Harar and Jijiga localities. Using an interpretive approach and a qualitative methodology that is underlined by historical methods, the thesis argues that the narrative on the integration of the Harar and Jijiga peripheries into the state is shaped by a history of negotiation. However, this negotiation is ongoing and is far from completion because there is no consensus on the nature of, and meanings associated with territoriality and identification when conceptualising statehood in Ethiopia. The condition of partial integration has afforded local actors in the peripheries the liberty to occasionally engage in discourses on territoriality and identification with neighbouring countries regardless of attempts by the Ethiopian state to enforce its ideas of these aspects of statehood.

This investigation highlights the presence of a British Military Administration from 1942 and the changes this made to the territorial boundary between eastern Ethiopia and the British Somaliland Protectorate, and the establishment of the Republic of Somalia in 1960. Previous studies have approached the centre-periphery relationship from the perspective of the Ethiopian state – highlighting conflict and resistance. This thesis contests these perspectives because of their inability to reveal a history of peripheral agency. Centre-biased and ahistorical approaches often overlook the shadings that exist in centre-periphery relations. The thesis also challenges the myth of a homogenous eastern periphery by demonstrating that the marginality of Harar and Jijiga is mitigated by their history of being centres in the periphery.

The findings of this thesis challenge the narratives of conflict and resistance that dominate interpretations of the relationship between the eastern periphery and the Ethiopian state. The empirical evidence presented in this thesis confirms and develops current scholarly debates on the existence of complex empirical manifestations of statehood in Africa, specifically in the Horn of Africa. Thus the thesis contributes to the ongoing turn in the study of statehood, which promotes the investigation of the state from the margins for a more balanced view of political reality. Finally, rather than attempting to resolve questions on the nature of statehood in Ethiopia, in the Horn of Africa or in sub-Saharan Africa, this thesis draws attention to the alternative ways of interpreting ideas of statehood as they manifest themselves in diverse historical, social and political contexts.

Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained herein is my own original work and has been composed solely by me. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed: (Namhla Matshanda)

Date:

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I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandmother – the matriarch who made us recognise the power of education.

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List of acronyms, glossary, usage and notes on orthography

Acronyms/abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AU	African Union
BMA	British Military Administration
CO	Colonial Office
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995- present)
FO	Foreign Office
GNRS	Gambella National Regional State
HNRS	Harari National Regional State
IES	Institute of Ethiopian Studies
NALE	National Archive and Library of Ethiopia
NRS	National Regional State
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OETA	Occupied Enemy Territory Administration
OLF	Ogaden Liberation Front
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1987-91)
RA	Reserved Area
SNRS	Somali National Regional State
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/ Movement
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
WO	War Office
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

Glossary of Ethiopian terms

Balabbat:	Local governing elites in the peripheries under imperial rule
Bitwaddad:	Most favoured courtier, imperial counsellor' imperial title for one officiating in the name of the King
Dejazmatch:	Commander of the gate – imperial political and military title
Dergue:	Committee of the Provisional Military Administrative Committee (1974-1991).
Fitawrari:	Commander of the vanguard, imperial title
Gabbar/gebbar:	Tribute-paying system in which northern officials based in the peripheries collected tribute to be consumed in the peripheries.
Gran:	Imam Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Ghazi of Adal.
Jegol:	Enclosed walled city of Harar
Kebele:	Smallest administrative unit

Kilil: Region – ethnic regions of the federal state in Ethiopia

Neftegna: Gun carrier – coloniser and settler people who were sent to the peripheries during Menelik's territorial expansions.

Negarit Gazeta: Ethiopian Government Gazette

Ras: Head prince or lord, highest imperial designation

Wereda: A district within the system of regional administrative units

Notes on orthography

All dates used in this thesis are of the Gregorian calendar and not the Ethiopian Julian calendar. The Ethiopian calendar year begins on 11 September and is seven or eight years behind the Gregorian years. The necessary conversions have been made.

The thesis has also not attempted to adhere to a systematic orthography of transliteration in the English presentation of terms that originate from the Amharic language and the Ethiopian script. Amharic and other Ethiopian language terms are depicted in commonly used and recognised English forms.

Ethiopian names do not have surnames or family names. Rather, one has a given name at birth followed by his father's first name. However, to comply with the Western format of surname/last name first, Ethiopian authors' names in the bibliography are depicted with the father's name as the 'last' name. In the main text the same rule applies where the authors are referred to by their father's names. In the footnotes, Ethiopian authors are presented by their names first followed by the father's name – to comply with the referencing style.

Also, no attempt has been made to follow a systematic orthography of transliteration in the English presentations of terms that originate from the Somali language. In this thesis Somali names are depicted in commonly used and recognised English forms. The spelling of Somali terms in colonial archival sources is used as it appears in these documents, especially in quotations. Otherwise, Somali names are depicted in commonly used and recognised forms.

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Map of Ethiopia

Source: UN Cartographic Section, from nations online project

Map of Ethiopia's ethnic federal regions

Source: Maps of the world, 2012

Chapter One. Introduction

…if we are to redraw the map of Africa on the basis of religion, race or language, I fear many states will cease to exist. It is in the interest of all Africans today to respect the frontiers drawn on maps, even though they were drawn by colonialists.

Emperor Haile Selassie,
Addis Ababa, May 1963

I belong to Ethiopia, Somaliland, Djibouti, Kenya; I have family in all these places.

Mohammed Jama Guleid
Harar, November 2011

This thesis investigates the protracted and intricate process of integrating Ethiopia's eastern periphery into the state and the regional implications of this process. The investigation is motivated by shifts in the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopia and the complex relationships between the Ethiopian state and neighbouring countries. The Horn of Africa has for a long time been associated with perpetual conflict and crises.[1] Contested nationalisms, competing political ideologies and ethnicity have invariably been attributed to the volatile nature of the state system in the Horn. Yet, there is a notable lack of understanding of this phenomenon. This is because of the equally diverse nature of the states that make up the region. This thesis seeks to offer an alternative interpretation of these relationships.

The common denominator in the struggles that characterise these relationships is that they are underlined by fundamental differences over territorial boundaries – suggesting that the latter may form the basis of a larger and more complex explanation for the nature of state formation in this region. The opening epigraphs exemplify the territorial and identification problematic that exists in the Horn. Emperor Haile Selassie and Mohammed Jama Guleid demonstrate different understandings of the nature and meanings of African

[1] Peter Woodward, *Crisis in the Horn of Africa – Politics, Piracy and the threat of Terror* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2013).

territorial norms. They appear to have arrived at divergent understandings of the seeming ambiguities that characterise state boundaries and the African state system.

When the emperor addressed the assembled African Heads of State and Government at the inaugural meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 he was speaking within the context of an emerging African consensus on territorial boundaries. The emperor was at the time aware of the potential dangers of going against the territorial status quo. The agendas of summits leading up to the 1963 meeting already featured boundary and territorial questions involving Congo, Cameroon, Guinea and Mauritania.[2] Mindful of the distinct identity of the Ethiopian state, the Ethiopian emperor jumped on the bandwagon of the emergent African state system and its corresponding post-colonial territorial discourse. Indeed, the Ethiopian emperor was among the key architects of the new African territorial consensus and one of its most vocal supporters. However, the extent to which Ethiopia would adapt to the 'post-colonial' territorial framework remained to be seen.

Mohammed Guleid occupies the other end of the spectrum – he represents the numerous people who inhabit the border regions of various African states – the people who have first-hand experience of the territorial consensus. Those, like Mohammed, who live in the peripheries of the states in the Horn, have experienced an existence of contested and shifting sources of territorial control and political authority. However, they have not been passive participants – many have been involved in a process of negotiating statehood. They have been able to do this partly because of the ability to draw on local approaches that allow them to formulate their own understandings of space and its limits – leading to the formation of distinct conceptions of territoriality, national identity and belonging. It can be said that the emperor and Mohammed represent and demonstrate "the interplay

[2] Saadia Touval, *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 71.

between official intentions and popular perceptions –between policy and the flow of everyday life."[3]

Territoriality as the basis of power and authority can be seen as one of the more basic measures of statehood. In particular, the use of territory for political, social and economic ends is widely seen as a successful strategy for establishing the exclusive jurisdiction implied by state sovereignty.[4] This understanding of statehood has, for the most part, been unproblematic on the African continent. The geographic limits of the majority of states have been unambiguous and largely uncontested.[5] Territoriality – "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area"[6] has found limited resistance, despite the limited ability of African states to defend their borders.[7]

However, in the Horn of Africa there is tension between the inability of states to defend their borders and the need to abide by the territorial integrity norm. This tension manifests itself when conflict within individual states acquires a distinct cross-border element – often underlined by what appears to be deep-rooted local conceptions of territory and its limits and various aspects of identification. This represents a notable departure from conflict found in other sub-regions on the continent. Elsewhere on the continent we often find varying degrees of domestic conflict that do not always have an 'inevitable' cross-border dimension that has the capacity to transform the territorial map of the region. Yet, it is not clear why or how this tension

[3] Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju, "Introduction, The Paradox of African Boundaries," in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 1.
[4] John Agnew, "Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no.2 (June 2005): 437.
[5] Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System, The Politics of State Survival (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46.
[6] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality, Its theory and history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 28-30.
[7] Jeffrey I.Herbst, "The Creation and maintenance of national boundaries in Africa," *International Organization* 43, no.4 (Autumn 1989): 676.

manifests itself in the Horn, nor is it clear how and where these 'localised' understandings of territory and identification emerge. This is due to the limitations that exist in the dominant literature on African state formation. This literature is typically characterised by the belief that in Africa, political order will evolve within a framework that does not contradict the idea of the nation-state.

Nonetheless, the saliency of territorial boundaries in conflict in the Horn distinguishes the region from other African sub- regions. This is evident in the nature of political development in the Horn since 1991. These developments feature a strong element of redefining the national territory. In 1991, the northern region of Somalia unilaterally declared its independence and became Somaliland – reverting to its colonial boundaries as a British Protectorate prior to its merger with the former Italian Somaliland territory in 1960. Eritrea became a sovereign state in 1993 following a protracted conflict with Ethiopia. And more recently in 2011 the Republic of South Sudan was established. On the other hand, although the Republic of Somalia has provided the clearest example of disintegration since 1991, it has persisted as a political entity that enjoys international legitimacy. Various non-state entities have occasionally filled the power vacuum in Somalia.[8] These variegated forms of statehood have led to the emergence of "pathological categories"[9] of statehood in attempts to make sense of these developments.

Based on this evidence from the Horn, it appears that the state as a concept remains a useful indicator of the nature of political and societal development in Africa – however, a challenge remains in defining the features of statehood and the trajectory of state formation on the continent. Thus, if the centrality of the state remains, then there

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[8] Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no.2 (July 2007); Peter Little, *Somalia: Economy Without State* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003).
[9] Tobias Hagmann and Markus V. Hoehne, "Failures of the State Failure Debate: Evidence From the Somali Territories," *Journal of International Development* 21 (2009): 43.

is a need to formulate new approaches in our attempts to understand the various forms of statehood that we find in different African sub-regions, not least in the Horn. The territorial integrity norm – the retention of colonial boundaries inherited at independence, has shaped how African states imagine statehood, and therefore, how they perceive the relationship between the state and its territory,[10] and consequently with neighbouring states. Yet, there remains a gap in our understanding of how this relationship is conceptualised and, indeed, performed in diverse historical, social and political contexts on the continent.

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the thesis and its key investigative concerns. The main themes of the thesis emerge from the research problem, which highlights the shortcomings of the dominant literature and its limitations in making sense of non-linear trajectories of state formation in Africa. These limitations are made more apparent against the backdrop of the nature of political development in the Horn of Africa. The territorial tension that exists in the Horn raises questions about the ways in which statehood is currently conceptualised in Africa – the methodologies and the analytical tools that are available for such assessments – whether they offer us the best approaches in our attempts to make sense of political reality. Subsequently, the chapter expands on the research problem by examining the various conceptions of territoriality in Ethiopian statehood as illustrated in the relationship between the central state and its eastern periphery. The relationship between Ethiopia and the neighbouring Somali territory, particularly as it relates to Ethiopia's eastern periphery is also discussed as a way to foreground the saliency of the territorial boundary and the complex manifestations of (ethnic) identification in the region. The penultimate section of the chapter

[10] Clapham, *International System*, 45-46 and Crawford Young, "Self-Determination, Territorial Integrity, and the African State System," in *Conflict Resolution in Africa*, eds. Francis M. Deng and I. William Zartman (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991), 320-332.

introduces the methodological choices that have been made for this research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a chapter outline of the thesis.

1.1 The Research Problem

The research problem centres on two sets of literature – the literature on state formation in Africa, which has struggled to grasp and make sense of dynamic, if not 'peculiar,' forms of statehood and the dominant approaches in the literature on Ethiopian state formation. To a large extent, both sets of literature limit our ability to fully comprehend the empirical manifestations of statehood that we find in the Horn of Africa.

Approaches to state formation in Africa have been dominated by analyses that are rooted in Weberian sociology of the state and its notions of statehood. This has led to the categorisation of all manifestations of statehood that do not conform to this model as instances of state failure, collapse or weakness.[11] This literature has struggled to make sense of political development outside the confines of state capitals, and has equally been unsuccessful in explaining inter-state relations in Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, (sub) regionalism has emerged as a prime ordering principle on the continent, with many African countries organising and cooperating at the sub-regional level. This inevitably requires a rethinking of statehood. The inability of the literature to grasp rapid and often unconventional political development is problematic especially since the main constant has been the role of the state in these developments.

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[11] Robert I. Rotberg, "The New Nature of Nation-State Failure," *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no.3 (Summer 2002); Jeffrey I. Herbst, "Responding to State Failure in Africa," *International Security* 21, no.3 (Winter 1996-1997); Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood, *World Politics* 35, no.1 (1982).

The inability of the literature and analysts to imagine African statehood beyond the confining category of the nation-state has been the main challenge. The preoccupation with internal state 'disorder' has meant that the legitimacy of African cases of secession, for instance, is questioned and met with contempt, as demonstrated by Zartman's assessment of Somaliland.[12] The fixation on internal 'collapse' or 'disorder' has led others to argue that there is, in fact, logic behind the seeming disorder that is found within African polities.[13] Indeed, while Chabal and Daloz's main claims are open for debate, their approach nevertheless demonstrates that, in Africa there exists political dynamics and practices that do not conform to ideal-type forms of political organisation, even if these authors see this as deviation from the ideal. Rather than comparing African political realities to ideal-type models, empirical political development in Africa should be analysed in a manner that emphasises context and history.

The contemporary African state system is based on the decision that was reached by the newly independent African countries in 1963 in Addis Ababa and in 1964 in Cairo – to retain the territorial boundaries inherited from colonial rule. Consequently, there has been general agreement on the absence of inter-state conflict on the continent, regardless of the persistence of states that emerged from seemingly arbitrary boundaries – the paradox of African boundaries.[14] There is consensus on some of the reasons why this paradox has persisted. A number of commentators such as Christopher Clapham and Jeffery Herbst have noted that the nature of the international state system supports this paradox,[15] particularly the popular idea of the

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[12] I. William Zartman, "African Regional Security and Changing Patterns of Relations," in *Africa in the New International Order, Rethinking State Sovereignty and Regional Security*, eds. Edmond J. Keller and Donald Rothchild (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1996), 56.
[13] Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works, Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 155.
[14] Herbst, "Creation and maintenance," 673.
[15] Clapham, *International System*, 44.

nation-state.[16] Others, such as Pierre Englebert, have gone a step further and attempted to demonstrate *how* the international system supports this 'paradox.'[17] The overall consensus is that African countries have largely remained viable and peaceful towards each other, regardless of internal turmoil, because the international system 'rewards' them for remaining intact. The conclusion, therefore, is that African norms of statehood find institutionalised legitimacy in the international system.[18]

However, the African territorial consensus and its popular understandings are challenged in the Horn of Africa. In most analyses, the Horn is acknowledged for its exceptional nature, but the discussion moves swiftly to focus on the remarkable feat of peacefully retaining 'artificial' boundaries elsewhere on the continent. Crawford Young acknowledges that "Ethiopia and Sudan cry out for creative imagination and careful study"[19] but does not offer ways to go about this. Similarly, Englebert does not adequately address why in the Horn the seemingly low odds of international recognition for breakaway states does not seem to deter secessionist states from emerging.[20] Nor does Englebert explain why, unlike elsewhere on the continent as he has demonstrated, actors in the Horn appear not to be interested in the "domestic power of command" that is afforded by the legalities of the international system.[21] Although some of this literature has attempted to challenge the state weakness/failure discourse, it has not been able to provide the necessary tools to take the analyses to a level that historically and contextually investigates the variegated forms of empirical statehood that continue to emerge in the Horn of Africa.

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[16] Jeffrey I. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa, Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 100-101.
[17] Pierre Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty and Sorrow* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).
[18] Young, "Self-Determination," 343.
[19] Ibid, 345.
[20] Pierre Englebert and Rebecca Hummel, "Let's Stick Together: Understanding Africa's Secessionist Deficit," *African Affairs* 104 (2005).
[21] Englebert, *Sovereignty and Sorrow.*

The consequences, as Mbembe observes, have been the development of hypotheses of stability and rupture that assimilate all non-linear phenomena into chaos.[22] For instance, Jackson and Rosberg argue that between 1962 and 1982 Ethiopia was an unstable community,[23] without explaining what the conditions were before 1962, the nature of this instability, or why the change came in that particular year. Herbst has also listed Ethiopia as collapsed, alongside Somalia, Liberia and Zaire,[24] thus, overlooking the highly distinct political and social histories of these countries. These approaches are, to a large extent, influenced by the erroneous assumption that Africa south of the Sahara has a relatively homogenous history that can be neatly encapsulated in the colonial experience.

To successfully challenge these assumptions, we must focus on history and context. Ian Spears notes that the Horn – Somaliland in particular, raises significant questions about Africa's territorial order.[25] Others have suggested a number of possible explanations for the unusual expressions of statehood in the Horn. For instance, Markus Kornprobst argues that "there is no consensus on who constitutes a colonial power in the Horn,"[26] unlike in other African sub-regions where European countries historically fit this imagery. Kornprobst suggests that some states may perceive Ethiopia as a colonial power in the Horn. Although the premise might be correct, it is contentious and requires further investigation. The formation of the contemporary state in Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century and the complexities of the decolonisation process in the Horn would need to be taken into account.

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[22] Achille Mbembe, *On the postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 17.
[23] Jackson and Rosberg, "Africa's Weak States," 5.
[24] Herbst, "State Failure," 124.
[25] Ian S. Spears, "Reflections on Somaliland & Africa's Territorial Order," *Review of African Political Economy* 30, no.95 (March 2003): 89.
[26] Markus Kornprobst," The Management of Border Disputes in African Regional Sub-Systems: Comparing West Africa and the Horn of Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, no.3 (September 2002): 376.

With regard to Ethiopia, we face a different set of challenges in the literature. The literature on state formation in Ethiopia generally highlights the political history, social and cultural developments of the political centre, [27] therefore preventing a broader understanding of the Ethiopian polity. However, within Ethiopian studies Anthropology has led the way in attempting to overcome the limitations of the centre-biased approaches.[28] The study of the state from the margins or peripheries in Ethiopia has been dominated by the discipline of Anthropology, with a strong focus on the southern and western peripheries.[29] This literature has gone a long way to develop a 'social history' of the margins. However, the problem is that this literature has not fully addressed the political aspects of the relationship between the margins and the state and the wider regional implications of this relationship. This is problematic since Ethiopia has been at the centre of interstate conflict and other major political transformations in the region.

Indeed, at present we can hardly formulate a well-rounded analysis of the regional connection between the Ethiopian state and its eastern periphery. This is because the literature is dominated by narratives of conflict and resistance against incorporation into the state. The eastern periphery was, indeed, the source and site of two major conflicts between the Ethiopian state and the Republic of Somalia between 1960 and 1980. Consequently, the literature on the eastern periphery of Ethiopia has portrayed the region as characterised by conflict and resistance, often conflating this condition with

[27] Edward Ullendorf, *The Ethiopians, An Introduction to Country and People* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government* (London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1969).

[28] Donald Donham and Wendy James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia-Essays in History and Social Anthropology* (Oxford: James Currey, 1986/ 2002).

[29] Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games, The Paradox of Anywaa and Nuer Identification Strategies in the Gambella Region, Ethiopia* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011); David Turton, "The Meaning of Place in a World of Movement: Lessons from Long-term Field Research in Southern Ethiopia," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18, no. 3 (September 2005).

developments in neighbouring Somalia.[30] In their analyses of the eastern region of Ethiopia, authors such as Hagmann and Korf are prompted by the realities of conflict and violence that characterise the region.[31] Certainly, following British withdrawal in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the eastern region of Ethiopia was administered militarily by the imperial state.[32] The area around Jijiga came under the authority of several battalions that were later raised to the level of a brigade – the 10th brigade, by 1954.[33] The practice of military administration in this region developed in tandem with various rebellions.[34] The impression from the literature is that this periphery is far from integrated into the state, because of the conflict and violence that exists in the region. However, this thesis argues that, because the eastern periphery is often seen as a homogenous region, the dominant interpretations often overlook other processes that may or may not be influenced by conflict and resistance to incorporation.

This thesis thus investigates why the eastern periphery of Ethiopia has not been fully integrated into the state and how this has influenced Ethiopia's relations with neighbouring countries. It does so by examining the interplay between the state projects of controlling territory and asserting authority and the experiences and responses of local actors to these attempts in the Harar and Jijiga localities of eastern Ethiopia. The investigation focuses on a particular historical

[30] Gebru Tareke, "The Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977 Revisited," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (2000): 635-667 and Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, *Somalia, The problem child of Africa* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1977), 73-75.

[31] Tobias Hagmann and Benedikt Korf, "Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and sovereignty in the Ethiopian-Somali frontier," *Political Geography* 8, no. 31 (November 2012): 205-214.

[32] Tibebe Eshete, "The root causes of political problems in the Ogaden, 1942-1960," *Norhtheast African Studies* 13, no.1 (1991): 18 suggests that the British military administration was replaced by an Ethiopian military administration when the Ogaden came under the governorship of General Asfaw Wold Giorgis.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Tibebe Eshete, "The root causes of political problems in the Ogaden, 1942-1960," mentions a Somali uprising in the fertile farming areas around Jijiga; Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion, Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedman Publishers Ltd., 1974), 68-69 mentions similar revolts in the Ogaden region in the 1960s against the introduction of livestock tax.

period – the presence of a British Military Administration for a period of just over a decade from 1942 – how it influenced the relationship between this periphery and the Ethiopian state. This period provides the context for the engagement of multiple actors in processes of state formation in Ethiopia's eastern periphery.

The thesis focuses on the periphery or margins[35] because these spaces are characterised by practises and discourses that are aimed at constituting a national entity that can be called the state.[36] In return, these practices and discourses are given meaning by the experiences and responses of local actors in the peripheries. Based on an interpretive approach that seeks understanding and a qualitative methodology that focuses on historical sources, the thesis argues that the narrative of integrating the Harar and Jijiga peripheries into the state is shaped by a history of negotiation rather than conflict and resistance. However, this negotiation is ongoing because the multiple actors involved in the negotiation have not been able to reach a consensus on the nature of, and meanings associated with territoriality and identification when conceptualising statehood in Ethiopia. Indeed, similar to Mitchell, the thesis contends that the actors involved in this negotiation are complex and multiple because of the inherent difficulty of separating the state from society.[37]

The condition of partial integration has thus afforded the various actors in the periphery the liberty to occasionally engage in discourses on territoriality and identification with neighbouring countries, regardless of attempts by the Ethiopian state to enforce its ideas of these aspects of statehood and those of the African state system.

This thesis offers a nuanced historical reading of the relationship between Ethiopia's eastern periphery and the central state,

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[35] Periphery and margins will hereafter be used interchangeably

[36] Tim Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no.1 (March 1991): 94.

[37] Ibid, 90-91.

and the wider regional implications of this relationship. In doing so, the thesis contributes to the ongoing turn in the study of statehood in Africa, which investigates the state from the margins for a more balanced view of political reality. This approach is useful as it acknowledges the existence of complex processes that characterise the emergence of statehood in various African contexts. By offering a different take on the political history of the eastern periphery, the thesis also contributes to the ongoing shifts in the study of statehood in Ethiopia, which take the margins as constituent parts of the whole.

The following section contextualises the main argument of the thesis by elaborating on the literature that was outlined in the preceding section and by situating the thesis within the relevant literature.

1.2 Framing the thesis argument

1.2.1 Peripheries as sites of negotiation

The purported deficiencies in empirical statehood and the tendency to paint African statehood with the same broad and ahistorical brush-stroke have been challenged in recent times. It is not surprising that this challenge has emanated from the Horn of Africa.[38] Several studies have conducted micro-level analyses that draw on the role of non-state actors in response to state or government interventions or lack of.[39] Some of this literature has proposed micro-level analyses that focus on key features of statehood at the local level. Some have

[38] Tobias Hagmann and Markus V. Hoehne, "Failures of the State Failure Debate: Evidence From the Somali Territories," *Journal of International Development* 21 (2009); Ken Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building and the Politics of Coping," *International Security* 31, no.3 (Winter 2006/2007).

[39] Peter Little, *Somalia: Economy Without State* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003); Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, "The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no.2 (July 2007); Michael Walls, "The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland," *African Affairs* 108, no.432 (July 2009).

taken the territorial boundary as an analytical tool.[40] Yet, others have considered the issue of cross-border ethnic group identities[41] as important elements of contested statehood. Overall, this literature has introduced new analytical categories for making sense of complex and contested manifestations of statehood in the Horn, and in Africa as a whole.

At the core of this thesis is an alternative interpretation of the relationship between the Ethiopian state and its vast and diverse eastern periphery. Some of the prominent literature that promotes the study of the state from the margins argues that such an interpretation can be achieved by studying the state and its practices – to discern and explore the different 'languages of stateness,' including how the state tries to make itself real and tangible through symbols, texts and iconography, and how it appears in everyday and localised forms.[42] Yet, it is difficult to talk about the presence or absence of the state in the eastern periphery of Ethiopia when there are evident challenges in defining and accounting for the existence of the state. Similar to what Hansen and Stepputat have noted, Mitchell suggests that there is evidence of practices that can be seen as an effect of attempts to display an almost *a priori* constituted entity – the state. Since the latter is such an elusive concept and difficult to define, the best approach is to trace the practices – some of them mundane – that make the state appear to exist in the periphery.[43]

The thesis illustrates some of the determined attempts by the Ethiopian state to manifest itself in the eastern periphery – through

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[40] Dereje Feyissa and Markus Hoehne , *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010).
[41] Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games, The Paradox of Anywaa and Nuer Identification Strategies in the Gambella Region, Ethiopia* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011) and Wolbert C.G. Smidt, "The Tigrinnya-Speakers across the Borders: Discourses of Unity & Separation in Ethnohistorical Context," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa & Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 61-83.
[42] Thomas B. Hansen and Finn Stepputat, "Introduction: States of Imagination," in *States of Imagination, Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 5.
[43] Mitchell, "Limits of the State," 94.

administration, particularly following restoration from the Italian occupation – during the BMA. However, these attempts often came up against opposing understandings of territoriality in the periphery. The thesis argues, however, that the emergence of negotiation does not constitute a single narrative of the integration of Harar and Jijiga into the state; rather, it brings to the fore non-linear processes of state formation, contested statehood and the nature of power relations between the state and the periphery. Evidence suggests that peripheries mean a great deal in Ethiopia because territorial boundaries have played a central role in how successive Ethiopian rulers have conceptualised the ultimate expression of Ethiopian statehood. Ethiopia corresponds to the form of statehood in which organised political power and authority existed before the territorial boundaries were officially defined and demarcated. This is because of the nature of social organisation that existed in the highland societies that were responsible for laying the foundations of the empire state. [44]

Since 1991, political discourse in Ethiopia has been underlined by a (re) construction of state power and authority. Federal restructuring has redefined Ethiopian statehood – further complicating previous understandings. According to historical sources, the state has made various attempts to broadcast its power and authority in its diverse peripheries, but with varying degrees of success. This explains why the perennial question of the peripheries has taken centre stage in current considerations of the success or failure of ethnic federalism, and by extension, the state. Yet, Ethiopia is not unique in grappling with contemporary processes of state formation in Africa – the Ethiopian course is unfolding within larger processes of state formation in sub-Saharan Africa, of which, however, we still lack adequate understanding.

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[44] Christopher Clapham, "Boundary and Territory in the Horn of Africa," in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 238.

The argument of this thesis is framed within an interpretive approach that seeks, and ultimately offers, understanding, more than causation. The thesis has adapted an analytical framework that does not privilege ideal types and linear progressions of statehood and state formation when examining political reality in Africa. This framework reveals a practice of "negotiating statehood," as conceptualised by Tobias Hagmann and Didier Pèclard.[45] This framework recognises the inherent flaws in advancing ideal types of statehood, particularly for a concept that takes on an enigmatic quality in the African context.[46] Rather than deterministic, this framework is "a way of looking at, and grasping dynamic and complex dimensions of statehood."[47]

However, the framework has limits[48] and cannot be blindly employed. Martin Doornbos welcomes the novelty of the framework to "help draw attention to the manifold moves and efforts made at local, national and international levels to arrive at new arrangements towards the organization of public authority in various African contexts."[49] However, he cautions that we should not overstate 'negotiability' since external influence still looms large in African political development – often working in contrast to local processes. Citing Somaliland as an example, Doornbos highlights the concept of sovereignty and its limiting effect on local processes of negotiating statehood in Africa.[50]

The argument put forward in the thesis situates itself within the literature that recognises the value of analysing dynamics of statehood from the margins or peripheries.[51] Within this literature, the African

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[45] Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard, *Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa* (West Sussex: Wiley- Blackwell, 2011), 4.
[46] Martin Doornbos, "Researching African Statehood Dynamics: Negotiability and its Limits," *Development and Change* 41, no. 4 (July 2012): 747.
[47] Hagmann and Péclard, *Negotiating Statehood*, 5
[48] Doornbos, "Statehood Dynamics," 747.
[49] Ibid, 748.
[50] Ibid, 764.
[51] Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State, Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

periphery, margins, or borderlands are seen as "resources,"[52] and sites of "negotiation,"[53] that can be readily mobilised by the various actors who reside in these spaces.[54] These actors utilise the marginal spaces in the most creative ways,[55] in their responses to, and experiences, of state power and authority or lack of. Due to multiple influences – external and otherwise, processes of identification are also negotiated, rather than imposed and resisted in the peripheries.

Within Ethiopian studies, the thesis challenges the myth of a homogenous eastern periphery by arguing that the two localities of Harar and Jijiga are characterised by a historicity that is not found in the rest of the vast region. This historicity, the thesis argues, is shaped by factors that include the history of the adjacent boundary, the subsequent approaches of the central state towards this region and the ensuing relationship between the state and local populations in these areas. The thesis demonstrates that from the time of official incorporation into the Ethiopian state in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Harar and Jijiga have been centres in the periphery. Northern/ highland state authorities were permanently based in both Harar and Jijiga, meaning that these areas experienced direct imperial rule. Unlike in the areas to the south – the Ogaden, the imperial state did not use local chiefs or *balabbats* for administering Harar and Jijiga. Instead, the northern military-settlers – the *neftegna* – oversaw the administration of these areas. This gave Harar and Jijiga an experience akin to 'direct rule.'

To develop these claims, the thesis proposes that this relationship should be contextualised within a historical framework of negotiation rather than a linear trajectory of state formation that assumes tension or incompatibilities between the state and the people

[52] Feyissa and Hoehne, *Borders and Borderlands.*
[53] Hagmann and Péclard, *Negotiating Statehood.*
[54] Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju, "Introduction – The Paradox of African Boundaries," in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 8-11.
[55] Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* (London: James Currey, 2002).

who inhabit the peripheral regions. The towering hegemony of the central state and its attempts to control territory and assert its authority in the peripheries are often viewed as necessary practices in the dominant statist literature. Indeed, while similar to other African sub-regions in that no state in the Horn, including Ethiopia, has ever been able to control its territorial borders,[56] there is evidence of concerted efforts to control borders in Ethiopia. In the centre-biased literature, practices of controlling territory and imposing the authority of the state in the peripheries have long been perceived as integral to the articulation of Ethiopian statehood, as suggested by Getatchew Haile.[57]

These practices and assumptions need to be problematized and examined. Peripheral engagement with the state has not been properly documented and has often been misunderstood. Furthermore, Ethiopian peripheries have separate histories and realities that generate different processes in their interactions with the state. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to highlight the historicity of the eastern periphery by differentiating Harar and Jijiga from the conflict/ resistance narratives, which are associated with the 'Ogaden.' The latter remains ambiguous despite its dominance in the literature. It is often unclear whether it refers to the Ogadeen Somali clan, the region, or both. Thus the Ogaden has become a vague concept that is synonymous with Ethiopia's eastern Somali-inhabited region, even though it only encompasses a section of the vast region.

The present work focuses on two localities that are geographically located in the eastern periphery but whose historical, political and social evolution on the margins of the Ethiopian state have not been fully investigated. Both Harar and Jijiga were part of the largest province of the Ethiopian empire – Hararge, which also

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[56] John Markakis, (seminar, Centre of African Studies, The University of Edinburgh, December 4, 2013).
[57] Getatchew Haile, "The Unity and Territorial Integrity of Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24, no.3 (September, 1986).

included what this thesis calls the Ogaden ‘proper’ – the vast and largely desert area south of Jijiga. Today, Harar and Jijiga are an hour’s drive apart and belong to two separate federal regions. On the other hand, Jijiga and the Ogaden ‘proper’ belong to different zones of the same Somali region. The thesis demonstrates that Harar and Jijiga have reasonably separate histories that have influenced their trajectories of incorporation into the state. These differential trajectories are implied in the current configuration of the Ethiopian state under ethnic federalism. The thesis avoids an exclusive focus on the Somali region of Ethiopia – it does so by including Harar, which borders the Somali region. The latter has attracted sufficient scholarly attention. The thesis also wants to highlight the historicity of both Harar and Jijiga as centres in Ethiopia’s eastern periphery.

1.2.2 Current status of centre-periphery relations – ethnic federalism

In Ethiopia the history of the state is dominated by the exploits of the highland societies that first laid the foundations of the contemporary state. Thus, what we know about ‘Ethiopia’ is based on narrowly constructed narratives of the central state and its founding societies. However, the advent of ethnic federalism seemingly challenges previously held assumptions and therefore demands new and original interpretations of the notion of statehood in the Ethiopian context. The federal experiment is proving to be a crucial test of the ideals and conceptions of Ethiopian statehood, of which the retention and control of the peripheries are a fundamental part.

Federalism has long been viewed as a viable remedy for addressing the grievances of minority or peripheral groups in Africa. However, the continental record on federalism is chequered. Nevertheless, previous and current examples of federalism illustrate the contexts that necessitate the adoption of the model. Only a few

countries currently operate a 'fully-fledged' federal system in Africa, these include Nigeria and Ethiopia. Whether operating as a full federal system or otherwise, the countries that have opted for federalism share a common desire – to address some form of diversity. However, it goes beyond utility, the question is no longer one of relevance, but the conditions under which federalism is likely to succeed as a device for managing diversity.[58]

From 1994 to 2004, Ethiopia fell short of providing the necessary conditions to implement ethnic federalism.[59] Today Ethiopia has yet to create and maintain an enabling environment for the federal experiment to thrive. The main obstacle is the inability of the central state to lift its strong grip on power over the supposedly autonomous regions, some of which are in the peripheries. As noted by Thomas-Woolley and Keller, autonomy is the minimum requirement for federalism, but thus far the basics of federalism are yet to be fully met in Ethiopia. The challenge is to go beyond granting autonomy. Inclusion and representation become necessary to complement autonomy.[60] Indeed, recent narratives of inclusion and exclusion raise questions about the nature of the relationship between the eastern regions of Ethiopia and the central state.[61]

Keller and Smith carried out an investigation on the success of the federal model during the first decade of federalism in Ethiopia. Their conclusions on the ability of the current model to transcend the

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[58] Eghosa Osaghae, "Federalism and the Management of Diversity in Africa," *Identity, Culture and Politics* 5, nos. 1&5 (Dakar: CODESRIA & ICES, 2004): 173-174.

[59] Edmond J. Keller and Lahra Smith, "Obstacles to Implementing Territorial Decentralization: The First Decade of Ethiopian Federalism," in *Sustainable Peace, Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, eds. Philip G. Roeder and Donald Rothchild (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 266.

[60] Barbara Thomas-Woolley and Edmond J. Keller "Majority Rule and Minority Rights: American Federalism and African Experience," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no.3 (September, 1994): 414.

[61] Abdi I. Samatar, "Ethiopian Ethnic Federalism and Regional Autonomy: The Somali Test," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 5, Article 9 (2005); Tobias Hagmann, "Beyond clannishness and colonialism: understanding political disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991-2004," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no.4 (December 2005).

nature of previous centre-periphery relations were not optimistic.[62] Despite the granting of regional autonomy, the marginal or peripheral regions, many of which were the sites of ethno-national conflicts in the decades preceding federalism, remain politically and economically distant from the centre, or are entangled in a lopsided relationship with the central state. In addition, the cultural boundary that has historically revealed itself in contestations over national identity is currently undergoing a major test. Undoubtedly, identification, as exemplified by the ethnic nature of Ethiopian federalism, will be a key determining factor in the success or failure of the federal experiment. Since federalism can be seen as a "mechanism for effecting compromise,"[63] and of balancing competing claims, it remains to be seen how much each side is willing to compromise in Ethiopia.

Whether as a solution, or a means to encourage a productive exchange and negotiation between the centre and the peripheries,[64] the historical and present context in which federalism evolves requires further investigation. A plethora of studies have re-visited[65] the relationship between the state and the peripheries, others have analysed emerging trends within the current federal context.[66] Many of these studies have employed innovative approaches. However, some of the literature on Ethiopia's eastern periphery has always been, and remains, dominated by the 'Somali question,' at the expense of other communities in the east such as the Harari of Harar. Indeed,

[62] Keller and Smith, "Territorial Decentralization."
[63] Isawa J. Elaigwu and Victor A. Olorunsola, "Federalism and Politics of Compromise," in *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, eds. Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 298.
[64] Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola, "Managing Competing State and Ethnic Claims," in *State Versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, eds. Donald Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunsola (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), 18-19.
[65] A second impression of the seminal work by Donald Donham and Wendy James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia-Essays in History and Social Anthropology* (Oxford: James Currey, 1986/ 2002) was published in 2002; and Donald Donham, Wendy James, Alessandro Triulzi et al, *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002) which has been seen as a sequel to *The Southern Marches.*
[66] Abdi I. Samatar, "Ethiopian Ethnic Federalism and Regional Autonomy: The Somali Test," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 5, Article 9 (2005): 51.

more often than not, the recent outpouring of writing on contemporary Ethiopia appears to be "unreflective and does not seek to place the material in any kind of historical context."[67] For instance, the important study on federal restructuring in Ethiopia by Asnake Kefale lacks historical grounding.[68] The paper explores similar themes to this thesis – territoriality and identification, and offers outstanding empirical evidence on contemporary processes of 'renegotiating' identities among minority ethnic communities on the Oromo-Somali federal boundaries. Kefale suggests that the current negotiation by these communities has historical precedents –however, he does not venture to explore these.

This thesis avoids overlooking the historical context by endeavouring for an interpretation that is grounded in both context and history. This is done in order to observe processes, structures, breaks and continuities in the relationship between the state and local actors in these peripheries over a period of time. This approach is strengthened by the framework of "negotiating statehood," which supports the examination of historical conditions which might have given rise to local understandings of statehood. The approach is given additional capacity by viewing the periphery as an arena of negotiation that has "spatial, social and temporal dimensions."[69]

The following section examines the development of territorial statehood in Ethiopia, particularly as it relates to the relationship between the state and its vast territories on the margins. The discussion is presented as a critique of the portrayal of Ethiopian statehood in centre-biased literature. The section demonstrates that this has led to the emergence of a distorted, and sometimes absent, portrayal of the eastern lowland periphery in post-1942 Ethiopian historiography.

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[67] Paul Nugent, *Africa Since Independence, A Comparative History* 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1-2.
[68] Asnake Kefale, "Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo-Somali Ethnic Frontiers," *Development and Change* 41, no. 4 (2012).
[69] Ibid, 12.

1.3 Ethiopian historiography of the state and the marginalisation of the peripheries

Taking into account the large corpus of Ethiopian studies, Harar and Jijiga are almost non-existent in the literature. Limited access to these areas because of geography, culture and politics is not adequate to account for their marginalisation. Indeed, such limitations never prevented the analyses of the imperial centre by writers such as Margery Perham who have never set foot in Ethiopia.[70] The problem can be attributed to the constrained views of authors and their interpretation of what 'Ethiopia' is – both historians and political scientists. This bias is best exemplified by the narrative of Greater Ethiopia[71] wherein the Christian northern highlands are viewed as the centre of civilization and authority among lesser groups. The consequences of this narrative, as noted by Edmond Keller, were that the historical literature constructed Ethiopia as a "multi-ethnic nation-state founded on an empire-state."[72] This, of course, is a problematic and contested notion.

Donald Levine's *Greater Ethiopia* captures the trend of reducing the history of Ethiopia to the central highlands. Levine notes that "Greater Ethiopia is a sufficiently unified ecological and cultural area to justify treating it as a legitimate object for holistic analysis."[73] Levine develops his argument based on the cultural and political experiences of the societies that, according to him, comprise the essence of 'Ethiopia.' Despite the supposed fairness in affording three ethnic groups – Amhara, Tigrayan and Oromo, the role of key protagonists in his narrative, biases still emerge. Levine privileges the

[70] Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969) for instance, has never travelled to Ethiopia but she wrote extensively on imperial Ethiopia.
[71] Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia, The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago University Press, 1974).
[72] Edmond J. Keller, "The Ethnogenesis of the Oromo Nation and Its Implications for Politics in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 4 (December 1995): 622.
[73] Levine, *Greater Ethiopia*, 69.

'Amhara' narrative over others. He constructs his argument as an 'Amhara thesis' vs. the 'Oromo antithesis.'[74] Levine continues and describes the political exploits of the Amhara as 'expansions' whereas the nomadic peoples to the south are described as 'invaders.' On Emperor Menelik's territorial expansions, Levine notes that "traumatic though they were for most of the peoples subjugated, these conquests have been judged as beneficial in many respects."[75] In addition to using the terms 'Oromo' and 'Galla'[76] interchangeably, Levine essentialises the 'Amhara' identity as a purely ethnic signifier as opposed to a social and political category. According to Teshale Tibebu, "'Amhara' was, in fact, a metaphor for power and 'Galla' for the relative lack of it."[77] Chapter four of the thesis explores identity formation by examining the state project of categorising populations in the eastern periphery and how this led to the formation of new social categories. The chapter demonstrates the problematic nature of essential categories.

In *The Ethiopians, An Introduction to Country and People* – Ullendorf envisages what he calls "Abyssinians proper,"[78] and 'Abyssinia proper' as the epitome of 'Ethiopianness.' Apart from a few pages that introduce the 'people,' the rest of the book is dedicated to religion and church, literature, art, music, and life and customs of highland Ethiopia.[79] The deliberate exclusion of the large parts that comprise the Ethiopian territory in these texts was underlined by competing interpretations of 'who' exactly is Ethiopian. This is what has been described as the 'Aksumite and Orientalist Semiticist paradigms,'[80] which privileged the study of the Christian societies that

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[74] Ibid, 72, 78.
[75] Ibid, 26.
[76] This is an archaic and derogatory term that was sometimes used to refer to the Oromo people of Ethiopia.
[77] Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1995), 45.
[78] Edward Ullendorf, *The Ethiopians, An Introduction to Country and People* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 32.
[79] Ullendorf, *Ethiopians*.
[80] Tibebu, *Modern Ethiopia*, xxiii.

historically held political power. These paradigms have dominated Ethiopian studies for years.

In *Imagining Ethiopia*, John Sorenson attempts to move beyond these confining paradigms by endeavouring to promote a re-interpretation of the discourses and images that characterised Ethiopia's past. At the time of writing Sorenson's analysis was motivated by the images that emerged in Western media following the Ethiopian famine in 1984. Sorenson highlights some of the flaws that characterised Western discourse – academic and popular media, on Ethiopia. He argues that the shock generated by the images of the famine was a consequence of the sharp contrast they presented to the mythology of Abyssinian Christianity and its civilizing role.[81] While taking stock of the flaws in academic and other discourses on Ethiopia, Sorenson concludes that "…the destruction of the old image of Ethiopia has opened up rich new fields for scholarly research, and previously denigrated cultures are now seen as valid and significant in their own right."[82]

However, Sorenson did not himself proceed to explore these other peripheral cultures. He left this task to others. The transformation of Ethiopian studies from a narrowly defined sub-field to a broader African studies academic agenda was aided by Ethiopian scholars, particularly those who wrote on the Oromo, most notably Mohammed Hassen among the latter.[83] The foreign-educated Ethiopian intelligentsia, according to Tibebu, was divided into various camps. Some expanded on the Aksumite and Orientalist Semiticist

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[81] Ullendorf, *Ethiopians*, 97 argues that "Monophysite Christianity is the most profound expression of the national existence of the Ethiopians" while Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia, from autocracy to revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy, 1975), 1 cautions against the blurring effect of the 'deep-seated myth' that has enshrined Ethiopia.
[82] John Sorenson, *Imagining Ethiopia, Struggles for History and Identity in the Horn of Africa* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 189
[83] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia, A history 1570-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

paradigms, whereas others occupied the radical left, which criticised the aforementioned paradigms.[84]

Throughout the 1960s, the focus of Western scholarship in Ethiopia remained on the imperial centre. However, in the period following the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974 much needed methodological and analytical shifts occurred. These changes were necessary since the revolution shattered the myth of an Ethiopian national identity that was, up to that point, seemingly endorsed by multiple ethnic groups.[85] Instead, agrarian history and urban history emerged as new themes in the late 1980s.[86] Some of the more notable work in this category includes that of Gebru Tareke,[87] as well as a number of master's dissertations on the history of the major urban centres in southern and eastern Ethiopia.[88]

Those who did not subscribe to the agenda of the radical left include historian Bahru Zewde[89] whom, Tibebu maintains, were still trained in 'Orientalist institutions' in the West. However, it can be argued that 'moderates' such as Zewde, although still focused on the centre, have been able to present a more balanced political history of Ethiopia.[90] By and large, however, the task of investigating the peripheries and their social systems has been left to those who take the peripheries as constituent parts of the whole. Consequently, these studies have highlighted the nature of the relationship between the peripheries and the central state, thus drawing attention to the peripheries as important social and political spaces in their own right.

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[84] Tibebu, *Modern Ethiopia*, xiii.
[85] Keller, "Ethnogenesis of the Oromo," 622.
[86] Donald Crummey, "Society, State and Nationality in the Recent Historiography of Ethiopia," *The Journal of African History*, 31, no 1 (1990): 106-108.
[87] Gebru Tareke, *Power and Protest: Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century* (New Jersey: Red Sea Press Inc., 1996).
[88] Tebebe Eshete, "A History of Jijiga Town, 1891-1974" (master's dissertation, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 1988).
[89] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991).
[90] For instance in Bahru Zewde, "Hayla- Sellase: From Progressive to Reactionary," in *Ethiopia in Change, Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, eds. Abebe Zegaye and Siegfried Pausewang (London: British Academy Press, 1994), 31-44.

As mentioned earlier, Anthropology has dominated this field in Ethiopian studies.

The key text within this literature is the collection of essays – *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia,*[91] which examines the political, social and economic underpinnings of imperial Ethiopia. The essays traced the core features of the imperial state – power, authority and identity. They examined, in historical perspective, different processes of incorporating southern territories and peoples into the state. The work is seminal since it is the first substantive study that traced "the making of southern history"[92] from the perspective of the south. The introduction to this volume has been noted as "something of a tour de force"[93] due to its comprehensive coverage of the major themes in imperial Ethiopia. One of the editors of this volume, Donald Donham, has likewise offered a contemporary history of Maale in southern Ethiopia. In *Marxist Modern, An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution,* Donham has compiled a narrative on the impact of the 1974 revolution in the southern locale of Maale.[94]

Although essentially about the peripheries, it is noteworthy that these texts have a specific focus on the southern periphery of Ethiopia, with a conspicuous absence of the eastern region. The editors of *The Southern Marches* have acknowledged this shortcoming. Donham singles out Harar[95] to the east, as one of the missing themes in the volume.[96] Significantly, this is what Donham notes about the eastern periphery: "In the east, apparently, the Ethiopian administration, along

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[91] Donald Donham and Wendy James, eds. *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia-Essays in History and Social Anthropology* eds. (Oxford: James Currey, 1986/ 2002).
[92] Donham and James, eds. *Southern Marches*, 46.
[93] Crummey, "State and Nationality," 114.
[94] Donald Donham, *Marxist Modern, An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 35.
[95] Donham is likely to be referring to the large province of Hararge as it encompassed much of eastern Ethiopia, and not Harar town per se.
[96] Donald Donham "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian empire: themes in social history," in *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia-Essays in History and Social Anthropology* 2nd ed., eds. Donald Donham and Wendy James (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 46.

with its British counterpart across the border, failed rather dramatically to adapt to local religion and politics."[97]

This confirms the differential patterns of incorporating peripheries into the state. This can also be seen to imply the presence of local understandings and ways of interacting with the state in the eastern periphery – on whose nature, however, we still lack adequate knowledge. The overwhelming focus on the southern periphery extends to the literature on the different ethnic population groups that inhabit the peripheries. Indeed, the Oromo have dominated Ethiopian discourses on the southern periphery and peripheral peoples. [98] Specifically, the Oromo dominate the historiography of ethno-nationalist struggles against the Ethiopian state.[99] A number of Oromo scholars have documented the history of the relationship between the Oromo people and the Ethiopian state,[100] most notably the timely contribution by Mohammed Hassen who sought to reverse the negative image of the Oromo people that dominated mainstream Ethiopian historiography.[101]

However, the Oromo discourse is complex because it is difficult to speak of the Oromo as occupying a 'marginal' or 'peripheral' existence in Ethiopia. The Oromo have a long history of integration and extensive assimilation to the 'Amhara' political and cultural centre. This is complexity noted by Merera Gudina who argues that, "the irony of Oromo history, therefore, is that they were

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[97] Ibid.
[98] The trend is traced by Asafa Jalata, "The Struggle for Knowledge: The Case of Emergent Oromo Studies," *African Studies Review* 39, no.2 (September 1996) and is confirmed in studies such as Alessandro Triulzi, "Nekempte and Addis Abeba: dilemmas of provincial rule," in *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia-Essays in History and Social Anthropology,* 2nd ed., eds. Donald Donham and Wendy James (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 49-68 and in Paul Baxter, "Introduction" in *Being and Becoming Oromo, Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, ed. Paul Baxter et al. (New Jersey: The Red Sea Pres, Inc., 1996).
[99] Keller, "Ethnogenesis of the Oromo."
[100] See for instance Asafa Jalata, *Oromo Nationalism and the Ethiopian Discourse, The Search For Freedom and Democracy* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1998); also Paul Baxter et al. *Being and Becoming Oromo, Historical and Anthropological Enquiries* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996).
[101] Hassen, *Oromo of Ethiopia.*

part of the conquerors as well as the conquered."[102] The grey area that is occupied by the Oromo is symptomatic of the complex processes of categorisation and identification that have underlined the project of crafting a nation-state in Ethiopia. The Oromo nationalist discourse that is demonstrated by Asafa Jalata and Leenco Lata[103] is thus linked to a particular section of the diverse and sizeable Oromo community in Ethiopia.

Nevertheless, we hardly find an equivalent of local histories – political and social, in the eastern periphery. The sense of marginality and omission that has been bequeathed by the literature on this periphery appears to intensify its seeming political and socio-cultural distance. These areas have been unjustly stereotyped largely because of the ethnic identities of the local populations as well as the dominant local religion. The lack of knowledge on the political ideas of local populations in these areas is no longer acceptable. This thesis argues that if we are to formulate satisfactory explanations and plausible assumptions on the different ways of thinking about statehood in Ethiopia, and indeed, in the Horn, these previously neglected areas that exist on the margins of the state must occupy centre-stage in contemporary analyses of state formation.

1.4 Bringing back the periphery

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the interconnectedness of the Horn sub-region is not in dispute, in fact, it is one of the key defining features of the region. Richard Reid has recently argued that, the history of the region can be conceptualised as comprising "fault lines and frontier zones, shifting borderlands which are not 'peripheries' but

[102] Merera Gudina, "Contradictory Interpretations of Ethiopian History," in *Ethnic Federalism, the Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed. David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 125.
[103] Leenco Lata, *The Horn of Africa as Common Homeland, The State and Self-Determination in the Era of Heightened Globalization* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004).

have defined the very nature of the states and societies."[104] For Reid, the region has its own (violent) character that exists independently of individual states. He attributes this to the "corridor of conflict that has the Ethiopian highlands (and their Eritrean extension) as its centrepiece."[105]

Although Reid is correct in acknowledging the fundamental role of territory in the social and political evolution of the region, this thesis does not fully agree with his assertions since they are largely predicated on the pre-colonial configuration of the region. The colonial period is significant for our current understanding of the Horn, not only because it produced colonial territories – it also established the foundations of the contemporary state in Ethiopia, even though the latter was never a colony. Thus this thesis contends that the evolution of social organisation during the colonial and post-colonial milieus carries significant weight for explaining present conditions in the Horn.

John Markakis' recent contribution to the ongoing turn in Ethiopian studies highlights the role of the peripheries in Ethiopian state formation. His main thesis is that: to engage in a meaningful discussion on the evolving process of state making and the future of the state in Ethiopia, the peripheral regions can no longer be overlooked – in both policy considerations and academic discourses. Markakis defines the periphery according to:

> … its marginal position in the power structure of the state, or more precisely, its exclusion from state power. Normally exclusion from power translates into lack of access to state resources, as well as the loss of native resources appropriated by the state and transferred to the centre. Equally important is the denigration of social and cultural accomplishments of societies in the periphery, and the expectation in the name of national integration that they should give place to the superior cultural accomplishments of the centre. Powerlessness,

[104] Richard Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa, Genealogies of Conflict since c.1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20.
[105] Ibid, 9.

> economic exploitation and cultural discrimination add up to a severe form of marginalisation, the defining feature of the periphery…[106]

Markakis' summation of the periphery is characteristic of the popular interpretation of the Ethiopian experience. Although this definition is mostly accurate, this thesis contests the portrayal of the periphery as 'powerless' and 'severely' marginalised. This popular reading of Ethiopian peripheries prevents the discovery of the creative and active engagement of the peripheries in their relationship with the state. What has consistently remained the same, however, is the centre's monopoly of power and the hegemonic position it occupies in this relationship.[107] As demonstrated by Markakis' definition, there is generally a good understanding of what being marginal entails, yet, there is notable lack of knowledge and understanding of *how* this marginality is experienced by those that are seemingly marginalised. Thus, rather than trying to make sense of the periphery from the perspective of the state, it is best to focus our attention on the periphery.

The Harari National Regional State (HNRS) with its capital Harar is the smallest in land size of the nine regions that make up the current federal state, whereas the Somali National Regional State (SNRS) is the largest. Because of its prolonged pacification, the political history of the Somali region of Ethiopia has generated a great deal of negative attention, perhaps since its official inclusion into the empire.[108] This led to the development of the conflict and resistance narratives. Harar on the other hand has a more ambiguous history in relation to the state. Emperor Haile Selassie was born in Harar where his father *Ras* Makonnen was governor since the capture and incorporation of the Harar city state in 1887. Consequently Harar remained an influential centre in the eastern periphery throughout the

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[106] John Markakis, *Ethiopia, The Last Two Frontiers* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 7.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Cedric Barnes, "The Ethiopian-British Somaliland Boundary," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa & Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 122-131.

imperial period. Yet, there has always been underlying tensions between the numerically dominant Oromo, the minority and culturally exclusive Harari and the treatment of Harar as a fiefdom of the imperial family. These competing interests and identities suggest a complex combination of local dynamics in Harar, which are yet to be fully understood, as Osmond illustrates.[109]

There is also a historical connection that is rarely explored between Harar and Jijiga. Chapter three of the thesis explores this connection in detail. The historical interconnectedness of the two localities can be explained and understood by examining their role as centres of imperial authority, an identity that was underscored during the period of the British Military Administration from 1942. In the main, however, Harar and Jijiga have always been seen to exist outside or on the margins of Ethiopia 'proper,' hence their absence and sometimes distorted portrayal in mainstream discourses on the state. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that there has been political bargaining that has been taking place in these localities.

Similar to elsewhere in Africa, as highlighted in Catherine Boone's study,[110] there is much negotiation and bargaining *within* the Ethiopian periphery, which in turn has an influence on the nature of the relationship with the centre. Therefore, the resultant relationship between local populations in the periphery and the state should also be seen as a consequence of local political struggles and bargaining. This approach departs from presenting an image of a passive or reactionary periphery, but instead centres the role of local actors in their interactions with the state.

The eastern periphery in Ethiopia is gradually making an appearance in the literature that seeks to make sense of the state from

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[109] See Thomas Osmond, "Competing Muslim legacies along city/countryside dichotomies: another political history of Harar Town and its Oromo rural neighbours in Eastern Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 53, issue 1 (March 2014) for a different take on the social dynamics in Harar.

[110] Catherine Boone, *Political Topographies of the African State, Territorial Authority and Institutional Choice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

the margins. This literature goes beyond what Markakis has accomplished – it affords the periphery/ margins/ borderlands a central role in analyses of the state. It does so by investigating political and other dynamics *within* the periphery. Some of this literature privileges the role of the territorial boundary in processes of state formation. With the latter approach, Dereje Feyissa and Markus Hoehne have conceptualised an original analytical framework whose central proposition is that:

> Marginal spaces and being marginal…presents multiple possibilities, and raises issues of agency without neglecting the constraining powers of the national centres or states. Those on the borderlands maybe physically detached from the centres, but they are partly in control of what happens at the borders, which is in turn vital for the centres.[111]

As this framework suggests, there is much analytical value in understanding the motives behind the actions of actors in the peripheries in order to gain a better understanding of their interactions with central state authority. This framework is relevant for ascertaining how local actors conceive their proximity to the territorial limits of the state. For instance, do those who live in the borderlands understand the border as a marker of state sovereignty? Or, how do they conceive their identities in relation to the dominant state discourses on identification – what are some of the strategies of self-identification that they are involved in, if at all? These are important questions that can only be answered by focusing on the peripheries.

The utility of the state border as an analytical tool has been similarly noted elsewhere in Africa. Observing events from the DR Congo-Ugandan border, Timothy Raeymaekers noted the emergence of a novel mode of governance. This research comes in the aftermath of Raeymaekers' previous observations – that "the analytical

[111] Dereje Feyissa and Markus V. Hoehne, "State Borders & Borderlands as Resources, An Analytical Framework," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa & Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 2-3.

opposition between 'normal' states and 'pathological' state collapse is perpetuating a dangerous metaphor."[112] Thus, having observed the making of a local strategy of governance in this border area, Raeymaekers concludes that despite the conflict in the Congo "The encounter between rebels and businessmen on the Congo-Ugandan border has led to a transformation of the local institutional framework that defines and directs local political action."[113]

This development could be working in conjunction with, in contrast and even in opposition to the objectives of the state. Which of these applies in any given context is not as important as the discovery of such a process that is emerging on the margins of the state. The emergence of novel forms of governance from encounters between state formation from 'above' and state formation from 'below' leads to richer hypotheses on how to best understand statehood in Africa. This approach is supported further by a study of everyday practices of state building in post-conflict South Sudan. These practices were observed in localities on the borders of South Sudan with DR Congo and Uganda.

Although primarily concerned with how the state manifests itself on the margins, instead of state formation that exists outside formal state structures, the study still managed to distance itself from the physical confines of the centre. In the study, de Vries observes the activities of state agents at border checkpoints and argues that they are central to both the administration and shaping of Southern Sudan.[114] In this context, the state agents represent manifestations of state power that are related, yet somewhat disconnected from those in the capital

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[112] Timothy Raeymaekers, "Collapse or Order? Questioning State Collapse in Africa." Working paper no.1, *Conflict Research Group* (2005). http://ideas.repec.org/p/hic/wpaper/10.html (accessed October 3, 2012).
[113] Timothy Raeymaekers, "Protection for Sale? War and the Transformation of Regulation on the Congo-Ugandan Border," in *Negotiating Statehood, Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa*, eds. Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 24-48.
[114] Lotje de Vries, "Facing Frontiers, Everyday practice of state-building in South Sudan" (PhD diss., Wageningen University, 2012), 1-2.

Juba.[115] It is precisely these instances of localised forms of exercising state power and/ or local forms of (negotiating) state power, as noted by Raeymaekers and de Vries that ought to be investigated and analysed.

The following section expands the discussion on the relationship between the centre and its peripheries in Ethiopian state making. The section highlights the foundational nature of peripheries in Ethiopian conceptions of statehood, particularly as this pertains to the twin processes of expanding state bureaucracy and consolidating the territory of the state. The section seeks to underline the inherent power imbalances that have characterised this relationship.

1.4.1 Territorial conceptions of statehood and the constitutive role of peripheries in Ethiopia

The formation of the contemporary state in Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century – the empire state, was shaped by the absorption of territories located south, east and west of the political centre. The incorporation of these territories contributed to the emergence of the idea of the 'Ethiopian state.' Subsequently, the peripheries shaped the evolution of state bureaucracy and the definition of the national territory. Central to these processes was the extension of state power over a particular territory, which instituted the use of territory as a means of asserting imperial state power and authority. However, the territorialisation of state power in Ethiopia was not a straightforward process.

James Scott brought to our attention the rich counter-narratives of state making that have largely gone unobserved.[116] Scott's narrative is an account of competing agendas in encounters between centres and peripheries in processes of state formation. However, Scott cautions

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[115] Ibid, 2.
[116] James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed, An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), x.

that his thesis on the Southeast Asian experience "makes little sense for the period following the Second World War."[117] Similar to Scott's assumptions about the nature of the post-Second World War international order, the present study does not suggest that the Harar and Jijiga peripheries reveal "a history of deliberate and reactive statelessness."[118] On the contrary, as the thesis argues, these areas have been partially integrated because they have exhibited both opposition and cooperation with the state – depending on a variety of internal and external factors. This is why the thesis rejects the narratives that portray the eastern periphery as, overall, hostile and resistive to incorporation.

The reach of Ethiopian state authority in these areas through administration, and the resolve of the state to integrate the peripheries through tribute,[119] direct and indirect rule[120] are suggestive of a relationship. Subsequent chapters demonstrate how the state attempted to control territory for political, social and economic ends in its attempts to legitimise its sovereign status in the period following the Italian occupation. The intention of the state was clear enough with regards to establishing territorial control and political dominance in the peripheries. However, the aims of the state were often hindered by limited state capacity. Nevertheless, the eastern periphery can hardly be seen as completely "ungoverned" or "not-yet incorporated."[121] The fact of limited capacity notwithstanding, the question, however, remains: what has prevented the complete integration of the eastern periphery into the state? There is strong evidence to suggest that the main obstacle has consistently remained the structural organisation of central state power and authority.

The major structural constraints have been linked to the nature

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[117] Ibid, xii.
[118] Ibid, x.
[119] The *gebbar* system – northern officials collecting tribute and consuming it in the peripheries.
[120] The appointment of the *neftegna* – northern military-settlers in the peripheries and *balabbat* – local governing elites in the peripheries or chiefs
[121] Scott, *Not Being Governed*, x.

of power and conceptions of statehood by successive state rulers in Ethiopia. Historically, the key structural constraint was the organisation of state power under imperial rule and the nature of political development within this structure. In *The Southern Marches,* Donham and James offer ground-breaking analyses of the structural organisation of imperial Ethiopia. However, the study focuses on the southern periphery, which has a separate and distinct history of incorporation. Yet, the strength of the collection of essays rest on their depiction of imperial power and its manifestation in the new territories on the margins. From the essays it is evident that the nature of imperial power and authority was closely tied to the traditions of the highland societies of Ethiopia.

Because of the traditional influence, the slow transformation of Ethiopian society and its full absorption into the international world order was slow and began in the post-liberation period following the Italian occupation – gaining momentum in the 1950s. This was occasioned by the presence of British, American and other Western 'advisers' in the imperial Ethiopian government. Even then, however, the transformation of society was severely constrained. Elsewhere on the continent during the same period, colonies were gradually enjoying new international networks where social movements were taking root across the colonies and redefining the nature of colonial rule.[122] However, in most of Africa these movements developed in the last years of colonial rule and were thus directly linked to agitations for independence. In Ethiopia the context was markedly different because the transformation of society was mitigated and made less remarkable by "...the resilience of a healthy tradition and the vigour of an alliance uniting Church and State, a bulwark that has not survived elsewhere in Africa below the Sahara."[123]

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[122] Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940, The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20-21, 38.
[123] John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of A Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 388.

The political and economic transformation of Ethiopian society was delayed because of the organisation of state power under the imperial order. The traditional base of legitimate state power in Ethiopia, initially for the Christian groups, and later for the Ethiopian nation,[124] ensured that a large section of the population within the Ethiopian territory remained on the sidelines. The motives and actions of the majority of non-state actors on the margins were, for the most part, misunderstood or simply disregarded. For a long time, the eastern periphery appeared to be subdued, even though it was not. Available evidence suggests that the eastern periphery has been bargaining with state power for a long time, although these instances tended to wax and wane, depending on various mediating factors. For instance, rather than viewed as instances of negotiating state power, open revolts by pastoralist groups against state taxation were often seen as instances of cultural incompatibility.

The 'fringe' or lowland peripheries, where pastoralists were much harder to keep track of and to control, experienced the least administration.[125] In the period following the Italian occupation the state saw an increase in peripheral dissent. However, this change was less about a periphery that became more belligerent, and more about structural changes that were taking place in the centre and in the wider region – state centralisation and decolonization. The state became increasingly centralised, and for the first time, the territorial boundaries of the state became more clearly defined than they were previously. Territoriality became more salient in the post-1942 period in Ethiopia. The geographic and political organisation of space found an immediate and direct expression in an increasingly centralised state. Indeed, centralisation required an exact articulation of the territorial limits of the nation. Elsewhere on the continent, the post-colonial relationship between central state power and the national

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[124] John Markakis and Asmelash Beyene, "Representative Institutions in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 5, no.2 (September 1967): 194.
[125] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 42.

territory has been conceptualised in ways that are somewhat different. To a large extent, the centre-periphery relationship was shaped by the colonial experience, and so it was this experience that influenced the nature of the post-colonial state.[126] In most cases, the core-periphery relationship took the form of the urban-rural divide.[127] The post-colonial state sustained this dialectic and adapted it to suit its peculiar mode of power and control. Thomas Callaghy describes the trend of increasing the power of central authority while simultaneously weakening local power structures in the periphery as the 'coverover strategy.'[128] This experience was widespread in the colonies and saw the colonial state transferring its most undesirable features to its post-independence successor.[129]

Although the practice of exercising control over the peripheries was similar to elsewhere on the continent, the motives and structures with which it was created and sustained was different in Ethiopia. Unlike the post-colonial state in other places in Africa, the state in Ethiopia had been actively involved in the determination of its territorial boundaries. Chapter two of the thesis demonstrates why and how Ethiopia participated in the drawing of boundaries in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopia is different because the demarcation of boundaries and incorporation of conquered territories into the state was actively pursued by Ethiopian rulers even prior to the formal demarcation of boundaries.

Perhaps it is *because* of the fundamental role of the peripheries in the conceptualisation of statehood that the transformation of power relations has been particularly challenging in Ethiopia. This is

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[126] Herbst, *States and Power*, 17-18.

[127] Michael Bratton, "Peasant-state relations in post-colonial Africa: patterns of engagement and disengagement," in *State power and social forces, Domination and transformation in the Third World*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 231-232.

[128] Thomas Callaghy, "The State as Lame Leviathan: The Patrimonial Administrative State in Africa," in *The African State in Transition* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1987), 98.

[129] Crawford Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 242.

suggested by Hagmann and Korf who argue that successive Ethiopian regimes have employed a variety of military strategies in the eastern periphery because this periphery is "constitutive to the Ethiopian state as a sovereign body."[130] Employing Giorgio Agamben's framework of spatiality and power, the authors further note that these strategies have led to the normalization of the 'state of exception' as a method of governing Ethiopia's eastern periphery.[131] The violent state of exception that pervades the narrative of this periphery is said to have historical antecedents that can be found in the violent territorial expansions that occurred in the late nineteenth century. These are processes that involved:

> …many 'others' who helped make twentieth century Ethiopia. These other Ethiopians lived their lives mostly in the periphery rather than at the political centre: they were local governors sent from Addis Ababa, northern settlers out to seek their fortunes at the frontiers and, most of all, they were the common peasants, tenants, and slaves created in the wake of Menilek's expansion into the south.[132]

From this historical experience we can see how the exercise of power by the state might have created a mutually reinforcing dynamic of imposition, rebellion, suspicion and mutual distrust between the state and the peripheries. Nonetheless, the experience also created an association that developed into a negotiation or dialogue – even if a fraught association.

The period following liberation from the Italian occupation was a key moment in Ethiopia's modern political history. This period was characterised by a determined effort by the state to: a) consolidate its territorial gains from before the occupation; and: b) consolidate its political dominance, particularly in the peripheries. These two goals were essential for the survival of the imperial state following the five

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[130] Tobias Hagmann and Benedikt Korf, "Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and sovereignty in the Ethiopian-Somali frontier," *Political Geography* 31, issue 8 (November 2012): 206.
[131] Ibid, 212.
[132] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 3.

year Italian occupation. The pursuit of these aims was accompanied by a strong rhetoric on modernisation. This rhetoric was rooted in a provincial administrative structure that sought to maintain the status quo of centre-periphery relations. The main goal of the provincial administration was to maintain the traditional role of the centre in the administration of the conquered territories and to preserve the territorial integrity of the state.[133] This became the dominant theme in the articulation of Ethiopian statehood – with subsequent state rulers adapting their ideologies in a way that they too could maintain the role of the state as an agent of control and authority.

The aforementioned objectives of the state were given impetus by the presence of the BMA in Ethiopia from 1941. The changes that occurred during the period of the BMA are crucial as they brought to the fore the (in) ability of the Ethiopian state to control its territory and assert its authority in the peripheries. This is the reason why the investigation for this thesis begins in 1942, a period that saw notable changes in the expression of Ethiopian statehood. The thesis argues that during this period, Ethiopian statehood shifted to an increasingly territorial conceptualisation, one that was not seen in the pre-Italian occupation period. Prior to the occupation, administration entailed the radiation of power from the centre to a vast and vaguely defined territory. However, the exact delimitation of the territory became more urgent and significant after 1941. During this period the state sought to fashion itself as a modernising empire with a secure territory and a stable community. These preconditions for 'modern' statehood crystallised because the territorial foundations of the state came under threat during the period of the BMA. The effects of this threat were most evident in the peripheries, which had hitherto been vaguely defined and loosely administered.

The growing centralising tendencies of the imperial state made a strong negative impression in the peripheries. Even prior to the 1974

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[133] This is demonstrated by the federation of Eritrea into Ethiopia in 1952 and what has been called its unlawful annexation as a province in 1962.

Ethiopian Revolution that presented the centre-periphery relationship in its most intense form,[134] actors in the peripheries had started to display their displeasure with certain state practices. The determined efforts of the state to impose taxation on the largely pastoralist populations in the eastern lowlands triggered hostile responses. This tension erupted in the 1963-64 conflict between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia. The source of this confrontation was traced to a rebellion led by one Garad Makthal Tahir of the Ogaden Liberation Front (OLF) against livestock taxes in the Bale and Ogaden regions of south-eastern Ethiopia.[135] This marked the beginning of a more forceful contestation of Ethiopian state presence in the eastern lowlands, one that would subsequently challenge the authority of the Ethiopian state in this region.

The espousal of Marxist ideology by the state following the revolution produced a notable change in the customary authoritarian tendencies of the state. Indeed, rather than transform the motives of the state towards the peripheries, the military socialists merely changed the approach of the state. When the revolutionaries came to power they sought to incorporate what seemed to be a restive eastern periphery into their structures of control. Marxism became entangled with strong currents of modernist discourse where the emergent "Marxist-Leninist metanarrative of modernity"[136] endeavoured to introduce radical land and other reforms that would obliterate all traces of the *ancien régime*. The territorial and spatial dimensions of the state thus crystallised during the process of creating and maintaining a 'garrison state.' However, the marginality of the eastern lowlands became evident when the various reforms failed to make an impact in

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[134] Christopher Clapham, "Controlling Space in Ethiopia," in *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism and After*, eds. Wendy James and Donald Donham et al., (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 14.
[135] John Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 169, 197.
[136] Donham, *Marxist Modern*, 122.

these regions. Instead, drought, famine, and conflicts created in the wake of the revolution shaped a new narrative of the eastern periphery.

Relations with neighbouring countries also became increasingly hostile during the revolutionary period. This was partly because the revolutionary state conceptualised statehood in uncompromising and extremist terms. The various peripheries, including the eastern periphery, were forced to join a revolution that had very little to do with them. Consequently, they became increasingly disconcerted – threatening to bring an abrupt and undesired end to the revolution. The threats posed by the peripheries to the military regime were evident in the cross-border linkages that emerged between the northern periphery and Eritrea and between the eastern periphery and Somalia. Perhaps even more threatening was the regional element in these conflicts. The Ethiopian state gained an acute awareness of its relationship with its border regions when its military confrontations with neighbouring countries increasingly featured a local dimension.

The next section examines what is a clear case of regional interconnectedness in the Horn of Africa, one that has played an unmistakable role in the nature of regional political developments. The section pays specific attention to Ethiopia's relationship with the Republic of Somalia. Indeed, to understand Ethiopia's eastern periphery, we must also appreciate the nature of its relationship with the neighbouring Somali territories and the latter's conceptualisation of key aspects of statehood.

1.5 Ethiopia and Somalia' competing agendas of statehood and their impact in Ethiopia's eastern periphery

Ethiopia and Somalia's seemingly contradictory conceptions of statehood need further investigation. This is necessary in order to

arrive at a sound understanding of what 'Ethiopia' and 'Somalia' are, and the roles they each play in the geopolitics of the region. A nuanced and historically informed interpretation is the best option for a better understanding of the relationship between the two countries, particularly as it relates to the Somali-inhabited regions of Ethiopia. At the core of the enmity between the two countries is believed to be divergent conceptions of national territory and national identity. Diametrically opposed in conceptions of territorial boundaries and national identity, the two countries appear to have been destined to be hostile neighbours. This is the dominant perception that also appears to be supported by empirical evidence. However, there tends to be more complexity and nuance than is readily evident –reality is less categorical. What is certain, and empirically evident, is that the complex characters of both countries tend to manifest themselves at their mutual borders and respective borderland regions.

Immediately following Somali independence and unification of the former Italian and British Somali territories in 1960, the territorial boundary took centre stage in intra-state and inter-state politics in the Horn of Africa. The government of the Somali Republic tabled significant claims on Kenyan, Ethiopian and French Somaliland territories at the newly established OAU. By the end of 1963 and early 1964, Ethiopia and Somalia were engaged in their first military confrontation where Ethiopia asserted its military superiority.[137] The dispute was referred to the OAU for arbitration. However, both Ethiopia and Kenya were in a strong position to occupy the legal high ground and to successfully argue that Somali claims contravened the OAU Charter. This marked the beginning of a protracted conflict on Somali irredentism and Ethiopia's defence of its territorial integrity.

[137] Touval, *Boundary Politics*, 216.

The 1963-64 conflict initiated a practice of "dramatizing sovereignty"[138] in the Horn of Africa – one not seen in other parts of the continent, during and after the decolonization period. Subsequent claims of territorial sovereignty in the region have been forceful as evident in the 1977-78 inter-state war between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia and in the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. These conflicts were extraordinary because they were based on claims that threatened the basic existence of the confronted states. In the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, as the thesis demonstrates, these contestations took a more definite shape during the presence of the BMA in the region, most notably during its administration of eastern Ethiopia.

Chapters two and three of the thesis foreground the importance of the BMA by demonstrating how the latter endeavoured to undermine Ethiopian territorial sovereignty from the two centres in eastern Ethiopia – Harar and Jijiga. This was done as part of the ill-fated scheme by the British to incorporate the largely Somali-inhabited strategic areas of Ethiopia into the neighbouring British Somali Protectorate.[139] Consequently, the defence of Ethiopia's territorial integrity against British encroachment led to a process of hegemonic ascension that allowed Ethiopia to effectively defend its territorial sovereignty at the expense of its populations and neighbouring states.[140] Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia pursued widely divergent conceptions of statehood that exemplified "…a peculiar contradiction that lay at the heart of the

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[138] Adriana Kemp and Uri Ben-Eliezer, "Dramatizing sovereignty: the construction of territorial dispute in the Israeli-Egyptian border at Taba," *Political Geography* 19, no.3 (2000): 315-344.
[139] The National Archive (TNA) Public Records Office (PRO) Colonial Office (CO) 535/138/13, *Agreement and Military Convention between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia.*
[140] Ruth Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence, Domination, resistance, nationalism, 1941-1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 29.

post-colonial consensus: the fragile balance of state sovereignty (territorial integrity) and the right of peoples to self-determination."[141]

Were Ethiopia and Somalia's conceptions of statehood as contrary as is often believed or were they perhaps too similar? Ethiopia's decision to engage in a military confrontation with Somalia in 1963 and 1977 was motivated by the strong desire to maintain its territorial integrity. Conversely, the decision of the Somali Republic to engage in the same confrontations was driven by the ambition of creating an ethnically unified nation-state. Indeed, post-independence Somali discourses have been dominated by the "nationalist account."[142] Both countries appear to have been pursuing valid claims that were at once supported and opposed by the international state system, as Iyob suggests.[143]

The origins of the Ethiopian (highland) centre's idea of power and authority can be conveniently juxtaposed to Somali conceptions. Following Somali independence, the Ethiopian state sought to solidify its territorial borders, whereas the Somali state endeavoured to eradicate the colonial territorial constructs in its pursuit of 'lost Somali lands.'[144] Ethiopian conceptions of power and authority are believed to be informed by the distinct variant of state formation that emerged in the Abyssinian highlands, which was underlined by the "Ox-plough agriculture of the northern plateau and the hierarchical social formations, coupled with localism induced by the remarkable topography of the northern highlands."[145]

The centralised form of statehood that emerged from this configuration ensured that property and territorial control are of utmost importance in the organisation of power and authority. While plough agriculture took much longer to adapt to conditions in most of sub-

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[141] Ibid.
[142] Cedric Barnes, "*U dhashay-Ku dhashay*: Genealogical and Territorial Discourse in Somali History," *Social Identities* 12, no. 4 (July 2006): 491.
[143] Iyob, *Eritrean Struggle*, 28-30.
[144] Clapham, "Boundary and Territory," 240.
[145] Clapham, "Controlling Space," 2.

Saharan Africa, the Ethiopian highlands had already developed a political economy out of it by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Like in Asia, where plough agriculture had developed much earlier, the adoption of the plough in the Ethiopian highlands and subsequent territorial expansions resulted in a situation where the state "…had a profound interest in controlling areas of intensive agriculture because of the possibility of high revenue flows from taxes with relatively low collection costs."[146] Subsequently, this approach shaped the exercise of imperial power and authority in the conquered territories to the south and east of the centre.

In contrast, Somali conceptions of power and authority are often constructed as decentralised, with emphasis placed on the Somali pastoral existence and the 'segmentary lineage system.'[147] The conceptualisation of boundaries and territory by the Somalis is perhaps aptly captured in the saying "wherever the camel goes, that is Somalia."[148] Chapter four explores in more detail the nature of Somali authority and how it was altered by the presence of external sources of authority – British and Ethiopian. Indeed, during the process of decolonization there was, admittedly, some tension between 'Western' and 'traditional' conceptions of authority in the newly independent Somali territories.[149] However, key features of the post-colonial Somali state between 1960 and 1991 were, generally, non-traditional thus conforming to the dominant ideals of modern statehood. This can be seen as a consequence of the long-term erosion of Somali traditional institutions of authority.

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[146] Herbst, *States and Power*, 39.
[147] Ioan M. Lewis, "Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman's "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia," *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no. 1(February 1998): 101.
[148] Clapham, "Boundary and Territory," 240.
[149] Annalisa Urbano, "Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State: The Politics of Nationalism and Decolonisation in Somalia (1940-60)" (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2012), 140-141.

Since the disintegration of the Somali Republic in 1991, debates within Somali studies[150] have suggested that both 'lineage' and 'territorial' narratives may underline Somali social organisation. Cedric Barnes has made a particularly persuasive and historically grounded proposition where he argues that "The sometimes intense lineage rivalry over [the] clan-based power structures notwithstanding, the dominance of genealogically related clans (or lineages) over certain territories has a long, albeit episodic and contradictory history in the Somali-speaking lands."[151]

Thus if there is a strong link between territory and clan identity in the conceptualisation of Somali social organisation, then we can speculate on the ways in which this connection could have been transferred to formal state structures and institutions. This would then suggest that Ethiopian and Somali conceptions of statehood are often in tension because they both involve strongly held notions of territory and identity – valid claims that are at once supported and rejected by the international and African state systems.

Chapter four of the thesis examines how the state project of identification and categorisation merged with self-identification in Harar and Jijiga. The chapter pays close attention to the role of institutions of authority among Somalis in Ethiopia and how these were manipulated by British and Ethiopian authorities. In the case of Jijiga, the chapter traces this process among some Somali clans in Jijiga and in the expanse between Harar and the border at Togochale. The chapter reveals that the return of Jijiga, the Ogaden and the Reserved Areas to Ethiopian sovereignty by the BMA in 1948 and 1954 was met by a surprisingly muted response from some sections of the Somali community in this region. This, the chapter argues, is because of hidden claims to territory by some clans, which tend to be influenced by their relationship with other Somali clans and, more

[150] Catherine Besteman and Ioan M. Lewis in *Cultural Anthropology* 13, no.1 (February 1998) engaged in a high profile debate.
[151] Barnes, "*U dhashay-Ku dhashay*," 491.

significantly, by their relationship with the Ethiopian state.

The fact that the Somali of the Ethiopian Somali region appear to oscillate "between integration, independence, and irredentism"[152] suggests that the formation of a national identity in this periphery is continuously being negotiated as part of a historical process. Later chapters demonstrate that these vacillations are examples of negotiation, much of which emerge partially in response to the nature of, and manifestation of central state power *within* the peripheries. But also, as Hagmann and Khalif have correctly argued – the formation of national identity in the Somali region of Ethiopia is a product of internal and external narratives of group identity.[153]

1.5.1 Complex 'identities'

This thesis reveals that identification – categorisation as a state project and self-identification as a local manifestation, is central to the history of negotiating statehood in the Harar and Jijiga areas of eastern Ethiopia. However, this revelation does not include the wide range of actors and voices that comprise these areas; rather, it applies to the group of state and non-state actors that were consulted for this research.

Identity has long been recognised as one of the key factors that render the state system particularly complex in the Horn of Africa.[154] It has been argued that, the interconnectedness of state entities in this region can be attributed to what appear to be 'ethnic zones of confederation' where partially separate groups of people are unified

[152] Tobias Hagmann and Mohamud H. Khalif, "State and Politics in Ethiopia's Somali Region since 1991," *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 6, Article 2 (2006): 38.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Reid, *Frontiers of Violence*, 95 argues that the colonial boundaries in the Horn were drawn within pre-existing ancient borderlands, and Leenco Lata, *The Horn of Africa as Common Homeland, The State and Self-Determination in the Era of Heightened Globalization* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004) also suggests this interconnectedness.

under a common identity or language.[155] This trait often manifests itself in the border regions of the various states in the Horn, and Ethiopian peripheries are good exemplars of this phenomenon.

However, the term 'identity' is not used arbitrarily in this thesis because it is ambiguous, contradictory, confusing and is characterised by reifying connotations.[156] The challenges in using the term 'identity' multiply when it is used in the context of a dynamic and often contested political space such as the periphery. However, in all its ambiguity, 'identity' looms large in political discourses in the Horn, not least in Ethiopia.[157] We are told that at the core of identity-related processes are perceptions of self-understanding, self-interest, collective-interest, social and political action. It is thus evident that the term 'identity' is impractical as an analytical tool when it is capable of denoting such heterogeneous and sometimes contrary usages.[158]

The thesis thus adopts the alternatives that have been put forward by Brubaker and Cooper who suggests 'identification' as a substitute. The term 'identification,' the authors argue, is processual and seeks further clarification on the agents doing the identifying and the purposes for such an exercise. We thus find a distinction between self-identification and external identification. Chapter four of the thesis investigates the interplay between external identification and self-identification. It does so by examining "the formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization developed by powerful, authoritative institutions,"[159] and the experiences and responses of local actors to these processes. The state is the most important,

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[155] Wolbert C.G. Smidt, "The Tigrinnya-Speakers across the Borders: Discourses of Unity & Separation in Ethnohistorical Context," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa & Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 67-68; Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis, eds., *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (London: James Currey, 1994).
[156] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity," *Theory and Society* 29, no.1 (2000): 5.
[157] Kjetil Tronvoll, *War & Politics of Identity in Ethiopia, The Making of Enemies & Allies in the Horn of Africa* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2009), also see footnotes 145 and 146 and Fukui and Markakis, eds., *Ethnicity & Conflict.*
[158] Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" 8.
[159] Ibid, 15.

although not only, agent of categorisation. In the context of the present work, other authorities include the BMA and the neighbouring Somali Republic, who, to varying degrees, have also been sources of external identification in Ethiopia's eastern periphery.

The rest of this section explores some of the key aspects of the complex manifestations of identification in the Horn, especially as they relate to Ethiopia. The section highlights the interplay between external and internal processes of identification and their capacity to impact the development of group identity, particularly in the peripheries or border regions of individual states.

Although with similar origins in contesting imperial and colonial rule, the trajectory of Eritrean national identity differs from that of the Somali. Group identity formation in Ethiopia's Somali-inhabited regions is often overshadowed by what tend to be simplistic analyses that highlight the influence of the Somali Republic. Such analyses have historically found support in the irredentist rhetoric of the Republic that dominated the period following independence in 1960 and the secessionist rhetoric of various Somali movements within Ethiopia. These are often framed within the dominant, yet ambiguous, framework of the Somali lineage system that makes generalisations about the nature of Somali ethnic identity and its cross-border dimensions. Although these assumptions are mostly valid, there are nuances, some of which are explored in chapter four of this thesis. These include the important processes of categorisation by imperial and colonial authorities in eastern Ethiopia. To illustrate this complexity the next section examines processes of identity formation of another seemingly 'fluid' cross-border ethnic identity, which, similar to the Somali of the eastern periphery, has had a profound influence on the ideation of ethnic and national identity in Ethiopia's northern periphery.

Unlike the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and its predecessors in the Somali region, the Tigray People's Liberation

Front (TPLF) lacked convincing rationale for secession in 1991. This was despite the TPLF's troubled history with the Ethiopian state and its precarious alliance with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Instead, the Tigrayans of northern Ethiopia emerged as ardent advocates of a reconstructed Ethiopian national identity, which ultimately gave way to the full expression of Eritrean national identity. Tronvoll argues that, ideologically, the TPLF-led government came to power with a 'non-nationalist' vision of Ethiopia,[160] where the state would comprise several supposedly equal 'nations.' Yet, there remained a fundamental dialectic, which did not disappear with Eritrean independence in 1993, in the conceptualisation of statehood by those who came to power in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. In what seemed like a repeat of the 1977-78 Ethiopia-Somalia war, tensions erupted over conflicting ideas of statehood in 1998 between Ethiopia and Eritrea, in a war that has been described as "very personal."[161] Similar to the Somalis in1977, Eritrean intentions in this war were motivated by sentiments of a strongly held national identity.

According to Tekeste Negash, the Italian colonial experience of racial policies, wage-labour, and participation on the Italian side in the conquering and pacification of Ethiopia contributed to the development of an Eritrean national identity or consciousness.[162] Therefore despite the divisions and conflict that plagued the initial stages of the nascent Eritrean national identity, it later emerged as a formidable movement against Ethiopian imperial rule. Indeed, the triumph of the EPLF in championing Eritreanness unfolded within a larger context of the recognition of the Eritrean struggle. Iyob notes that the success of the EPLF in shaping Eritrean identity was an outcome of a concerted and sustained struggle for local, regional and

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[160] Tronvoll, *Politics of Identity*, 206.
[161] Alexander Last, "A Very Personal War: Eritrea Ethiopia 1998-2000," in *Unfinished Business, Ethiopia and Eritrea at War*, eds. Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (Trenton/ Asmara: Red Sea Press, Inc., 2004), 57.
[162] Tekeste Negash, *Eritrea and Ethiopia, The Federal Experience* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 16-17.

international legitimacy.[163] Thus, uncontested in shaping the struggle, the EPLF consolidated Eritrean national identity in the last decade of the liberation war against Ethiopian domination.[164]

The eventual secession and independence of Eritrea generated much resentment in Ethiopia, despite the clear evidence of a separate Eritrean national identity, or perhaps because of it. The bitterness of the Ethiopians was evident in the determination with which they fought in the 1998-2000 war, where the war was perceived as a "second Adwa"[165] in Ethiopia. This war raised a number of questions about the nature of post-1991 politics of identity in Ethiopia, with many struggling to make sense of the popular support of this war. Tronvoll posits that the near unanimous support of the war in Ethiopia can be explained by "historical conceptions of state and power in Ethiopia and not because of primordial identities such as ethnicity or nationalism."[166] Tronvoll suggests that the 'retrieval of lost territories' – Badme and Eritrea, and internal power-plays in Ethiopia, contributed to the support of this war by political elites from across the political spectrum, regardless of misgivings they might have had with the TPLF-led government. Also making sense of the war, Ruth Iyob argues that the EPLF enjoyed a paradoxical relationship with the TPLF of Ethiopia because of what each signified – a diasporic state and a regional hegemon.[167] Iyob's analysis suggests that at the root of the war lay competing conceptions of national identity and national territory.

Iyob and Tronvoll suggest existing tension over conceptions of territory and identity in Ethiopian and Eritrean national discourses

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[163] Iyob, *Eritrean Struggle*, 123-135.
[164] Kjetil Tronvoll, "Borders of violence- boundaries of identity: demarcating the Eritrean nation-state," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no.6 (1999): 1043.
[165] Alessandro Triulzi, "The Past as Contested Terrain, Commemorating New Sites of Memory in War-Torn Ethiopia," in *Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa*, ed. Preben Kaarsholm (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 128.
[166] Tronvoll, *Politics of Identity*, 203.
[167] Ruth Iyob, "The Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 4 (December, 2000): 660.

following Eritrean independence. This tension was evident when the elation of Eritrean independence immediately gave way to a cooling of relations.[168] Many observers were mystified by these developments, especially when taking into account the success of the EPLF-TPLF alliance in the preceding decade. The TPLF was expected to relate much better to the new EPLF-led government in Eritrea because of its own history under previous Ethiopian state regimes. The Ethiopian Tigrayans were subjected to a marginal existence of discrimination that left their province one of the poorest and least developed in Ethiopia.[169] This explains the role of their province in the overthrow of the *Dergue* regime in 1991 – through the TPLF- EPLF coalition. Furthermore, the leadership and membership of the two Fronts was bound by ethnic and cultural links.[170] Yet, the two sides envisaged conflicting notions of statehood in a post-liberation context because of the historically divergent trajectories of their respective national identities.[171] The latter can be explained by tracing the historical contexts in which processes of identity formation developed in both Eritrea and Ethiopia. Here, the focus would be on categorisation and the extent to which the categorised groups 'internalised' and assimilated the categorisations, in part or in whole.[172]

The interplay between national territory and identification in the Horn suggests original and dynamic processes of state formation – it also makes for a strong argument that differentiates the Horn from

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[168] For a detailed account including the mass expulsion of each other's citizens by both countries see Martin Plaut, "Background to War: From Friends to Foes," in *Unfinished Business, Ethiopia and Eritrea at War*, eds. Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (Trenton/ Asmara: Red Sea Press, Inc., 2004),13; and John Young, "The Tigray and Eritrean Liberation Fronts: A History of Tensions and Pragmatism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no.1 (March 1996): 105-120.

[169] Jenny Hammond, "Garrison Towns and the Control of Space in Revolutionary Tigray," in *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism and After*, eds. Wendy James, Donald Donham et al. (Oxford: James Currey 2004), 90.

[170] John Young, "The Tigray and Eritrean People's Liberation Fronts: a History of Tensions and Pragmatism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no.1 (1996): 107.

[171] Both Tigrinnya-speakers, yet sharply distinguishable by the territorial border and respective histories on either side of this border, see Smidt, "Tigrinnya-Speakers," 61-83 and Iyob, "Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict."

[172] Jenkins, "Rethinking ethnicity," 216.

other sub-regions in Africa. Whereas Somalia came into existence as a "nation in search of a state,"[173] the pursuit of an Eritrean state underpinned the formation of a formidable national identity. These processes raise pertinent questions about how this region compares with the rest of the African continent that is grappling with issues of citizenship and belonging – matters related to identification.

The next section examines how the dynamic processes of state formation in Ethiopia and the wider region, as outlined in the preceding sections, can be understood within the more immediate project of decentralisation and democratization that is pursued through ethnic federalism in Ethiopia.

1.5.2 Ideas of belonging in Ethiopian peripheries

With the exception of ethno-nationalist claims that have a much longer history, there seems to be fewer grounds for claims of belonging along the lines of autochthony[174] in the Horn. The concept, as expounded by Geschiere and Jackson,[175] is a relatively new development that can be attributed to the advent of globalisation. In the Horn, as this chapter has demonstrated, claims to territory have existed for a long time and tend to exhibit secessionist claims that appear to be embedded in a complex language of 'ethnic identity.' However, elsewhere such as Cameroon and the Ivory Coast, these claims are underlined by recent contestations of national citizenship within existing national states.[176] In the Horn, claims to territory challenge the national territory of the state more than the national identity. It can be argued that the absence

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[173] David D. Laitin, *Somalia: nation in search of a state* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

[174] Peter Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging, Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[175] Peter Geschiere and Stephen Jackson, "Autochthony and the Crisis of Citizenship: Democratization, Decentralization and the Politics of Belonging," *African Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (September 2006): 1-7.

[176] Ibid.

of institutionalised colonialism in Ethiopia partly explains the absence of a "bifurcated state,"[177] which would have aided the extreme polarisation of the population as seen in other parts of the continent.

Less contestation of belonging and few autochthonous claims suggest that perhaps national identity is conceived in terms that are less definitive in the Horn. As demonstrated by Mohammed Guleid in the opening epigraphs of this chapter, and as the argument of the thesis contends – identification in Ethiopian peripheries is subject to the influence of multiple and competing forces and actors, including internal and external sources of group identity and political authority. We cannot completely dismiss existing claims of belonging in the Horn precisely because of the wide and complex range of actors and voices that influence processes of state formation.

To be sure, there have been nascent, at times violent, claims of belonging in the western Ethiopian periphery of Gambella, along the border with South Sudan.[178] These developments can be attributed to the emergent discourse of national citizenship that is currently used to legitimise the democratic credentials of the federal state. Since the Ethiopian federal system explicitly underscores ethnic identity, one of the major challenges has been the extent to which minority groups can convincingly identify with a major ethnic group in order to claim belonging to a specific geographic territory – an ethnic region.[179] This has heightened competition for access to state power and state resources within the supposedly ethnically homogenous regions.

The decades-long civil war in the Sudan and the contestations of statehood in that country reverberated on the Ethiopian side. The

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[177] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers, Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), 28.
[178] Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games, The Paradox of Anywaa and Nuer Identification Strategies in the Gambella Region, Ethiopia* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011).
[179] Asnake Kefale, "Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo-Somali Ethnic Frontiers," *Development and Change* 41, no.4 (2010) and Assefa Fiseha, "Theory versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism," in *Ethnic Federalism, The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed., David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 135-138.

evolution of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A) in Sudan and the emergence of the Dinka ethnic group as the movement's custodians [180] had repercussions for political development in western Ethiopia. Dereje Feyissa notes that:

> Indeed, the political process in Gambella has been intimately tied to the politics of liberation in southern Sudan ever since the first civil war broke out in 1955. As early as the mid-1960s, war-fleeing southern Sudanese refugees crossed the border and settled in different parts of Gambella. By the mid-1980s, the refugee population outnumbered the local population by far.[181]

This created the unintended, yet conceivable, outcome of polarising political identities in Gambella. The dominant groups of the Nuer and Anywaa found themselves competing for state resources with the refugees. Within the current federal context, Gambella has experienced some of the most violent conflict over access to political power and state resources. The Nuer and the Anywaa find recourse in the utility of their ethnic identities because of the permitting nature of ethnic federalism. The political discourse in Gambella has even been elevated to invoke state sovereignty where the Anywaa have made demands for more secure state borders. The Anywaa want to prevent against what they perceive to be an imminent threat caused by the Nuer cross-border settlement pattern.[182]

A comparable yet somewhat different process is underway in the east, in Harar and Jijiga. In Jijiga, the capital of the SNRS, the line appears to be drawn firmly between the Ogadeen and other Somali clans. Similar to the Anywaa, the Ogadeen appear to utilise their ethnic identity to claim belonging in opposition to other Somalis. They have made strong claims based on the large presence of their clan in

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[180] Mohammed M.A. Salih, "The Ideology of the Dinka & the Sudan People's Liberation Movement," in *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa,* eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 190-191.
[181] Feyissa, *Different Games*, 7.
[182] Dereje Feyissa, "More State than State? The Anywaa's Call for the Rigidification of the Ethio-Sudanese Border," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa & Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 27-44.

eastern Ethiopia. Since 1991, many Ogadeen have returned to Ethiopia from Somalia and elsewhere. Ethnic federalism has allowed the Ogadeen to claim strength in numbers – allowing them to occupy political positions and have access to state resources. This is one of the reasons that can account for the inability of the ONLF to find substantial support in this region after 1991.[183] Some Ogadeen Somali no longer saw separatism as a necessary or viable option. However, there is complexity to this narrative since some members of the Ogadeen remain in the Ogaden desert where they are waging an insurgency against the Ethiopian state.

Potential claims of belonging in Harar appear to unfold in a slightly different trajectory. The Harari who otherwise would be in the strongest position to claim 'belonging' as the descendants of the Harar Emirate are outnumbered by the Oromo. The consequence is a highly contested regional state administration that belies the small size of the region. However, the Harari appear content to pursue an exclusive process of self-identification where they are pursuing a cultural revival by promoting their rich cultural heritage. Yet, the cultural self-promotion of the Harari is performed as a claim to something, and in opposition to an alternative culture (s), as chapter four of the thesis argues.

The Ethiopian ethnic federal state is paradoxically both an inclusive and exclusive model, a factor that is set to prolong the complete integration of the peripheries into the state. Decentralisation and democratisation are invoked as tools of inclusion. On the other hand, the internal federal boundary-making process, which is linked to historical processes of identification,[184] has emerged as a form of exclusion that heightens the propensity towards contested belonging.

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[183] Abdi M. Abdullahi, "The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF): The Dilemma of its Struggle in Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy* 34, no.113 (September 2007).
[184] Kefale, "Federal Restructuring," 615-635.

This introductory chapter has underlined the importance of the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopian conceptions of statehood and the need to bring forth the periphery or margins in analyses of the state in Ethiopia. This is the preferred approach in attempts to understand how statehood is conceived and practiced in Ethiopia, and indeed, in the Horn of Africa. The preceding sections have demonstrated that such an investigation can only be done justice by foregrounding history and context. Indeed, the previous sections have demonstrated that the efforts of the Ethiopian state to broadcast its power and authority and to establish territorial control have progressed within a historical trajectory.

The following section thus presents the methodological choices that have been made in this thesis and their implications for the argument, objectives and aims of the investigation. The section concludes with the chapter outline of the thesis.

1.6 Notes on Methodology

An appropriate methodology has been devised for the purposes of answering the main research question of this investigation: *why has the eastern periphery not been completely integrated into the Ethiopian state and what are the implications has this had for Ethiopia's relations with countries in the region?* The secondary questions are:

- What has influenced the state's attempts to project and assert state power in the eastern periphery?
- What are the historical contexts in which these attempts crystallised and became central to the states' ideas of statehood?
- How have local actors in the peripheries responded to, and experienced the various attempts of the state to control territory and assert authority in the peripheries?

- How has the ensuing relationship between the central state and the territories in the eastern periphery manifested itself in wider regional political developments?

To answer the research question(s), the thesis employs an interpretive approach and a qualitative methodology that combines historical and ethnographic research methods. By implication, a constructivist inspired methodology should be inductive, interpretive and historical.[185] Indeed, a study of the state in Ethiopia, as this thesis demonstrates, is a study of the motives and practices of how the state has fashioned itself toward its population and neighbouring countries, as well as how the various populations have interpreted and experienced these practices over time. Here, the task of the researcher is to contextualise and historicize this experience in order to arrive at a new or alternative interpretation of the relationship between the centre and the periphery, and its wider regional implications. The historical archival material has been critical in shedding light on specific and significant historical period (s), and for unravelling the nature and impact of Ethiopian state projects in the peripheries. On the other hand, the ethnographic data, although limited has been able to shed light on understandings and meanings attributed by populations in the peripheries to past and present realities of their interactions with state power and authority. The motivation behind these choices is influenced by the aims and objectives of this study. The two main aims of the study are to:

- Contribute to the literature on the study of statehood from the margins in Africa.
- Contribute a historically informed and nuanced interpretation of the nature of the relationship between the eastern periphery

[185] Vincent Pouliot, "“Sobjectivism”: Towards a Constructivist Methodology," *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2007): 359.

and the Ethiopian state, and to derive an understanding of this relationship in its wider regional context.

These aims will be reached by meeting the following objectives:

- Challenge statist approaches of explaining statehood in Africa.
- Contest and redress the marginalisation of eastern and lowland peripheries in Ethiopian studies.
- Identify and examine central state motives and practices aimed toward the eastern periphery since 1942.
- Investigate local responses and experiences to these practices in the Harar and Jijiga areas since 1942.
- Identify and explore key historical events that have shaped the centre's relationship with the eastern periphery in Ethiopia.

The thesis aims to "write history forwards" by putting "process, choice, and explanation"[186] at the forefront of the analysis. The chosen methodology supports this by allowing the researcher the ability to trace the nature of structures that were there in the past and their evolution over time, and people's experiences of these processes.[187] Overall, the strength of this methodology is that it allows the researcher enough scope to detect and analyse inter-linkages that can account for "continuities, discontinuities or new modes of doing."[188]

[186] Frederick Cooper, "Africa's Pasts and Africa's Historians," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34, no.2 (2000): 312.
[187] Roseline Achieng, "Autochthones Making their Realities Strange in Order to Better Understand Them," in *Readings in Methodology, African Perspectives*, eds. Jean-Bernard Ouédraogo and Carlos Cardoso, (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2011), 141.
[188] Achieng, "Autochthones Making their Realities Strange,"141.

1.6.1 Historical/Archival sources

Historical sources form a significant part of this research. The historical sources are in the form of archival material. The material was collected from four archives: the Public Records Office (PRO) at The National Archives (TNA) at Kew Gardens in London, the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) library based at Addis Ababa University, the National Archive and Library of Ethiopia (NALE) in the city centre of Addis Ababa and from the Harar Documentation and Archives Centre at the Arthur Rimbaud Museum in Harar. I visited the British archives on three separate occasions: March-April 2012, August 2012 and March 2013.

At the PRO I consulted Colonial Office, Foreign Office and War Office documents. These have been central to the analysis of the period of the BMA in Ethiopia, the history of the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary and the nature of the British Somaliland Protectorate. The period of the BMA in Ethiopia is crucial for the overall argument of this thesis. The thesis seeks to demonstrate that the negotiation of statehood in this periphery was largely influenced by the period of the BMA – it was during this time that issues relating to territoriality and identification underwent significant changes in the eastern regions of Ethiopia.

At the Ethiopian archives I consulted a combination of private collections, various government publications and English newspaper sources. The private collections of *Dejazmatch* Zewde Gabre Selassie[189] at the NALE were very useful and they were available in foreign languages including English and French. At the IES library I consulted several Addis Ababa University masters dissertations as well as former IES conference proceedings. In addition, the IES holds

[189] Noted Ethiopian historian and once Prime Minister of Ethiopia during the imperial period, is noted to have belonged to the group of foreign educated Ethiopian intelligentsia that formed the bridge that links the Aksumite and Orientalist paradigms in Ethiopian studies, see Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974*, (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1995), xiii.

a large collection of the Ethiopian Government Gazette – the *Negarit Gazeta,* which contains Government decrees and proclamations from the 1940s up to the 1990s. These were consulted and used extensively in this thesis. The IES also has a limited, yet useful, collection of government publications of the former Republic of Somalia relating to Ethiopia-Somali relations between 1965 and 1985.

1.6.2 Ethnographic methods

I undertook field research to Ethiopia from August 2011 to January 2012 (including one week in Hargeisa, Somaliland in January 2012), and from September 2012 to November 2012.

The ethnographic methods that I used in this investigation comprise non-participant observations and a combination of informal and semi-structured interviews. The latter were conducted with various state representatives in Harar, Jijiga and at the Togochale border area – to gather the nature of current state practices. The interviews were conducted with immigration and customs officials, including a refugee coordinator in Jijiga. There is an unmistakable contrast in the way that life is lived and experienced on the margins of the state compared to the more central regions. Because I wanted to capture the nuances and, indeed, the contradictions that characterise the margins, observations were carried out on an ongoing basis for the duration of the time I spent in the Harar, Jijiga and Togochale localities of eastern Ethiopia.

I also gathered life histories through a combination of observations, conversations and informal interviews. Some of these were carried out with five elders in Jijiga – all of them were asked on their personal experiences of the border with northern Somalia (former British Somaliland) and on living in this section of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia. In Jijiga I also had chance-encounters with a

category[190] of people who were able to shed some light on what informs their choices of self-identification in the current political context. I observed and had conversations with these people on two separate visits to Jijiga. In Harar I had frequent and long conversations with a local historian and cultural commentator whose conversations were enlightening in regard to the Harari people. I also interviewed a cultural adviser and local historian at the Harar regional state offices. In Harar I interviewed yet another local cultural custodian who had opened a museum of Harari cultural artefact out of his own home. These interviews were sources of great insight into past and present Harari conceptions of self-identification.

I was also fortunate to spend a significant amount of time with two families, whose narratives greatly influenced my understanding of the relationship between Harar and the state and the different population groups that live there. One of these families is an ethnic Somali family that also has relatives in Jijiga and Hargeisa. I subsequently visited the distant family members in Jijiga and Hargeisa. The second family is Harari, with whom I lived on my extended stays in Harar. Both these families live inside the *Jegol*, the famed walled city of Harar. My observations of their lives, listening and recording of their personal stories have been useful in constructing a narrative of the lived experiences of the people of this region.

The next section pays close attention to the historical method and some of the issues arising with the main source of evidence – the archive. There are politics that surround the archive and the following section addresses some of these controversies since they emerged in the course of conducting research for this thesis. Closely related to this is the issue of interpreting the archive. Thus, the challenges of making sense of history and interpreting an inherently political source of evidence are discussed next.

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[190] I met several members of the Ogadeen Somali clan, mostly business people and professionals, who have returned from exile to partake of the new opportunities afforded by the current federal system.

1.6.3 History, the Archive and interpretation

The writing of African history is a contested terrain. Contemporary debates have tended to cut to the core of history as an academic discipline.[191] At the heart of these debates are the processes of generating African histories.[192] The debates centre on the types and versions of histories. In some quarters there is a strong rejection of the writing of history as stories of victors and in some cases survivors.[193] Another contention, perhaps more epistemological than the latter, is on approaches to history – writing it backwards[194] vs. writing it forwards.[195] Within this debate this thesis aligns itself with the proponents of writing history forwards as noted by Frederick Cooper.[196] By tracing the historical processes that have characterised the integration of the eastern periphery into the Ethiopian state, the aim of the thesis is not to proffer lessons from the past. Instead, the thesis is motivated by the current historical moment and seeks ways of understanding the historical processes that have led to present conditions.

The contested nature of writing African history can be attributed to the extensive and shifting contexts in which the history of the continent has progressed – both external influences and internal transformations. However, that history is indispensable for the

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[191] Cooper "Africa's Pasts," 298-336 and Mamadou Diouf "Des Historiens et des histoires, pour quoi faire? L'Histoire africaine entre l'état et les communautés," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34, no.2 (2000).
[192] Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Valentin Yves Mudimbe, "African's Memories and Contemporary History of Africa," in *History Making in Africa*, eds. Bogumil Jewsiewicki and Valentin Yves Mudimbe (Middletown: Wesleyan University, 1993), 1-11.
[193] Cooper, "Africa's Pasts," and Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims become Killers, Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001).
[194] Cheikh Anta Diop, *Antériorité des Civilisations Nègres: Mythe ou Vérité Historique?* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1967).
[195] Cooper "Africa's Pasts," 298-336.
[196] Ibid.

present[197] is a truism that is widely accepted. There is also extensive agreement on the role of history for the future, although there tends to be some variation in the application of this approach. As much as Cooper and Hobsbawm agree on the necessity to read history forwards, Cooper cautions against reading history as a "tale of progress,"[198] which is tinged with future predictions. Hobsbawm goes a step further, however, and advocates for forecasting the future through history.[199]

Admittedly, there is a thin line between Cooper's belief in the ability of history to 'suggest possibilities' and Hobsbawm's 'predictions.' Yet, the perils of committing one's analyses to future predictions are self-evident. This thesis limits itself to employing history for the sole purpose of making sense of the present and making modest suggestions on future possibilities. Indeed, there is hardly any doubt about the value of history as a way of understanding the present, however, one still faces other challenges, not least the nature of available sources.[200] Confronted with the various approaches to history, the historian is then faced with the even more challenging task of reading one of the key sources of historical knowledge – the archive.

The major source of historical knowledge, the archive, is not an objective record. Both the written and oral versions are often recorded and presented in a very deliberate fashion.[201] The very trajectory of the archive – from seemingly banal document to archival status, calls for closer examination. The development of an archive, as noted by Mbembe, involves judgement – a consequence of the

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[197] Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 34.
[198] Cooper "Africa's Pasts," 318.
[199] Hobsbawm, *On History*, 51.
[200] Stephen Ellis, "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," *Journal of African History* 43, no.1 (2002): 1.
[201] Cooper, "Africa's Pasts," 308.

exercise of a specific power and authority.[202] The historian who is attempting to piece together a coherent story of the past is then left with the challenging task of 'dispossessing' the archive of its original form when trying to create an entirely new interpretation of past events.

As suggested by Mbembe, the process that documents go through to acquire archival status is political in nature. The historian that consults the archive must remain cognizant of this fact and not be persuaded to adopt the narrative of the powers that conferred the archival *status*. Stephen Ellis cautions that African newspaper sources, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, tended to reflect a partial record of official thinking.[203] These are challenges that I was confronted with when consulting British and Ethiopian archival material. The challenge lay in the ability to read beyond the deliberate political views that informed the documents. For example, in Ethiopia the Archive was not created in the late 1950s by a colonial power, as it was the case in Kenya,[204] for instance. In Ethiopia there is a long tradition of recording history dating back to the Axumite Empire of the fifth and sixth centuries.[205] Therefore, the trend of documenting events according to the version of those in power goes back to antiquity. The reading of Ethiopian archives requires an awareness of the particular political moment that the archive was 'active.' The private collections, in particular, had to be approached as "established by intellectuals belonging to a social group fighting to maintain or acquire the status of a politically recognised entity."[206]

Consistent with the description of the methodology and research methods that are employed in this research – a brief

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[202] Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, eds. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris et al., (Cape Town: David Philips Publishers, 2002), 20.
[203] Ellis,"Writing Histories," 17.
[204] Matthew Carotenuto and Catherine Luongo "Navigating the Kenya National Archive: Research and its Role in Kenyan Society," *History in Africa* 32, (2000): 446. 445-455.
[205] Reid, *Frontiers of Violence*, 25.
[206] Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe, "African's Memories," 11.

examination of the experience of field research follows in the next section. This section highlights some of the potential biases that emerged in the use of ethnographic methods.

1.6.4 Reflexivity, choices and safety during field research

The collection of primary field data for this research confronted me with some methodological dilemmas. Early on in the process of data collection it was evident that there is a need to consider and recognise with a degree of seriousness the role of my identity in the process. The most obvious aspect was how, as an African researcher researching Africa, I would research 'my own' context. The assumption is that the African researcher has acquired a level of 'common sense knowledge' of the African environment.[207] This renders the research process potentially complicated for the African researcher. Conceptually, the question becomes: "how does a subject research itself without being subjective and thus biased?"[208] These are questions that raise issues of reflexivity.

It became necessary for me to constantly take stock of my role and actions in the research process.[209] There are countless incidents during which I gained access or permission was granted, on the basis of being African. Indeed, I constantly recognised my own socio-cultural background[210] in the lives and everyday experiences of some of the research subjects. In some instances, these shared values went as far as overcoming language barriers because of the familiarity of it all. This subjectivity was mitigated by constant awareness of my role and purpose as an outsider and researcher in my interactions with the research subjects. Ultimately, I vacillated between objectivity and

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[207] Achieng, "Autochthones," 140.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 149.
[210] Ibid.

subjectivity in the research process – never settling for one or the other.

The nature of interactions with the research subjects also brought to the fore the issue of conducting field research in a particular political context, and the subtle nuances thereof.[211] When it comes to conducting field research in Ethiopia there is much variation in the ease of access that foreign researchers enjoy – a variation that is largely dependent on the topic and geographic area under investigation. As the introduction of this thesis has demonstrated, the large corpus of Ethiopian studies reflects an overwhelming focus on the political centre – its history, culture, religion and so forth, with foreign researchers rarely venturing into the eastern lowland peripheries.

Therefore I was filled with trepidation regarding the reception I would receive in the eastern lowlands, particularly as a foreigner, and unable to speak the local languages. In the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa many were sceptical of my plans to conduct research in Harar and Jijiga. Some expressed doubt about what exactly might be learned about 'Ethiopia' in these places. Undoubtedly with good intentions, many also suggested that I change the geographic focus of the study and rather head to the north of the country where there *is* history. In addition to concerns about the type of data I would collect, some simply feared for my safety. These opinions merely highlighted the disconnection between the centre and the eastern periphery, and reaffirmed my decision to investigate the latter. These exchanges also highlighted the lack of knowledge, and the prevalence of stereotypical narratives on the eastern and lowland peripheries of Ethiopia.

Contrary to the concerns that were expressed in Addis, the research experience was highly positive in Harar, Jijiga, and

[211] The presence of political undercurrents that the outside researcher may not be aware of in the field research location is noted by Geoffrey R. Owen, "What! Me a Spy?: Intrigue and Reflexivity in Zanzibar," *Ethnography* 4, no.1 (March 2003): 122.

Togochale and in other areas that I visited in eastern Ethiopia. The single research obstacle that I encountered was a blatant denial of access to archival material in Harar. I was told of documents that had been relocated from Jijiga to Harar in the 1990s. Many (especially Ethiopian researchers) had expressed concern over their state – citing negligence. Some suggested that perhaps some sort of payment (bribe) was required from me by the gentleman in charge of these documents, especially since he never game a solid reason for denying me access, even after his superiors had granted me permission. Less of an obstacle, and more of a bother, was the need to constantly explain the exact geographic location and subject matter of my research. Some were suspicious and believed that investigating the 'Ogaden' is akin to 'playing with fire' – particularly for a female foreigner.[212] Others were also unnecessarily cagey on mention of the 'border' with Somalia, since this has always been a contested issue. In the main, however, the majority of people that I encountered and interacted with in this region opened their doors and their hearts to me in the most unexpected ways. Some became genuinely invested in the successful completion of this project and made endless entreaties to Allah on my behalf.

Because of the amiable nature of the research subjects and instances of shared values I was ensured boundless access to their lives and everyday experiences. Because of this, I gained first-hand observation and examination of their lives in Ethiopia's eastern periphery. Because of these close contacts, language barriers were somewhat overcome – my experiences with the people sometimes made up for what was said or not said in our interactions. However, some of the structured and informal interviews and life histories were conducted through translation from the Harari, Somali and Amharic

[212] Foreign researchers investigating what the government believes to be 'sensitive' issues have been banned by Federal and Somali regional state authorities since circa. 2007.

languages. A large number of interviews and conversations were also conducted in English.

The next section examines the research scope of the thesis.

1.6.5 Delineating the research scope

The research scope and some of the limitations of this thesis need to be outlined in order to establish the relevance of the main argument and its implications for related scholarly work. The main argument of the thesis maintains that the Harar and Jijiga peripheries of eastern Ethiopia have been partially integrated into the state because their relationship with the state is shaped by a history of negotiation, and that the ultimate outcome of this negotiation depends on the extent to which the multiple actors that are involved in shaping the state are willing to redefine meanings associated with territoriality and identification. This section aims to delineate the geographical, conceptual and methodological boundaries of the thesis.

Methodologically, the thesis faces some limitations in the extent to which the main source of evidence – the historical archive, reveals the negotiation that is claimed in the thesis argument. The British archival material that was consulted is available up to 1959 – the withdrawal of the British from the Horn of Africa. However, the material is crucial as it reveals how the relationship between the Harar and Jijiga areas of eastern Ethiopia and the centre was influenced by competing interests among the various British agencies during the period of the BMA. The Ethiopian archives on the other hand tend to reflect a more clear bias towards the centre. From 1959 onwards the thesis has attempted to fill the periodic gap with a limited repository of ethnographic data and rich secondary sources.

Overall, the thesis argument remains motivated by the archival material from the period of the BMA and is informed by a close reading of archival material from this period. The rest of the thesis is

dedicated to demonstrating the relevance and strength of the argument by using available evidence.

As already established and justified, the focus of the thesis is not on the exploits and political developments in the centre. Rather, the thesis examines the interplay between state projects of controlling territory and asserting authority and the experiences and responses of local actors in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries to these attempts. This is done as a rejection of the dominant centre-biased interpretations, including the literature that presents this relationship as mainly characterised by conflict and peripheral resistance to incorporation.

The thesis also does not endeavour to trace the political history of the entire eastern periphery of Ethiopia. The thesis does not attempt to speak on similar processes of negotiation in the areas south of Jijiga – the place I have called the Ogaden 'proper.' In this thesis, 'Ogaden' is not used as a synonym for the Somali-inhabited Ethiopian periphery.[213] Instead, the Ogaden refers solely to the geographic area south of Jijiga. As for the Ogadeen Somali clan, they constitute a majority in five of the nine administrative zones of the current Somali region – namely, Wardheer, Degehabur, Korahe, Godey, and Fiq. Therefore, Jijiga zone and town fall outside of the Ogaden 'proper' section of the region. Jijiga was selected because it was the first political centre that was established by imperial authorities in the newly captured Somali-inhabited territories in the late nineteenth century. Subsequently Jijiga became a major centre of imperial administration before the Italian occupation, and remained a centre during the BMA, and is currently the capital of the Somali National Regional State (SNRS). Jijiga is also a melting pot of various Somali clans, and thus represents a dynamic setting for observing processes of state and identity formation on the margins.

Harar was selected because it was also a centre of imperial authority in the eastern periphery. Harar was the capital of the large

[213] Although it was a district within the large province of Hararge which had Harar as its capital.

imperial province of Hararge, which included the current Somali region. The capture of Harar in 1887 enabled imperial expansion into the Somali plains east of the city. However, the development trajectories of Harar and Jijiga differ, yet remain interrelated. Harar was a fief of the imperial family from 1890-1974 – thus occupying an ambiguous position as a periphery vis-à-vis the central state. The thesis argues that the nature and extent to which the marginality of Harar and Jijiga was established and experienced is of interest since they took on the identity of centres in the periphery. In arguing that the marginality of Harar and Jijiga has been mitigated by their roles as centres in the periphery, the thesis challenges the idea of a homogenous eastern periphery, thus confirming the relativity of centres and peripheries in Ethiopian statehood.[214]

The selection of Harar and Jijiga also helps to establish a clear distinction of the geographical focus of the thesis in relation to the neighbouring Somali territory. Since the latter features prominently in the thesis, it is useful to establish 'which' Somalia the thesis refers to. The references to Somalia vary throughout the thesis. Initially, the adjacent Somali territory that the thesis refers to from 1942 was the British Somaliland Protectorate. In the present context, the Somali territory that is referred to in the thesis is the self-declared Somaliland Republic, and will be referred to as Somaliland. For the period from 1960-1991, the territory will be referred to as the Republic of Somalia or Somalia. This delineation establishes the historicity of this border area/periphery of eastern Ethiopia, and by implication, the historicity of the actual boundary in comparison to the sections south of Jijiga, which has the contested boundary with the former Italian Somali territory.

The thesis foregrounds state power and authority, and territoriality. These choices are inspired by evidence that suggests that the conception of statehood by successive Ethiopian state rulers has

[214] Donham, "Old Abyssinia,"37 and Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers.*

consistently centred on attempts to control territory and proclaim and establish the authority of the state. In Ethiopia, as elsewhere, the geographic organisation of space has political implications which manifest in the subsequent relationship between the state and its territories on the margins. In the present case, this relationship comes with additional and more complex regional implications.

1.7 Chapter outline

The thesis is divided into five chapters and the conclusion. The first three chapters, including the current chapter, foreground the main themes of the thesis. The background that is offered in these chapters highlights and examines the conditions that have shaped the emergence of a territorially defined conception of statehood in Ethiopia. These chapters trace the territorial expansions of the empire state in the nineteenth century. This background establishes the key distinguishing aspect of Ethiopian statehood from other African countries – its participation in the determination of its territorial boundaries and those of neighbouring countries.

Chapter two foregrounds the emergence of a territorially defined conception of statehood in Ethiopia, which is traced to the late nineteenth century. The chapter examines the ways in which the territorialisation of state power emerged during the territorial expansions and how it manifested itself in the ensuing relationship between the state and the conquered territories. Within this context, Ethiopia's controversial participation in the delimitation of its territorial boundaries with European colonial powers in the late nineteenth century is discussed. However, the chapter also demonstrates that the consolidation of Ethiopia's territorial gains was prolonged due to foreign interventions that posed a threat to the territorial consolidation of the imperial state. Thus, the chapter also examines the period of territorial repartition that threatened Ethiopian

territorial sovereignty following liberation from Italian occupation. The establishment of a British Military Administration is examined. The boundary between Ethiopia and the British Somaliland Protectorate is used as an example of the temporary territorial shifts that occurred during this period and their implications for the future administration of the eastern periphery by Ethiopia.

Chapter three examines some of the historical events that illustrate the various attempts to establish power and authority in the conquered eastern regions of imperial Ethiopia. The chapter goes back a few centuries to the period of territorial expansion in the nineteenth century and examines the eastward territorial expansions. This provides the context for a discussion of how Jijiga became a site of dual administration between the Ethiopian state and the British Military Administration from 1942. The chapter argues that the latter period saw the most determined attempts by the Ethiopian state to consolidate its territorial gains and assert its political dominance in the eastern periphery. Jijiga is used as a case to demonstrate the contestation between the two authorities and to highlight the varied trajectory of broadcasting power and authority in this periphery. The main argument of this chapter is that the convergence of two administrative traditions, one governed by established colonial administrative formulae and the other by principles of a modernising African empire created a complex peripheral regional identity. This inevitably affected the various populations of this periphery, particularly how the state perceived them and attempted to categorise them. However, the local populations were not passive actors. They were able to exploit the seemingly undesirable situation to their own ends, and in the process initiated a form of negotiation with the state.

Chapter four examines evidence that suggests the existence of an ongoing negotiation on issues of identification between the state and local actors in the Harar and Jijiga localities. The chapter examines identity formation by exploring the interplay between state

attempts to categorise the population and local ideas of self-identification. The chapter privileges 'ethnic' identity as the most useful category in examining both the state project of categorisation and local ideas of self-identification. The chapter argues that the various population groups in these areas have constructed their identities in encounters with others – the state and other authorities, and with each other. The chapter demonstrates that populations that are located on the margins of the state often vacillate between various approaches to identity formation – depending on the prevailing political milieu. Historically, at least from 1942, the context for identity formation was provided by the presence of the British Military Administration. This was most pronounced with the proliferation of people with dual and indeterminate official/legal identities due to the ambiguous nature of authority in the Ethiopian periphery and the permeability of the adjacent boundary with the British Somaliland Protectorate.

Chapter five investigates the negotiation of territorial control between local actors and the state in this section of the eastern periphery. The chapter examines how local populations have responded to state discourses and practices on the use of the territorial border. The investigation focuses on the border at Togochale – the main border crossing with the former British Somaliland Protectorate, and what is today Somaliland. The chapter argues that, multiple actors who live in this border area, up to and including Jijiga, have contributed to the transformation of the nature of Ethiopia's territorial sovereignty and authority at this border. The chapter arrives at this conclusion by examining the history of cross-border movement within key areas – cross-border trade, refugee movement and immigration. The chapter explores how these types of cross-border movement have shaped, and have been shaped, by local conceptions of the national territory and its limits.

Chapter six presents the conclusions of the thesis. The chapter restates the main themes of the thesis, the main argument and presents the implications of the key findings for related contemporary scholarly debates. The chapter assesses the implications of the research findings for current understandings of statehood in Ethiopia and their relevance for our understanding of the state-system in the Horn of Africa.

With regard to these findings, the conclusion also reflects on the possible nature of future research on this topic.

Chapter Two. Making and contesting territorial statehood in Ethiopia: imperial territorial expansions, foreign interventions and shifts in the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the thesis and its key investigative concerns. The chapter foregrounded territoriality as one of the key factors that has consistently underlined Ethiopian conceptions of statehood. The current chapter examines the ways in which territoriality emerged during the period of imperial territorial expansion in the late nineteenth century. This is done by investigating the historical contexts that necessitated territorial control – the presence of European powers in the region and the creation of national territorial boundaries. The chapter demonstrates that at the centre of processes of territorial expansion in imperial Ethiopia were foreign interventions that threatened the territorial gains of the expanding empire. This chapter introduces the establishment of the British Military Administration (BMA) in the region and the challenges this posed to Ethiopian territorial sovereignty beginning in 1942 – a period known as the repartition of the Horn.[1]

The discussion on the BMA highlights the role of the British in the emergence of ideas on territoriality and identification in eastern Ethiopia. This process was most notable with the creation of the special administrative areas – the Reserved Areas and the Haud. These areas were located adjacent to the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary. Both areas represented the threat posed by the BMA to the territorial sovereignty of the Ethiopian state; they also became the battleground for its preservation. The chapter demonstrates that the

[1] John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Paul Mall Press Ltd., 1964), 38.

complex political dynamics that emerged between the Ethiopian state and sections of the local populations in this area set the tone for the development of a complex relationship. These complexities engendered a multifaceted relationship between the central state and this periphery, and between local populations and the neighbouring Somali territory. However, rather than signifying conflict and resistance, these complex dynamics indicate contested and negotiated processes of incorporation into the Ethiopian state.

The argument of the thesis maintains that the Harar and Jijiga areas of the eastern periphery have been partially integrated into the state – that their relationship with the state denotes neither full integration nor outright marginalisation. This has led to local actors in the peripheries to occasionally identify with, and engage in political discourses across the border. The chapter argues that this pattern took shape during the crucial period of the BMA, because although the geographical limits of the Ethiopian state had already been established through boundary agreements prior to the Italian occupation, the reach of Ethiopian state power and authority was vaguely defined and articulated in the areas adjacent to the boundary. Thus, it was in the context of foreign intervention and temporary repartition that the Ethiopian state sought to extend its power and authority more decisively and on a more permanent basis in the eastern periphery.

The first section of the chapter provides an historical background to the determined effort by the Ethiopian state to resist territorial partition in the early 1940s during the BMA. This background includes major events that led to the expansion and definition of the territorial limits of the Ethiopian Empire in the nineteenth century.

These include one of the foundational[2] events in modern Ethiopian state making – the battle of Adwa in 1896, the boundary-making processes between Ethiopia and European colonial powers, and the Italian occupation in 1936. These events, as the chapter argues, shaped the manner in which the nascent Ethiopian state perceived its territorial limits and control thereof. Subsequently the chapter analyses the circumstances surrounding Ethiopian liberation from Italian occupation and the establishment of the BMA. This section focuses on the precise implications of the BMA for Ethiopian territorial sovereignty along the border with the British Somaliland Protectorate. The chapter concludes by highlighting the significance of these territorial changes, although temporary, in the ensuing relationship between Ethiopia's eastern periphery and the central state.

2.2 Historical background to the struggle for territorial control

In May 1936 Fascist Italy occupied Ethiopia, marking what has been suggested to be revenge for the humiliating Italian defeat at Adwa in 1896.[3] In the process of occupation, Italy tarnished Ethiopia's reputation as one of only two African countries not to experience

[2] The term 'foundation' is used with caution here. It has been noted that the modern Ethiopian state owes much of its shape to Emperor Yohannes IV (1872-1889) who was given the main responsibility for charting Ethiopia's foreign policies after Tewodros (1855-1868) – and for determining her attitude towards foreigners. This is noted by Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann Education Books Ltd.,1976), 275, in addition, Adwa presents its own set of problems in the reading of the country's past, leading to diverging views over the nature of the multi-ethnic state and the processes of territorial expansion – for the full debate on this see AlessandroTriulzi, "The Past as Contested Terrain – Commemorating New Sites of Memory in War-Torn Ethiopia," in *Violence, Political Culture and Development in Africa*, ed. Preben Kaarsholm (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 122. Therefore, it is difficult to point to a specific date as the beginning of the modern Ethiopian state; hence I prefer to see the 'foundation' as evolutionary through a series of events over a specific period, with Adwa as one of these key events.

[3] Richard Reid, *Frontiers of violence in North-East Africa*, *Genealogies of Conflict since C. 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 139 and Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, *1855-1974* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991) have alluded to this.

European colonisation. Whether revenge or pure territorial expansionist motives led to the Italian occupation is not particularly important – it was most likely both. Italy was in a desperate bid to acquire colonial possessions in its relatively late participation in the territorial scramble for Africa, while at the same time the spectre of the defeat at Adwa continued to plague Italian national consciousness.

This section presents a brief background of Italian-Ethiopian relations vis-à-vis Italy's ambitions on Ethiopian territory in the period preceding and following the official scramble for Africa. This establishes the context for better understanding the events leading up to 1936 and Ethiopia's subsequent conceptions of its territorial limits, and indeed, political independence.

2.2.1 Italian designs on Ethiopian territory: from Assab to Adwa

According to Ethiopian historian Bahru Zewde, the Italians' territorial ambitions on Ethiopia began around 1869 when they acquired the port of Assab on the Red Sea south of Massawa, with British assistance.[4] Indeed, the relatively late arrival of the Italians in north-east Africa was a hasty affair. Following diminishing Egyptian influence and withdrawal in the region[5]

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[4] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1974* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991), 56.

[5] The Ethio-Egyptian war of 1875-1876 is said to have been one of the most significant moments in the history of Ethiopian independence. Ethiopia defended her independence while Egypt lost hers. With Egypt still in possession of territory believed to belong to Ethiopia, the rise of the nationalist movement among Egyptian officers challenged the power struggle in Egypt so did the rise of the Mahdists in the Sudan. This led Egypt to consider territorial concessions to Abyssinia by 1882. For a detailed account of these events see Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann Education Books Ltd., 1976).

France and Britain made significant advances in delineating what would be their spheres of influence.[6] Italy's entry on the scene and the capture of Assab and eventually Massawa was a British stratagem to keep the French at bay.

One of the more radical interpretations of this period casts the Ethiopian Empire as a colonial power. Presented from the perspective of the independent 'nations' that were subsequently conquered and incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire, Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa argue that competing British and French interests in the region contributed to the 'invention' of the Ethiopian Empire in the late 1800s.[7] The authors suggest that the ability of the Italians to eventually gain a foothold in the region and Ethiopia's attainment of 'independence' were part of the European colonial contest.

Regardless of European motives, securing these vital ports on the Red Sea with their proximity to the Abyssinian[8] territory emboldened the Italians to advance into the interior. This was set in motion in 1876 by an expedition of the Italian Geographical Society that travelled to the Kingdom of Shoa. The extent to which the mission was purely scientific is uncertain. Paul Henze aptly notes that it was not always possible in nineteenth century Africa to separate exploration from colonial expansion.[9] This is supported by Abebe

[6] The Ethio-Egyptian war of 1875-1876 has been noted as one of the most significant moments in the history of Ethiopian independence. Ethiopia is said to have defended her independence while Egypt lost hers. With Egypt still in possession of territory believed to belong to Ethiopia, the rise of the nationalist movement among Egyptian officers challenged the power struggle in Egypt so did the rise of the Mahdists in the Sudan. This led Egypt to consider territorial concessions to Abyssinia by 1882. For a detailed account of these events see Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*.
[7] Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia – The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa* (Trenton NJ: The Red Sea Press, 1990), 2-8.
[8] Generally refers to the historic Ethiopian Empire before the determination of boundaries, it will be used here only in specific historical context.
[9] Paul Henze, *Layers of Time, A History of Ethiopia* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000), 160.

Hailemelekot who notes that the carving up of Africa by Europeans was often under the guise of religion, trade or cultural visits.[10]

Sven Rubenson has noted that the replacement of the 'Egyptians'[11] by the Italians meant another decade of struggle to preserve Abyssinia's integrity and independence.[12] Thus when the Italians entered the scene, the Ethiopians were already familiar with encroachments on their territory and had developed dexterity at keeping aggressors at bay. Nonetheless, regardless of the pretext, the Italians made their way to the interior, by-passing the territory of the incumbent emperor. At that time the seat of the Abyssinian Court was in Tigray, where Emperor Yohannes IV presided over the ruling house. Yohannes was occupied with events taking place closer to home – encroachments from the north-west in the midst of the rise of the Mahdist movement in the Sudan.[13] However, he was aware and wary of events taking place on the Red Sea coast in the east. This was a period of great anxiety for the emperor as he faced threats from different quarters. The Italians were also aware of the discord between Tigray and Shoa – hence they elected to make advances on the King of Shoa, Menelik II, instead of the incumbent emperor.

If the Ethiopians had not given much thought to the Italian capture of Assab, they were decidedly alarmed by the occupation of Massawa. With the imperial Court seemingly in disarray[14] and embroiled in an internal succession struggle between Shoa and Tigray, the Italians made their move. Zewde notes that Count Antonelli was decisive in shaping the future of Ethiopian-Italian relations.[15]

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[10] Abebe Hailemelekot, *The Victory of Adowa and what we owe to our heroes, The 1st Victory of Africa over Colonialists*, trans. Yohannes G. Selassie (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 1998), 22.
[11] It was essentially the British who yielded real power in Egyptian affairs at the time.
[12] Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*, 378.
[13] This is noted by Christopher Hollis, *Italy in Africa* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941), 47 and Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*, 385.
[14] Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*, 66-68 cautioned that the rivalry between Shoa and Tigre tended to be exaggerated to the detriment of the foreigners. As ultimately, in times that mattered the houses joined forces and fought against foreign intrusions.
[15] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 74.

Antonelli sought to transform Menelik into an active ally against Yohannes the reigning emperor.[16] Thus, the news of Emperor Yohannes' death in March 1889 placed Menelik of Shoa in pole position to become the next emperor, but this was not guaranteed. In a bid to secure his position, Menelik fell into the trap that had befallen many African traditional leaders – he placed his name on the dotted line of an 'agreement' with a European power. With this move, Menelik secured his political position and also procured a supply of arms. Fortunate for Menelik, his fate would be significantly different from those of other African leaders elsewhere on the continent.

In May 1889, Count Antonelli drafted a treaty and took it to Menelik's camp – at the time located at Wichale. The treaty was ostensibly for the purposes of amity and commerce. Menelik thus signed what became known as the Treaty of Wichale, the terms of which were highly controversial. According to Zewde, Article three of the Treaty granted the Italians considerable territory in the north.[17] However, the magnitude of Italian colonial ambition was expressed in the Italian version of the Treaty, in the so-called 'protector clause.' The Italian text compelled the emperor to use the Italians as an intermediary for Ethiopia's foreign relations, whereas the Amharic version contained no such obligation.[18] Following the signing of the Treaty, Rome proceeded almost immediately with territorial expansion, officially occupying Keren and Asmara by August 1889. Italy declared its colony of Eritrea on the Red Sea Coast in January of 1890 with the hesitant support of the major powers.[19] Italy thus incorporated all the territories it had occupied north of Ethiopia as well as on the coast north of Massawa down to the French controlled territory in the Gulf of Tajura.[20]

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[16] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 85.
[17] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 75.
[18] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 89.
[19] Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*, 389-391.
[20] Henze, *Layers of Time*, 155.

Sensing the danger of being or perceived to be an Italian protectorate, or worse, a colony, Menelik began to see the Treaty of Wichale for what it was – a threat to his territory and authority. By November of 1889 Menelik had officially been crowned Emperor of Ethiopia. Immediately after, Menelik reached out to European powers through several communiqués on matters relating to the territorial independence of his empire. However, despite the emperor's active participation in the murky dealings between Europe and Africa in the nineteenth century, responses from European powers were fundamentally distressing. They revealed that the emperor had the makings of a crisis on his hands.[21] Menelik soon discovered the discrepancy between the two versions of the Wichale Treaty. The deceit of the Italians and their true intentions were confirmed by their occupation of Adwa in January 1890.

Following the initial Italian designs on Ethiopian territory, there unfolded a series of events that expanded the territorial limits of the Ethiopian Empire and the political dominance of Shoa. Menelik ventured south of Shoa, conquering neighbouring peoples and incorporating them into the empire during the "southern marches of Imperial Ethiopia."[22] Also quite significantly, the kings of Tigre and Gojjam, two of the most important provinces of the empire, both renewed their loyalty to Menelik,[23] thus creating a unified and strong political centre.

However, this period is controversial for a number of reasons. The main controversy is the charge that Ethiopia became a "dependent colonial empire."[24] Holcomb and Ibssa argue that, during this historical moment, Ethiopia became a colonial empire that incorporated and subjugated various 'nations' into its fold. The authors

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[21] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 90.
[22] Donald Donham and Wendy James, eds. *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia, Essays in History and Social Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002).
[23] Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence,* 397-398.
[24] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 2.

suggest that the maintenance of this colonialism depended on the vagaries of the international world order – of which European colonialism was its best exemplar in the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, not only did the territorial expansions give shape to the geographical limits of the modern state in Ethiopia, they also laid the foundations for the enduring nature of political power and authority that ultimately defined Ethiopian statehood – particularly the relationship with the conquered territories.

During these momentous events Menelik unilaterally abrogated the Treaty of Wichale, to Italy's chagrin. Rubenson notes that the unilateral termination of the Treaty by Menelik was done less on his legal right to do so, but on his moral right.[25] According to Zewde, the abrogation of the Treaty by Menelik in 1893 ruined the last hope for the Italians to achieve their objectives without resorting to arms.[26] These events culminated in the battle of Adwa, a defining moment in the history of European colonial conquest on the African continent. The Ethiopian victory over the Italians was to stand out as a significant event in the African colonial narrative.[27] It can be argued that the victory stands out less for its occurrence,[28] and more for its implications.[29] The narrative has taken on various meanings over time, depending on the narrator. There are arguably two major approaches to Adwa. Rubenson notes that as opposed to an instance of Ethiopian victory, Italian and almost all European historiography has explained Adwa as an instance of Italian failure.[30] This is in sharp contrast to more recent African historiography that views Adwa as a decisive Ethiopian victory. Zewde for instance argues that, "The racial

[25] Ibid, 394.
[26] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 75.
[27] See Hailemelekot, *Victory of Adowa*.
[28] It was not the first of its kind, the Anglo-Zulu battle of Isandlwana had already taken place in 1879, but Adwa secured Ethiopian 'independence' on a more permanent basis.
[29] The Ethiopian victory at Adwa set into motion a series of events that led to the establishment of Ethiopian sovereignty – thus mitigating chances for official colonialism.
[30] Rubenson, *Ethiopian Independence*, 404.

dimension was what lent Adwa particular significance – it was a victory of blacks over whites."[31] This is what made Adwa a major source of inspiration in subsequent anti-colonial and nationalist discourses of independence across the continent[32] and beyond.

The events at Adwa brought significant changes to the political landscape in the Horn of Africa. These shifts were most notable among the other European powers that were present in the region – Britain and France. Following Adwa, the two colonial powers were decidedly anxious regarding their colonial interests in the Horn of Africa. Thus, legal international agreements carving up north-east Africa were entered into by Ethiopia, Britain, France and Italy – compelling Ethiopia to participate in the colonial partition of Africa. Saadia Touval rightly notes that the scramble for Africa coincided with the resurgence and extension of central authority in Ethiopia.[33] Therefore, processes of re-negotiating political power in the centre placed Ethiopia in a unique position. Indeed, following Adwa and because of the territorial conquests, the Ethiopian polity had reached a particular stage of state formation[34] that rendered boundary-making a necessary process.

Some, however, believe that it was a wholly internally-driven process that led to the Ethiopians' involvement in the scramble for Africa. For instance, Hollis argues that prior to 1935 the main expansionist power in this part of Africa was neither Italy nor Great Britain, but Abyssinia.[35] Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the

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[31] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 81.

[32] There are various instances of this, but perhaps the most fascinating is the establishment of the 'Ethiopian Church' in South Africa in the closing years of the 19th century, and also in parts of the United States. This is an apparent instance of African nationalism expressed through the medium of the church. This is explored by Moitsadi T. Moeti, "Ethiopianism: Separatist roots of African Nationalism in South Africa" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1981) consulted at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library, Addis Ababa University, November, 2011.

[33] Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism, International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 47.

[34] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 17-20 maintain however, that this stage of Ethiopian state formation was as much an internal Ethiopian endeavour as it was a European one.

[35] Christopher Hollis, *Italy in Africa* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941), 46.

empire under Menelik held grand territorial ambitions. The emperor is known to have occasionally referred to the far-reaching ancient limits of Ethiopian territory,[36] which included a substantial part of the entire east African sub-region. The conquering of neighbouring territories by Menelik is the clearest evidence of this expansionism. Yet, our analyses of this period must necessarily include the presence of European colonial powers in the region. As argued by Holcomb and Ibssa, Menelik's territorial expansions received substantial technical assistance from Europeans. By acknowledging this, we can thus avoid a situation where, as implied by Hollis earlier, Abyssinian/ Ethiopian territorial expansion and state formation is condemned and European colonialism is defended.

Before we get to the precise circumstances of carving up north-east Africa between Britain, France, Italy and Ethiopia, and to get a better understanding of how the eastern periphery became an Ethiopian territory, we must contextualise this experience. The next section explores the details of the unique circumstances in which the Ethiopian empire-state found itself in the late nineteenth century – a period that obliged Ethiopia to participate in the scramble for Africa or risk being carved-up by the European powers.

2.3 Becoming an empire state: the exceptional nature of Ethiopian state making in the nineteenth century

Holcomb and Ibssa argue that Ethiopian and European interests coincided in the latter part of the 1800s.[37] Menelik, the incumbent emperor after 1889, sought to solidify his political base through

[36] As a key negotiator in the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary negotiations in 1897, the British envoy Rennell Rodd noted that the emperor propounded an "extraordinary doctrine" stating that the Somalis were from time immemorial the cattle-keepers of the Ethiopians who could not themselves live in the inhospitable lowlands, in TNA, PRO Foreign Office (FO)/ 881/6943, September 1897 *Confidential Papers respecting Mr Rodd's Special Mission to King Menelek.*

[37] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 2-10.

territorial expansions, whereas Britain and France sought to preserve their détente in north-east Africa. The Europeans thus gave Menelik assistance to expand his territory, and in return he agreed to not encroach on their interests in the region. It can be argued that Ethiopia has paid a high price for its independence, a price that the country has possibly been paying since that victory at Adwa – the perennial tensions between the state and its peripheries and with neighbouring countries.

Indeed, the determination of territorial boundaries in the Horn during this period and Ethiopia's participation therein is a subject of great controversy, as indicated earlier. The outcome is a double-edged sword. On the one hand Ethiopia is derided as an African/Black nation that participated in the colonial partition of the continent; on the other hand, it is lauded as a beacon of African independence.

2.3.1 Attempts to consolidate the empire state

Following Adwa, Ethiopia was catapulted onto an international system of states that functioned according to specific requirements and rules. Weber and Biersteker note that territory, population and authority, in addition to recognition, are important aspects of state sovereignty.[38] However, they argue that each of these elements or a combination of them is socially constructed and has a specific historicity. Ethiopia qualified in at least two of these requirements, with authority and recognition still under construction. By 1896 Ethiopia was undergoing extensive territorial expansion under the leadership of Emperor Menelik II – incorporating into the empire peoples and territories to the south, east and west of the highland core. However, the acquired territory was not yet guaranteed and the boundaries of the expanding polity were not yet determined. The only certainty was who the

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[38] Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber "The social construction of state sovereignty" in *State sovereignty as social construct*, eds. Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13.

recently conquered populations were, and to whom they owed allegiance.

In the context of nineteenth century Ethiopia, population and territory were inextricably linked. This supports the idea that precolonial rulers in Africa struggled to extend their power, but that the desire to expand control over people was a constant.[39] The social stratification of Ethiopian society that emanated from the political centre has arguably been the main driving force for the nature of social organisation. The traditional and hierarchical nature of social organisation led to the emergence of a specific type of political culture, one that 'naturally' embraced centralised bureaucracy. Indeed, there is an even longer history of this type of socio-political organisation in Ethiopia. The political structures that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries predated the territorial expansions of that period.

There are several explanations for why this structure was pervasive in Ethiopia's political development, particularly in the conquered territories. Some of the more persuasive accounts take into consideration religion and the type of social and political ethos that was embedded in the centre. For instance, the economic basis of political power in Ethiopia has always been tribute and surplus labour.[40] The essays in the seminal work on imperial Ethiopia – *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, underlined that the imperial expansions to the south were facilitated and supported by the cultural, political and economic underpinnings of Abyssinian society.[41] In summing up this structure, Markakis notes that the core (Amhara-Tigre) society presented the classic trinity of noble, priest, and peasant.[42] This hierarchy, according to Markakis, was maintained

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[39] Jeffrey I. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa, Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 35.
[40] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 87.
[41] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 4,8,13.
[42] John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 73.

through a range of practices that included the division of labour, distinct social categories and a clear awareness of these distinctions. The emerging 'modern' institutions within this structure thus sought to entrench the economic and political ideology and objectives of the ruling classes.

Claims to authority are seldom ambiguous in a hierarchical social structure. However, Donham warns against perceiving Abyssinian society as rigid with fixed structures and hierarchies, instead, Donham notes the relativity of social structures in imperial Ethiopia. [43] Nonetheless, this was the prevailing structure, opportunities of upward social mobility notwithstanding. In the process of the southward and eastward expansions, the hierarchical structure of the north was transferred to the conquered territories. Markakis observes that the exercise of Ethiopian authority in the newly incorporated areas often proved true to traditional form, only in an exaggerated manner. [44] This manifested itself in the extensive appropriation of land through the key instrument of authority. However, as Markakis has noted, the pattern in the south was far from uniform. Some conquered lands were 'given' to victorious generals or other nobles of Menelik's entourage, whereas others were governed by local chiefs who had submitted peacefully.[45] However, authority was still under construction because it could not yet be guaranteed in the conquered territories. Furthermore, the differential application of the structures of authority negated the formation of a uniform pattern of authority in the peripheries.

The question to then ask is to what extent did these patterns replicate processes of territorial expansion and state formation seen elsewhere, in other words, where is the uniqueness in these processes? The nature and role of centralised authority in the process of state making exemplifies the exceptional nature of the Ethiopian polity in

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[43] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 6-7.
[44] Markakis, *Anatomy*, 104.
[45] Ibid, 106.

nineteenth century sub-Saharan Africa. Holcomb and Ibssa[46] have not given enough credit to the indigenous element in these processes. Instead, the authors highlight the exogenous dimension. Indeed, Europeans may have imposed their agenda, and indeed, fashioned Ethiopian statehood in a particular (Western) framework – yet, the ability of Ethiopian rulers to conquer and incorporate weaker nations, suggests that the uniqueness lay in the internal organisation of the political centre.

It is generally understood that the basic framework of the modern state emerged out of Europe in a context of the survival of the fittest between warring kingdoms. One of the defining features of this process was that war made states, and vice versa, in a process often mediated by taxation.[47] Powerful kingdoms fought and incorporated weak neighbours into their polities, thus expanding their territories and forging unified populations under the direction of a single authority. This condition culminated in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia that ended the state of war and in the process forged the key elements of modern statehood. Poggi, however, cautions that the extension of sovereign statehood beyond its original European heartland has been deeply contradictory.[48] Indeed, we can only draw limited parallels between the Ethiopian attainment of sovereign statehood in the nineteenth century and the processes that unfolded in Europe in an earlier period.

The comparable features are, nonetheless, significant since no other African polity went through similar processes. Weber and Biersteker note that claims to territory, authority and national identity are consonant with Eurocentric cultural ideals.[49] That similar claims existed in Ethiopia is noteworthy and calls for further examination of the formation of Ethiopian statehood and how it subsequently shaped

[46] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 2-10.
[47] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital AND European States, AD 990-1992* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1990), 67.
[48] Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State, A Sociological Introduction* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Publishers, 1978), 89.
[49] Biersteker and Weber, "Social construction," 14.

the perceptions of Ethiopian rulers in relation to the conquered territories. Of significance, for our purposes, is the nature of authority that was established by the emergent state in the conquered territories. In Ethiopia territoriality was pursued by an already existing 'state' that had found its jurisdiction coming up against the jurisdiction of others that controlled neighbouring territories.[50] This is a classic model of state formation and is the key feature that distinguishes Ethiopia from other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The next section demonstrates how territoriality emerged within the expanding Ethiopian empire state.

2.4 The making of the Ethiopia-Somalia boundary

The previous section provided an overview of the spatial and socio-political structure of the Ethiopian empire-state in the nineteenth century in order to have a better understanding of Ethiopia's participation in the determination of boundaries in the Horn of Africa. It is sometimes thought that boundaries demarcate the abrupt limits of political jurisdiction and the lines where separate political jurisdictions come into sharp contact.[51] However, this mostly applies to processes that unfolded in Asia and Europe, with very few African examples – with the exception of Ethiopia.

In conceptualising the idea of territorial boundaries, Malcom Anderson notes that the characteristics and functions of frontiers and borders are dependent on the internal organisation of societies.[52] In other words, territorial boundaries are inextricably linked to the way that political power is exercised and distributed in the centre or how the 'state' is positioned in relation to society – hence they are referred

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[50] Cristopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System, The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46.
[51] Ravi L. Kapil, "On the Conflict Potential of Inherited Boundaries in Africa" *World Politics*18, no.4 (July 1966): 657.
[52] Malcolm Anderson, *Frontiers, Territory and State Formation in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 3-4.

to as 'political boundaries.' Anderson also notes the various theoretical approaches adopted by historians and political scientists, but argues that irrespective of theory, these disciplines analyse boundaries in the same way – as other political institutions and processes.[53]

Following the victory at Adwa, Ethiopia closely resembled the classic definitions of the state, including what Max Weber termed a "political community."[54] In *Economy and Society* Weber defines a political community as constituting a territory, the availability of physical force for its domination and social action which is not restricted.[55] Indeed, the emergence of a distinct ruling class with clearly defined political and economic interests also resembled Marx and Engels' idea of the state.[56] However, Ethiopian correspondence to these classic definitions of statehood was transient and could not be sustained due to a number of external factors. Nonetheless, most pressing after Adwa for both Menelik and his European neighbours was the determination of their respective frontiers.[57]

The battle of Adwa was territorial in nature. The Wichale Treaty that was signed following an earlier territorial clash between Ethiopian and Italian forces in 1887 can be seen as the main catalyst to Adwa. The main source of contention was the highly controversial 'protector clause' of the Treaty, whose terms led to immediate disagreements between the signatories. Gebru Tareke notes that in the Treaty Menelik conceded to Italian occupation the northern part of Tigray province, but Italy wanted to annex the rest of the country.[58] In

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Max Weber, *Economy and Society, An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* vols. 2 and 3, trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 902.
[55] Weber, *Economy and Society*, 902.
[56] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 19.
[57] Menelik and his most trusted General *Ras* Makonnen engaged in protracted negotiations for the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary in 1897, with drafts and re-drafts of the articles of the final Treaty, in FO 881/ 6943, September 1897, *Confidential Papers respecting Mr Rodd's Special Mission to King Menelek*.
[58] Gebru Tareke, *Ethiopia: Power and Protest, Peasant revolts in the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 41.

Anglo-Italian Treaties between 1891 and 1894, the entire Abyssinian territory was recognised as under Italian influence, as per the Wichale Treaty.[59]

The significance of the outcome of Adwa to what became Ethiopia's international status is without doubt. As noted by Tareke and Marcus,[60] the victory led to the recognition of Ethiopia's sovereign independence. It was within this context that the empire state began to officially determine its frontiers since it was in a position to sign international treaties with other sovereign states. However, Zewde cautions that Ethiopia's post-Adwa independence was not as absolute as it is often believed, because it was politically circumscribed by the influence Europeans wielded in the affairs of the country.[61] This is not surprising, especially considering the questionable role of European powers in Ethiopia's ascension to international status.[62] This ambiguity corresponds to the point made by Poggi[63] on the contradictions that characterise the application of sovereignty outside its original European context.

The limits of Ethiopian independence notwithstanding, Ethiopia entered into international agreements with European powers – delimiting their respective spheres of influence in the Horn of Africa. Although this suited Menelik's territorial ambitions, it also challenged them. According to Touval, in 1891 the emperor had informed European powers that his territory extended to Khartoum in the north, Lake Victoria in the west, and to the Indian Ocean in the east and southeast.[64] Despite these far-fetched claims, the emperor was cognizant of the sovereign status of his polity following Adwa.

The immediate consequences of Adwa were felt as soon as the victory was declared. These were in the form of a beeline for

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[59] Author unknown, *Abyssinia and Italy* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1935), 7.
[60] Tareke, *Power and Protest*; Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*.
[61] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 85.
[62] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 136-144.
[63] Poggi, *Modern State*, 89.
[64] Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 141.

Menelik's court in Addis Ababa by representatives of various colonial powers. They rushed to express their recognition of Ethiopian sovereignty. First to arrive was an Italian contingent that signed the Treaty of Addis Ababa in October 1896, recognising "absolutely and without reserve the independence of the Ethiopian Empire."[65] The French followed suit, and with the ink barely dry on the treaties with France, Rennell Rodd, a senior British official arrived. The British envoy noted that the French had bowed to Ethiopian pressure when deciding on their mutual boundary, something that the British were not prepared to do – particularly with respect to the various Somali people they (the British) had made agreements with.[66]

The boundary between Ethiopia and the various Somali territories was formally decided on by Ethiopia and the three colonial powers administering French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and the British Somaliland Protectorate between March and May of 1897.[67] The boundary with French Somaliland did not give rise to any major disagreements. The Treaty between Ethiopia and Britain is the most important for the present discussion, and the thesis as a whole. This is because Britain retrospectively deemed this Treaty unfair to its Protectorate subjects – causing problems with Ethiopia. In the International Boundary Study (IBS), a database containing the histories of African boundary Treaties and Agreements, it is stated that the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897 modified the limits of British Somaliland[68] by excluding most of the Haud grazing pasture.[69] A large part of the latter fell into Ethiopian jurisdiction.[70] The annexes of the 1897 Treaty contain special arrangements that afforded the right

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[65] Henze, *Layers of Time*, 72.
[66] TNA, PRO, FO 881/ 6943.
[67] The International Boundary Study (IBS), "Ethiopia-Somalia Boundary", No. 153, 1978. http://www.law.fsu.edu/library/collection/LimitsinSeas/numericalibs-template.html. (accessed April 25, 2012).
[68] Ibid.
[69] Haud means "the south" in the Somali language, and refers to the grazing land immediately south of northern Somalia, most of which falls within Ethiopia.
[70] See Figure 1

of movement of adjacent peoples across the boundary for grazing and other purposes.[71]

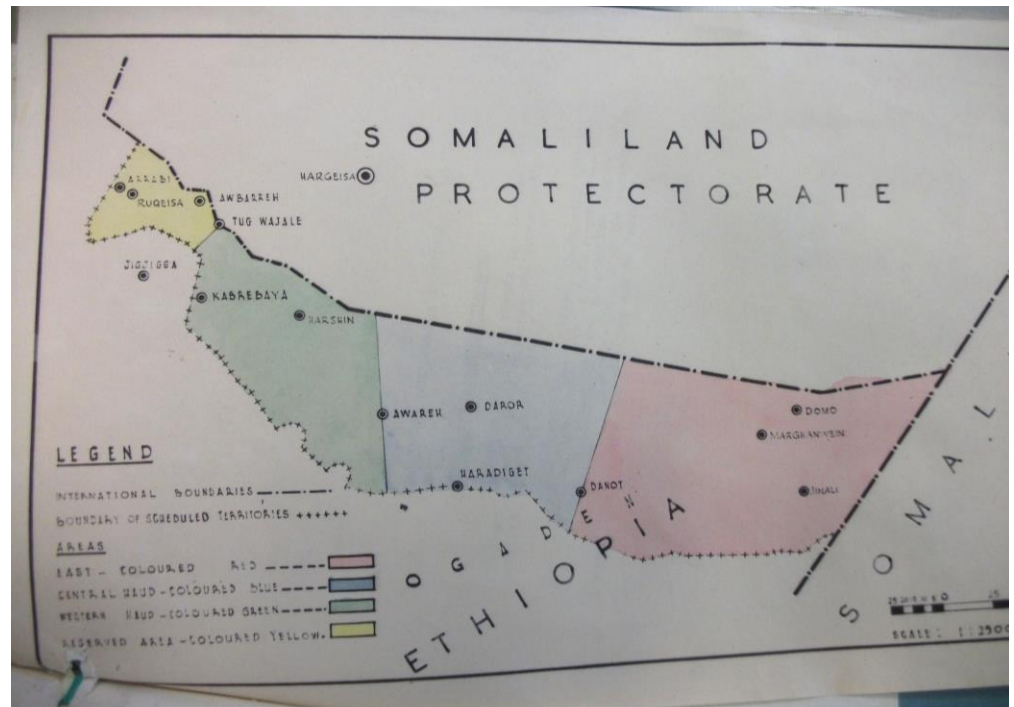

Figure 1: Map of the British Somaliland Protectorate – Ethiopia boundary showing the Protectorate, the Haud (the shaded areas) and the Ethiopian territory adjacent to the boundary
Source: The National Archives, Public Records Office, Colonial Office 1015/139

The Anglo-Ethiopian boundary Agreement was never contested. Yet, it was only demarcated between 1933 and 1935, thirty years after it was delimited.[72] The decision to delay demarcation was part of a strategy by the British Colonial Office to buy time for the eventuality of the recovery of 'lost Somali lands.'[73] However, as time passed and the authority of the Ethiopian Empire expanded in the territory adjacent to the boundary, it became necessary to demarcate the

[71] FO 881/6943, *1897 Treaty*.
[72] FO 1015/ 57, *Ethiopian Agreement, Retention of Reserved Area*, 1957.
[73] Cedric Barnes, "The Ethiopia-British Somaliland Boundary," in *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 123-124.

boundary, to the frustration of the Somaliland Protectorate government.[74] Subsequent chapters of the thesis demonstrate that Ethiopian administrative presence was felt much earlier in the Ethiopian territories adjacent to this boundary. This explains the increasing demands of the Ethiopians for demarcation. Thus, central state attempts to integrate this periphery were evident much earlier than in the regions to the south – adjacent to the Italian Somaliland colony. This is why the thesis maintains that there is much variation in the relationship between the central state and the eastern periphery, and that this difference is occasioned by the history of the adjacent boundary and the nature of Ethiopian authority in the said territory.

The Italian Somaliland boundary with Ethiopia is important for comparative purposes – to highlight its different historical trajectory in comparison to the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary, and to contextualise the mounting tensions between Italy and Ethiopia leading up to 1936. In the IBS database it is noted that in September 1897 the Italian Government sent a telegram accepting the proposed boundary line – however, official texts of the delimitation were never exchanged and copies of the map cannot be found to this day. In the database it is further noted that, it was clear that different terms of reference had been used by Ethiopia and Italy to determine their mutual boundary and that a large triangular area broadening north-eastward was of questionable sovereignty. In May 1908, a Convention between Ethiopia and Italy created a new Ethiopia-Italian Somaliland boundary between Dolo and Wabi-Shebelli. However, this Convention did not clarify the situation relative to the divergence of the northern sector of the boundary in the Ethiopian and Italian interpretations of the 1897 boundary.[75]

[74] Ibid.
[75] IBS, Ethiopia-Somalia Boundary.

2.4.1 Problems with the Ethiopia-Italian Somaliland boundary

It appears that Ethiopia and Italy have a history of misinterpreting their mutual agreements. Mesfin Wolde-Mariam suggests that the Italians may have conveniently lost the cartographic map of the 1897 boundary.[76] On the other hand, Zewde believes that other powers – France and Britain – were devious in their implicit support of Italian mischief. He notes that the Tripartite Agreement of 1906 defined in precise fashion British and French interests, whereas Italy's interests were defined in vague terms – as including the hinterland of its colonies, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland – in effect the whole of northern and eastern Ethiopia.[77] The Agreement also contained what Zewde calls an ominous phrase –a 'territorial connection' between Italy's two colonies – implying the whole of central Ethiopia.

Tension mounted between Ethiopia and Italy following the failure to agree on the initial boundary line. Menelik made a request to the Italians to reopen negotiations for the 1897 boundary.[78] The result of the renegotiations was an agreement that, according to Wolde-Mariam, was a "master piece of ambiguity."[79] Wolde-Mariam argues that the Agreement of 1908 failed to eliminate the ambiguous line that separated Italian-Somaliland and Ethiopia because it was not specific enough on the route to be taken when delimiting the boundary. The Agreement also did not contain a map.

Despite the uncertainties and tensions highlighted above, the period from 1896-1934 has been described as one of *rapprochement* between Ethiopia and Italy.[80] Rowan-Robinson notes that this was exemplified by the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in

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[76] Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, "The Background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 2, no.2 (July 1964): 201-202.
[77] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 151.
[78] Wolde-Mariam, "Background," 202.
[79] Ibid.
[80] This is noted by Henry Rowan-Robinson, *England, Italy, Abyssinia* (London: William Clowes and Sons Limited, 1935) and by Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*.

August 1928, which was reaffirmed in Rome as late as September 1934.[81] The Treaty, however, was meant to last twenty years, but did not survive even ten.

In most accounts the decisive end to the *rapprochement* was November 1934. This was when an Anglo-Ethiopian boundary commission arrived at Walwal[82] in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and found an Italian detachment. The Italians were so close to the boundary with Ethiopia that the Ethiopians requested an explanation. A standoff ensued between Italian and Ethiopian troops and after two weeks a clash erupted, leading the Italians to push the boundary further into Ethiopian territory. Marcus notes that the Italian commander had refused to deal with Ethiopians as equals in order to establish the nature of their presence there. Later on the afternoon of December 4 two Italian planes buzzed the Ethiopian mission's camp, leading to a full Italian attack on Ethiopia on December 5, 1934.[83] In effect, the Italians were able to do this because there was very limited Ethiopian state presence in that region at the time.

There is a clear link between the seemingly benign Walwal incident and the problematic nature of the Ethiopia-Italian Somaliland boundary. There is little doubt that these hostilities were also coupled with sentiments relating to Adwa. Mussolini is said to have wanted a quick and easy war to bolster Italian pride and to demonstrate that fascism had made the country one to be reckoned with on the international stage.[84] While the fascists cultivated support at home, on the ground they pushed the boundary further into the Ethiopian Ogaden region – making their intentions clear to the Ethiopians. Subsequently, Emperor Haile Selassie made desperate attempts to seek arbitration at the highest level – the League of Nations, with all efforts proving futile. This was a fragile moment in internal European

[81] Rowan-Robinson, *England, Italy, Abyssinia*, 76-77.
[82] This small settlement was the actual point of contention between Italy and Ethiopia on this boundary.
[83] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 139.
[84] Henze, *Layers of Time*, 215.

politics, to the detriment of Ethiopia. Zewde notes that "it became increasingly clear that in an effort to woo Mussolini away from Hitler, both Britain and France were ready to sacrifice Ethiopia."[85] This served Mussolini well as on October 3 1935 the Italians advanced from Eritrea and crossed the Mareb River boundary to invade Ethiopia.

The next section examines how the Ethiopian Empire partially fell, and more importantly the circumstances surrounding its liberation by Britain. The empire state found itself faced with a different domestic and international situation at the time of liberation in 1941. The brief moment of occupation was a momentous period in Ethiopia's political history. However, rather than threaten the territorial limits of the state, the occupation only served to confirm them. The actual territorial threat came later and was paradoxically posed by the 'liberating' forces.

2.5 The partial fall and rise of the empire state

2.5.1 The Italian Occupation

In 1936 the Ethiopian state found itself defending its independence from the same aggressor it had defeated nearly four decades earlier. The Italian occupation of Ethiopia provided the clearest evidence of the contradictions and hypocrisy that characterised sovereign recognition outside the European context.

Nonetheless, the Ethiopians resisted a determined Italian onslaught for approximately eight months. The Italians brought in battalions via Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, thus launching the attack from the north and south-east. This gave the emperor time to decide on a defensive strategy, however, reports coming from the north of the country were not promising. The most decisive battle in the north was fought in March 1936 near Maichew in southern Tigray, on the border

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[85] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 153.

with Shoa, thus dangerously close to the capital.[86] Imperial units led by some of the most prominent *Rases*[87] put up a brave fight, but the military capacity of the Italians overwhelmed the Ethiopians.

The options available to Emperor Selassie during the war distinguished him as a 'modern' emperor. Zewde notes that due to Ethiopia's relative integration into the international system, and because of Selassie's illusion of collective security and instincts of self-preservation, the modern emperor was able to take the option of exile.[88] Zewde's assertion is a veiled critique of Selassie's instinct for self-preservation in his pursuit of absolute power. Indeed, Emperor Selassie's flight – avoiding the possibility of facing death in battle, as some of his predecessors had done, was a first.

On 3 May 1936 the emperor and imperial family boarded a ship from Djibouti bound for England, and the following day Marshal Pietro Badoglio's forces entered the capital, Addis Ababa.[89] Regardless of Haile Selassie's motivations for going into exile, his time in exile led to a determined diplomatic and military struggle for Ethiopia's liberation. This was carried out on two fronts. The intricate diplomatic manoeuvring was carried out by Haile Selassie himself on the international stage. His appearance at the League of Nations in 1936 is arguably the single event that promoted him to the international community.[90] Although employing a skill that was forged by his predecessors, most notably Yohannes IV and Menelik II, the emperor's efforts on the international stage were largely futile.

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[86] Henze, *Layers of Time*, 218.
[87] Ras is an imperial military designation meaning 'head', the highest traditional title next to Negus-king.
[88] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 160.
[89] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 146.
[90] Selassie was seen as a courageous, if not helpless, African leader faced with a brutal Italian occupation, this is alluded to by Robert L. Hess, *Ethiopia, The Modernization of Autocracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), xix and Bahru Zewde, "Hayla- Sellase: From Progressive to Reactionary," *Ethiopia in Change, Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, eds. Abebe Zegaye and Siegfried Pausewang (London: British Academy Press, 1994), 31.

The second front of the liberation struggle was on home soil. As noted by Zewde and others,[91] the Italian occupation was denied legitimacy in part due to the efforts of the Patriots who put up a brave fight. The more the Italians unleashed violence on the population, the more the patriotic resistance gathered strength. Support for the Patriots was widespread, but the Patriots were not coordinated.[92] The efforts of the Patriots were concentrated in the highlands where the Italians could not deeply penetrate and easily manoeuvre. This gave them a tactical advantage and added an element of legitimacy to the Ethiopian resistance.

In addition to the sentiments generated by the Ethiopian victory at Adwa, the combination of the Italian invasion, the resistance of the Patriots and the emperor's appeals to the international community, reverberated across Africa. Mazrui has noted that the invasion and the patriotic resistance gave impetus to the adoption of militant and radical forms of Black Nationalist resistance to white colonialism.[93] Indeed, Britain's initial support of the Italian occupation led many across the continent to lose faith in "British fair play."[94] This sentiment grew more salient in the post-occupation period when Britain attempted to dismember the Ethiopian territory.

Haile Selassie's efforts to persuade the international community to intervene against the Italian invasion earned him many sympathisers in Europe, but support was not forthcoming. On the other hand, Mussolini was preparing to establish his *Africa Orientale Italiana* as he merged Eritrea and Italian Somaliland with Ethiopia.[95] This was a notable moment in the history of Ethiopia's territorial

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[91] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia.*
[92] Dawn M. Miller, "'Raising the Tribes': British Policy in Italian East Africa, 1938-41", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no.1 (1999) suggests that the Patriots were eventually given support by the British in an attempt to secure a quick victory. This can be read in other ways, for instance, as an effort to diminish Ethiopian agency in the liberation of their own country or confirming Ethiopia's dependence on European colonial powers.
[93] Ali Mazrui, "Introduction" in *Nationalism and New States in Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1984), 1.
[94] Ibid, 8.
[95] Henze, *Layers of Time*, 223.

boundaries. Eritrea was enlarged to include the Ethiopian province of Tigray, whereas Italian Somaliland absorbed the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.[96] The consequences would be dire for Ethiopia's future relations with both its northern and eastern peripheries – not least because while the Italians granted these areas some autonomy, they also improved infrastructure for the local populations –a first for many in these areas. These developments highlighted and heightened the magnitude of the loss of Ethiopia's territorial control and nascent authority in these areas.

However, Mussolini's African empire lasted a mere five years. By entering World War II on the side of Germany in June 1940, Mussolini effectively annulled the Tripartite Agreement of 1906 with Britain and France on the Horn of Africa. Some have noted that war actually came to Africa four years before it came to Europe,[97] when Italy invaded Ethiopia.

Mussolini's declaration of war on the Allies brought spectacular changes, not least for Haile Selassie and his empire. Marcus notes that London recognised the emperor as a full ally two days after Mussolini's declaration of war, and two weeks later he was flown to Khartoum.[98] The mission was clear – to rout the Italians in Ethiopia and to restore the emperor to the throne. The British launched their attacks from Sudan and Kenya. High ranking British officers accompanied Selassie back into Ethiopian territory and entered the north-western province of Gojjam in January of 1941.[99] The assembled British force was named 'Gideon Force' and relied to a large extent on the Patriots. The latter allowed Gideon Force to move and operate freely from Italian forts, and they greatly assisted the planning of operations due to their knowledge of local conditions.[100] The Italians made valiant attempts to repel the onslaught – but they

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[96] Reid, *Frontiers of Violence*, 143.
[97] Mazrui and Tidy, *Nationalism*, xi and Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, 77.
[98] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 150.
[99] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 176.
[100] Miller, "'Raising the Tribes,'" 115-116.

were “worn down by five years of guerrilla warfare and faced a vastly superior force.”[101]

When assessing the circumstances of Selassie’s return to Ethiopia it is difficult not to consider the arguments posed by Holcomb and Ibssa. The authors argue that the War only served to demonstrate how Ethiopia was merely a pawn in the agendas of European powers.[102] Even Haile Selassie was mindful of this as illustrated in his difficult encounters and struggles with the BMA. At the time of his restoration Selassie was beholden to the auspices of the West, and Britain in particular. This was going to be challenging especially since the emperor was making preparations to consolidate his precarious power and authority following his time in exile.

When Emperor Selassie entered Addis Ababa in May 1941 he was doing so under very different circumstances. The world was at war and his own country was regarded as an Occupied Enemy Territory with plans by Allied forces to set up a foreign military administration. Prior to Italian occupation, the territorial limits of the polity were, to a large extent, well-defined and had led to the international recognition of Ethiopian sovereignty. However, Ethiopia was subjected to partial membership of the international system of states mainly because of its African identity. This was compounded by Ethiopia’s ambiguous and dependent relationship with Britain and France.

2.6 Restoring the empire state and threatening its territorial sovereignty: the British Military Administration

The emperor’s return in 1941 was due to Britain’s spectacular change of attitude regarding its position on Ethiopian independence. As

[101] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 150.
[102] Holcomb and Ibssa, *Invention of Ethiopia*, 194-200.

mentioned in the previous section, the British government initially recognised the Italian conquest and annexation of Ethiopia to the Italian Crown in 1938.[103] The emperor subsequently struggled to find allies in the pursuit of the liberation of his country. However, as noted by Marcus, the turning point came only a year later with the outbreak of the Second World War, which changed the geopolitical situation in Haile Selassie's and Ethiopia's favour.[104]

With great military precision and in a relatively short period of time, by 1942 the largely British Commonwealth force had defeated the Italians in Italian Somaliland, British Somaliland, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The outcome was the establishment of a British Military Administration in Ethiopia.[105] The most salient outcome of this arrangement was that as leader of the Allied forces campaign in East Africa, Britain administered the greater east African region, which includes the Horn. Consequently, this period led to (temporary) territorial shifts with lasting geopolitical implications for Ethiopia and the wider region.

Richard Reid notes that at the time of liberation the internal situation in Ethiopia was far from stable and was dangerously volatile.[106] The volatility was due to a number of factors, including the amount of weapons in circulation, uncertainty about the loyalty of key regional nobles to the emperor, and doubts concerning the sovereign status of the country. Perhaps the overriding source of instability and anxiety for the Ethiopians was the establishment of the British Military Administration in large, and arguably strategic, parts of the country.

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[103] James Rennell Rodd, *British Military Administration of Occupied Territories in Africa during the years 1941-1947* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1948).
[104] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 151.
[105] Rodd, *British Military Administration.*
[106] Reid, *Frontiers of Violence*, 146.

2.6.1 British Military Administration in Ethiopia

The military arrangement that ultimately threatened Ethiopian territorial sovereignty began as an Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA), and later in 1942 became a full British Military Administration (BMA). However, the decision to declare Ethiopia an OETA was somewhat peculiar. Reid notes that Eritrea could be treated straightforwardly as an OETA since it had been a full Eritrean colony before the war, but doing the same for Ethiopia seemed rather odd.[107] It appears then that, indeed, in Ethiopia one European occupation had in effect been replaced by another.[108]

From the outset, this arrangement was characterised by controversy. Head of the OETA Sir Phillip Mitchell sought to integrate Ethiopia into British East Africa, a notion that was not in the least entertained by London.[109] Haile Selassie on the other hand sensed the precarious nature of the OETA and became desperate for assurances on the sovereignty of the empire. The situation was far from ideal as far as the Ethiopians were concerned. They knew that they could not be guaranteed the support, let alone the trust, of the Allies when taking recent history into consideration. Indeed, if there were doubts regarding overall British interests in Ethiopia, these were confirmed when the BMA came into effect.

Zewde notes that under the convenient cover of the continuation of the War, Britain came to assume extensive control over Ethiopia's finances, administration and territorial integrity.[110] This supports the notion of replacing one occupation with another. Addis Hiwet similarly argues that Britain and Ethiopia developed a master-client relationship during this period.[111] British forces

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[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid, 146-147.
[109] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 151.
[110] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 179.
[111] Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia, from autocracy to revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy, 1975), 87.

requested full cooperation from the emperor upon the establishment of the BMA – not long after he was restored to the throne the emperor was summoned to London. According to an October 1941 Colonial Office (CO) memorandum, the main reason for the trip was to discuss the need to make certain areas cantonments and Reserved Areas in eastern Ethiopia.[112] The first Agreement and Military Convention between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia was signed in Addis Ababa on 31 January 1942 by Haile Selassie and Phillip Mitchell the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), East Africa.[113] The second Agreement was signed in 1944 and superseded the previous one. The Agreements stipulated the terms of reference for the Convention and set out clearly how the administration would be organised.

The 1944 Agreement was signed in Addis Ababa by *Bitwaddad*[114] Makonnen Endalkachaw, the Prime Minister and Lord De La Warr. There were notable differences between the 1942 and 1944 Agreements. One of the additions to the latter was the establishment of a "British Military Mission to Ethiopia" (BMME).[115] The purpose of the BMME was to equip the Ethiopian army with modern facilities and training methods. The Mission was placed under the direct authority of the Ethiopian Government Minister of War. According to Zewde, the 1944 Agreement was a much more sympathetic document to Ethiopian sovereignty – the 1944 Agreement "gave the Ethiopian state a relatively greater margin of independence, but the British nonetheless still retained substantial control over the country's destiny."[116] Indeed, the language of the 1942 Agreement was rather vague.

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[112] The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Public Records Office (PRO), Colonial Office (CO) 535/138/13 *Agreement and Military Convention between the United Kingdom and Ethiopia.*
[113] CO 535/138/13.
[114] This is an imperial designation meaning 'most favoured courtier, imperial counsellor'- often officiating in the name of the king
[115] CO 535/138/13, *Agreement*
[116] Zewde, *History of Modern Ethiopia*, 68.

In Article six of the 1942 Agreement it is noted that "The Government of the United Kingdom shall have the right to keep such military forces in Ethiopia as they see necessary."[117] Article seven stated that "Without prejudice to the fact that British cantonments are upon Ethiopian territory, the said cantonments shall be inviolable and shall be subject to the exclusive control and authority of the appropriate British Authority." [118] The Agreement continued elsewhere, stipulating what is to be expected from the emperor – unconditional cooperation. The 1944 Agreement was more detailed and can be rightly seen as less threatening to Ethiopian sovereignty, with the power of British forces somewhat restricted. The 1944 Agreement also contained more clearly defined timelines and guidelines for British withdrawal. However, both agreements placed considerable infringements on Ethiopian authority in the eastern periphery, particularly in the Somali-inhabited lowland areas.

2.6.2 The Reserved and Haud areas

The compromised territorial integrity of the Ethiopian state and the associated territorial shifts were most apparent in the Schedule of the military cantonments and Reserved Areas (RAs).[119] The Schedule included all territory along Ethiopia's eastern border regions. In addition to these, it included "All land within Ethiopia occupied by the Franco-Ethiopian railway and its appurtenances."[120] The railway line traversed much of central Ethiopia, covering the area from Addis Ababa to Dire Dawa, in the direction of the Ethiopia-French Somaliland boundary. The military cantonments were some of the well-developed key regional centres in the eastern region – namely, Harar, Dire Dawa and Jijiga.

[117] CO 535/138/13, *Agreement*
[118] Ibid.
[119] See Figure 2
[120] CO 535/138/13, *Agreement*

The Reserved Areas were sections of Ethiopian territory along the borders with British and French Somaliland. Their importance in the present investigation is much clearer when we consider their location adjacent to the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary. For all practical purposes, the BMA sought to integrate these territories into the British Somaliland Protectorate, with boundary rectification as the primary aim of British authorities. Long-range British interests in the region were made apparent in an undated correspondence in response to a January 1942 memorandum entitled "Policy for Ethiopia." In this correspondence it is noted that "it seems to me therefore, that it is quite possible that there may be other reasons than military security behind our present policy in the Reserved Areas."[121]

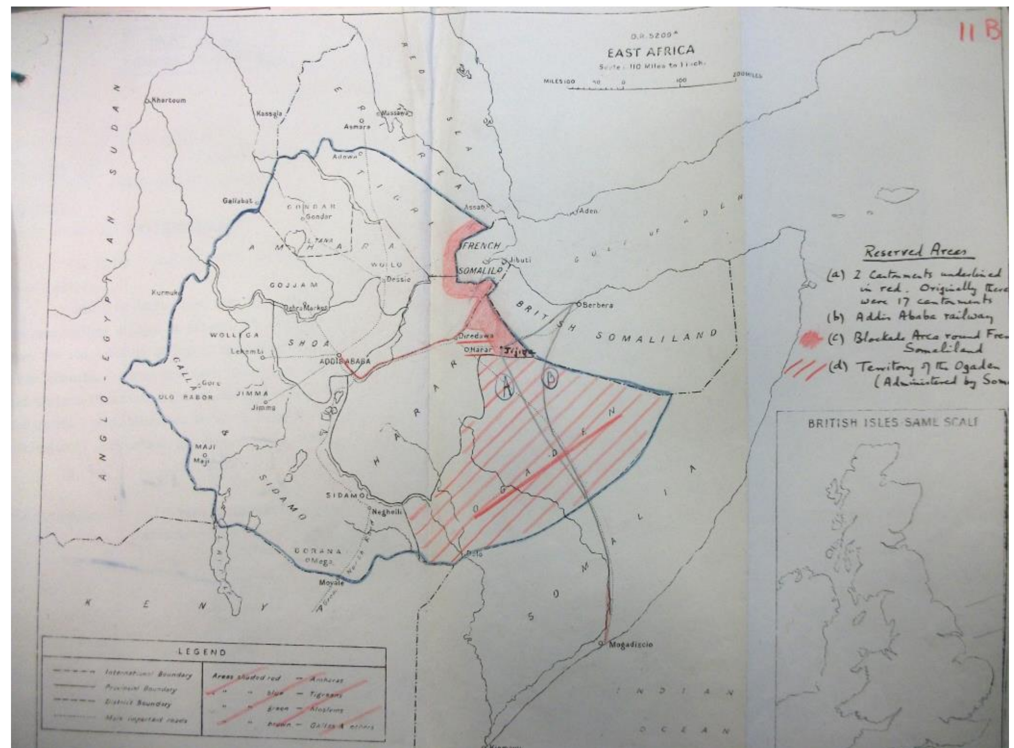

Figure 2: BMA map of the Reserved Areas of Ethiopia (shaded) and the Ogaden (lines).

Source: The National Archives, Public Records Office, Foreign Office 1015/57

[121] CO 535/138/13, undated correspondence between Walter Moyne (CO) and Anthony Eden (FO).

As early as 1943, not long after signing the first Agreement, controversy emerged when emperor Selassie requested the immediate withdrawal of the British from the RAs. As stated in Article three of the 1942 Agreement, the areas specified in the Schedule were to remain under the BMA and only the GOC-in-C in consultation with the emperor could decide otherwise.[122] In a 17 January 1943 telegram from the GOC-in-C to the War Office (WO), the GOC – Platt, noted that he wished to de-reserve the Dire Dawa-Harar-Jijiga area.[123] He was of the opinion that there were no military reasons for the continued reservation of this area.

2.6.3 Competing British agendas

A close reading of colonial archival documents reveals that the GOC-in-C was in constant tension with the Colonial Office with regards to the continued reserved status of the Reserved Areas. This is evident in an internal CO correspondence:

> No suspicion in our minds that the G.O.C. in C. is not complying with the policy which has been laid down that the Somali grazing areas be retained under British Military administration. Appears that he (Platt) is not acquainted with general reasons of a non-military nature which are behind the policy of retaining these grazing areas- it seems that neither the military authorities nor the Minister (Mr. Howe) in Addis are fully aware of the importance we attach to the retention of the areas in connection with the question of ultimate boundary rectification.[124]

This demonstrates that it was not in the interests of the CO to allow immediate Ethiopian control of the strategic RAs since this would have thwarted their ambition of integrating these, together with the Haud grazing areas, into the British Protectorate. The CO thus

[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

intervened and suggested that the emperor should be told of military exigencies that did not permit the de-reservation of the said areas. CO correspondence further stated that "…in the interests of the future administration of the British Somaliland Protectorate, it is a cardinal feature of Colonial Office policy that we should aim at fully securing the grazing rights of the tribes subject to our suzerainty."[125]

The GOC-in-C persisted and pleaded that some of the RAs should be de-reserved by the WO. At this point it is clear that the BMA ceased to be a purely military arrangement but became very much political. This was evident in the heavy involvement of the CO in the affairs of the BMA. The sections of the RAs that the GOC-in-C was most adamant did not need to be under reservation include the Jijiga area north of the Ogaden. A February 1943 correspondence to the WO states that "retention of Reserved Areas of northern part: neither necessary nor desirable,"[126] however, "the proposed boundary which follows reserved areas boundary included Jiggiga which was not included in Somaliland grazing area, retention of Jiggiga essential (rpt.essential)."[127]

An August 1943 secret note of a conversation between Platt the GOC-in-C, Mirehouse (WO) and Seel (CO) makes clear the meaning of the previous statement. The officials effectively conflated the two issues of securing grazing land for the Somaliland Protectorate population with that of administering the Reserved Areas of Ethiopia. The officials spoke of Jijiga as a 'buffer state' covering the Somali grazing area.[128] By August 1943, the GOC-in-C conceded to CO exigencies in a telegram to the WO and noted that, "interest in Jigjiga remains till Somali grazing question is settled…it would be impracticable to permit extension of Ethiopian administration to rest of Jigjiga area which is entirely Somali."[129]

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[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] CO 535/138/13, Secret Note from the GOC-in-C East Africa to the War Office.
[128] Ibid
[129] Ibid.

These developments indicate the nature of the threat posed by the BMA to Ethiopian sovereignty in the areas adjacent to the British Somaliland boundary. The interests of the BMA in the region north of the Ogaden, and the establishment of Jijiga as a buffer region also help to establish a clear differentiation between this region and the Ogaden to the south. This paved the way for a differential and separate history of the relationship between the Ethiopian state and the Harar-Jijiga areas north of the Ogaden in the period following the restoration of the imperial state. Subsequent chapters trace the historicity of this relationship by examining the experiences and responses of local actors in Harar and Jijiga to attempts of the central state to control and establish its authority in these areas. However, it should be noted that this predates the period of the BMA.[130] Nonetheless, an important aspect of the ensuing relationship between the state and the eastern periphery includes the changes made to the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary *during* the period of the BMA.

These competing British interests in Ethiopia later manifested themselves during the period of BMA withdrawal in 1954, when the FO and CO demonstrated divergent views vis-à-vis Ethiopian sovereignty in the Haud and Reserved Areas. This is discussed in detail in chapter four.

2.7 Remaking the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary during British Military Administration

The delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary involved *Ras* Makonnen and James Rennell Rodd reaching an agreement following lengthy and intricate negotiations in 1897. Consequently, this border and surrounding borderlands have been relatively peaceful in comparison to the southern sectors of the border

[130] Cedric Barnes, “The Ethiopian State and its Somali Periphery, circa 1888-1948” (PhD diss., Trinity College, University of Cambridge, 2000).

areas between Ethiopia and the former Italian Somaliland territory. As noted in an earlier section, the latter has been burdened by an indeterminate boundary that has never been properly demarcated.

The boundary delimitation process between Ethiopia and the British Somaliland Protectorate placed a considerable amount of northern Somali grazing lands in Ethiopia. Since they were aware of the potential consequences of this decision, the British endeavoured to reach a settlement with the Ethiopians to allow seasonal cross-border movement of British Protectorate subjects into the Haud grazing area in Ethiopia. The Ethiopians agreed, cognizant that the arrangement was less than ideal. It then appears that mutual agreement on the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary line was recognised and interpreted as an act of British cession of Somali territory to Ethiopia – hence the special grazing arrangements for seasonal cross-border movement. This arrangement was inherently problematic. The grazing lands were also used by Somali clans whose territory is largely within Ethiopia, hence the potential for conflict. The British were aware of this, as noted in a letter from BMA-Somalia to Civil Affairs Branch, Nairobi. In the letter it is stated that "The grazing area of the Haud is common both to British Somaliland and the Ogaden tribes." [131] Perhaps as a result, or because of this, the 'return' of the Haud, or at the very least its unrestricted access to the Somali of the Protectorate became the all-encompassing doctrine for the duration of the BMA in Ethiopia.

The manner in which the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary Agreement was signed in 1897 suggests that Britain was mostly indifferent towards the grazing areas. This can be explained by the nature of British presence in the region as well as Ethiopia's status in the region at the time. The initial and main British interest in the largely desert and uneconomic region was the need to preserve a foothold in the northern Somali regions to ensure a continued meat

[131] CO 535/138/13, Telegram - Internal Colonial Office correspondence.

supply for the British garrison in Aden.[132] The British presence also served to check Ethiopian, French and Italian territorial ambitions in the region. Yet, Britain had signed 'treaties and agreements' with several Somali clans prior to 1897,[133] which denied Britain the cession of Somali territory. However, the balance of power in the region had shifted significantly following Adwa, with Britain, France and Italy fortunate to retain a foothold at all on the Somali coast.[134] Menelik's powerful position at the time and the strategic location of the British Somaliland territory compelled Britain to reluctantly retain a Protectorate. Britain's initial interests were thus on the Somali coast in the Indian Ocean, with little interest in the desolate interior. Thus, the special arrangements for the grazing areas can be seen as more about honouring[135] the Anglo-Somali treaties of the 1880s, rather than as related to direct British economic interests in the interior of the Protectorate.

Geographically, the Haud is a portion of territory that is located south-west of the former British Somaliland Protectorate and north-east of the Ethiopian Ogaden – straddling the boundary.[136] The largest section of this area lies within Ethiopian territory. Markakis describes the Haud as a "broad, undulating plain that stretches parallel to the Somaliland border, and offers some of the best grazing land."[137] During the BMA, the grazing areas were initially administered from Jijiga and were later jointly administered by the British Protectorate Government in Hargeisa. Dual administration was initiated when both the Protectorate government and the BMA began to exercise authority in the administration of the grazing areas. The Reserved Areas were

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[132] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 26.
[133] Foreign Office (FO) 881/ 6943, September 1897, F.R.Wingate lists the names of at least ten Somali clans that the British had signed treaties with between 1884 and 1886.
[134] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 31.
[135] Yet, if the British were concerned about honouring these treaties in the first place, they would have never ceded Somali territory to Ethiopia.
[136] See Figure 1
[137] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 55.

located immediately north of the grazing areas.[138] According to the administrative boundaries of the BMA, the grazing areas geographically overlapped with the RAs in the vicinity of Jijiga.

Problems emerged almost immediately regarding the administration of the grazing areas. The government of the Protectorate in Hargeisa was at pains to ensure that its subjects continued to have access to the grazing areas. By-passing all fragments of Ethiopian authority, officials in Hargeisa liaised directly with their BMA colleagues stationed at Jijiga and Harar. At a meeting held in Hargeisa in June 1943 suggestions were made to establish a Joint Administration.[139] The officials found that "any arrangement which involves the exercise of authority by officers of two different Administrations in a single area must be intrinsically a bad one."[140] The officials believed that they (the British administration) "are all of one nationality, and serving under a common Directive,"[141] therefore joint administration could be a solution to their many problems.

At this meeting the officials also lamented the practicality of the existing arrangement on the grazing areas – believing that the only solution would be boundary rectification. However, this was not a widespread opinion, and certainly those who made the suggestion knew that their idea was controversial. The polarised views on boundary rectification were evident in a correspondence from Mogadishu to Nairobi. In the correspondence it is noted that the idea of boundary change could lead to further complications as it would involve 'tribes' not connected to the grazing area.[142] It appears that the War Office was under immense pressure as it was asked to look into the "old question of the boundary."[143]

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[138] See Figure 2
[139] Colonial Office (CO) 535/138/13, Meeting between CO and WO officials, 15 June 1943.
[140] CO 535/138/13.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] CO 535/138/13, G.F. Seel (CO) asking Colonel F.G. French in the WO

The merger of the two British administrations therefore fuelled Ethiopian suspicions of the BMA. The extent of British aspirations regarding Ethiopia's eastern regions was revealed in a memorandum on post-war Ethiopia and Somalia that was compiled by an official working within the Intelligence Office in Addis Ababa. Covert designs on Ethiopian territory were revealed not in the statements and observations per se, but in the apparent vigilance exercised by the BMA in matters relating to Somali territorial rights vis-à-vis Ethiopian authority. In the memorandum it is noted that from observations in Addis Ababa in 1943, post-BMA Ethiopian territorial claims not only included Eritrea but also Italian and possibly French Somaliland.[144] The author of the memorandum creates an image of grand Ethiopian territorial ambitions in a post-war context. He further noted that "any proposals (by Ethiopia) to include purely Somali territory at present under British or French administration should not receive consideration."[145] The author made further inferences and noted that "the return to Ethiopia of the Ogaden and Reserved Areas round Jiggiga, which are ethnographically and ecologically Somali, would provide a breeding ground for future disturbances of unforeseen magnitude in the East African Horn."[146]

As suggested in the previous section of this chapter, opinion was deeply polarised on the nature and possible shape of a post-war Ethiopian state within the various British agencies. On one side there were those who advocated boundary rectification whereas others supported the pre-war status quo. Regardless of these seemingly divergent views, most officials within the Colonial Office favoured a solution that entailed unlimited and unhindered access to the grazing areas for the Somalis of the Protectorate.

[144] CO 535/138/13, Trevor Taylor (Major) *Memorandum on Post war Ethiopia and Somalia*
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.

2.7.1 Implications of conflating the administration of the Reserved and Haud areas

British attempts to modify the Ethiopia- British Somaliland boundary were audacious and potentially destabilising. The British took advantage of the ambiguous BMA mandate while administering the entire East African region. This can be seen as an example of their disregard for Ethiopian sovereignty, an attitude they had exhibited since Adwa in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, Britain had no moral obligation towards Ethiopia. Nonetheless, objectivity and consideration would have been expected when dealing with another sovereign state. But Ethiopian sovereignty once again proved its inferior status in relation to Western powers.

In the period from 1941 to 1959, Britain consistently viewed Ethiopia as a "native state" that was obligated to heed the advice of appointed foreign specialists in its internal affairs.[147] Indeed, this opinion was validated by the presence and influence of a number of foreign 'specialists' in the Government of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the reluctance to restore Ethiopia's pre-Italian sovereignty, a process that was completed in 1954 long after the War ended, can be seen as an example of a paternalistic attitude toward Ethiopia. However, Britain felt a strong moral obligation toward its Protectorate Somali subjects. The spectre of the pre-1897 agreements and treaties with various Somali clans loomed large in Anglo-Ethiopian relations for the duration of the BMA in Ethiopia, with Britain preoccupied with the "unsatisfactory nature of the 1897 Treaty."[148]

One of the most significant consequences of dual administration between the BMA in Ethiopia and the Protectorate government was that Somalis from the Protectorate still enjoyed the

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[147] Harold G. Marcus, *The Politics of Empire, Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States 1941-1974* (New Jersey: Red Sea Press Inc., 1995), 2, 25.
[148] FO 371/125/ 589, *Somalia and the Haud & Reserved Areas,* 1957.

status of being "British protected subjects"[149] during their seasonal migrations. This had a significant impact on the nature of authority exercised in the Reserved and Haud areas, and indeed, in the buffer region of Jijiga and surrounds. The boundary ceased to signify a clear break in the territorial limits of the respective political entities – Ethiopia and British Somaliland. The meaning of the boundary became blurred as its meaning was transformed. The boundary no longer signified the point at which the way things were done changed, or one at which certain rules of behaviour no longer obtained.[150] Instead, the Protectorate, Reserved Areas and the Haud represented a continuity of rules and conventions, to the detriment of Ethiopian sovereignty and authority in this border region.

In examining the period of 'British mischief' in the eastern periphery, this thesis seeks to lend a nuanced historical reading of Ethiopian state making in the post-war period –based on events in the peripheries ,rather than in the centre. It is often believed, for instance, not only by Ethiopians and Ethiopian sympathisers, that the seeds for the antagonistic relationship between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia were planted during this period.[151] However, beyond the ubiquitous references to 'rebellions in the Ogaden,' we lack detail on how this enmity was conceived at the local level. Certainly, Somali nationalism crystallised and became a distinct movement with territorial claims as its leitmotif during the period of the BMA. Thus by examining the underlying and complex political forces that emerged in the eastern periphery of Ethiopia during this period we can provide a local reading of these developments. This is important since these processes emerged simultaneously with attempts to expand and entrench the reach of the Ethiopian state. The consequences, as the

[149] CO 535/138/13, Note by Government HQ, Somaliland, 21 August 1943.
[150] Joel S. Migdal, "Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints: Struggles to Construct and Maintain State and Social Boundaries", in *Boundaries and Belonging, States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.
[151] This is noted by Touval, *Somali Nationalism* and Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*.

thesis argues, were the emergence of an element of bargaining between local populations and the Ethiopian state. Consequently, both sides have been in a stalemate where neither side has been able to accept the others' conceptions of territorial control.

Historical sources reveal a powerful dynamic – a battle for the soul of Jijiga – that emerged between the BMA and Ethiopian authorities where a struggle for political dominance and authority was waged in this town and surrounding areas. The motives for the participation of each side in this confrontation and the full implications of this are discussed in the next chapter. The most important aspect of this contestation was the responses and experiences of the local populations.

2.8 Conclusion

Ethiopian territorial sovereignty has a long and unparalleled history in sub-Saharan Africa. Involvement in complex political machinations with European colonial powers endowed Ethiopia with a repository of experience in international diplomacy. However, the attainment of sovereign recognition of this African country did not guarantee a definitive escape from European colonialism, with the latter manifesting itself under different guises over time. This was most evident during the 1936 Italian invasion and subsequent occupation of Ethiopia, and when the British 'liberators' became an 'invading' force in the context of the Second World War.

This chapter discussed key historical contexts that help us to comprehend the evolution and establishment of territoriality as a salient feature of the modern state in Ethiopia. The chapter argued and demonstrated that the creation and presence the BMA and the Reserved and Haud Areas fuelled the Ethiopian states' conceptions of territorial sovereignty and authority in the eastern periphery. The eastern periphery, including the sections that comprise Harar and

Jijiga, became the ground on which the Ethiopian state endeavoured to (re) assert its territorial control and authority.

The following chapter examines the history of exercising varied administrative authority in the Harar and Jijiga localities. The chapter highlights the conditions under which these areas were incorporated into the Ethiopian empire and the nature of administration that ensued following its incorporation. The chapter demonstrates that attempts to proclaim imperial authority in these areas were interrupted by foreign interventions and that it was in the wake of these intrusions that the state sought to entrench its authority in a more decisive manner. In considering how and why Jijiga and surrounds became a crucial 'battle ground' during the period of the BMA, the chapter argues that the situation of ambiguous and contested administrations and authority set the stage for an ongoing negotiation between the state and local actors in these areas. Local populations conducted this negotiation in ways that suggest active participation rather than passivity or powerlessness in the face of indeterminate and ambiguous state authority.

Chapter Three. The varied trajectory of broadcasting power and authority in the eastern periphery: the unlikely mélange of administrative traditions in Jijiga

3.1 Introduction

The evolution of the Ethiopian state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was shaped by political imperatives that underlined the spatial organisation of the polity. This contributed to the emergence of the centre-periphery and highland-lowland dichotomies, which influenced the nature of authority in imperial and subsequent state forms. The politicisation of space along these contrasting formations gave rise to tensions over key aspects of statehood, which manifested in the relationship between the central state and local populations in the conquered territories. The spatial conception of Ethiopian statehood[1] was evident in the provincial/ regional administrative structures of the imperial and military states, and remains pronounced in the current federal state. The federal state continues to politicise space by means of the internal boundaries that determine the ethnically divided federal regions. The previous chapter demonstrated that the imperial state expanded its territory in the latter part of the nineteenth century. However, establishing effective power and authority in the eastern periphery was an arduous process for the state.

This chapter examines the historical background to the state's attempts to establish power and authority in the eastern periphery. The chapter demonstrates that the area of Jijiga was the site for the implementation of dual administration between the Ethiopian state and the British Military Administration (BMA). The chapter argues that the convergence of two administrative traditions, one governed by

[1] Christopher Clapham, "Controlling Space in Ethiopia," in *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism & After*, eds. Wendy James et al. (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 9.

established colonial administrative formulae and the other by principles of a modernising African empire created a complex peripheral regional identity. This inexorably affected the multiple actors found in this periphery. However, they were not passive actors – they exploited the seemingly undesirable situation to their own ends, in the process facilitating the formation of a distinct relationship with the Ethiopian state. This has contributed to the separate and distinct historicity of this area in relation to the rest of the eastern periphery. Today Jijiga continues to be a political hotbed and battleground in the Somali National Regional State (SNRS) of the federal state, a condition that has historical foundations in the period of the BMA.

The chapter is not confined to the decade of dual administration. Rather, this period is used to foreground a broader discussion of the emergence of administrative practices that were aimed at controlling both territory and people in this periphery, and the ensuing relationship between locals and the state. Therefore, the chapter revisits the period of imperial territorial expansions in the nineteenth century, which were mentioned in the previous chapter. This discussion highlights the differential patterns of integration into the state of the various regions in eastern Ethiopia.

The town of Jijiga and its immediate surroundings were the site for staging the struggle for Ethiopian territorial unity during the BMA. Jijiga, therefore, can hardly be regarded as marginal since Ethiopian rulers deemed it fundamental to the broad conceptualisation of Ethiopian territorial statehood. As Hagmann and Korf demonstrate, it is possible to move beyond narrow definitions of marginality and interpreting state presence in Ethiopia's eastern periphery. The authors argue that the eastern periphery has been central to conceptions of Ethiopian sovereignty.

They support this assertion by highlighting the exceptional measures of violence that have been consistently deployed by the state in this periphery since the nineteenth century.[2] Indeed, despite the practice of using violent and heavy handed tactics, the eastern periphery is a useful case for examining the manner in which territorial conceptions of statehood have emerged and how they have been perceived by successive Ethiopian rulers.

The chapter proceeds by reminding us of the nature of the Reserved Areas during the BMA in Ethiopia. This is followed by a historical background of the town of Jijiga. The history of Jijiga is presented within the context of the eastward territorial expansions of the Ethiopian empire in the late nineteenth century. This section demonstrates that the establishment of Jijiga during the eastern marches was directly linked to the capture of the Harar Emirate in 1887. Next, the chapter examines how the British administration attempted to assert its authority by creating a vaguely defined but powerful administration that sought to undermine Ethiopian authority in the eastern region of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian struggle to regain authority in this periphery will be used as a counter narrative to the period of British administration. The chapter will then present the initial experiences and responses of the local populations to the contested administration of Jijiga and surrounding areas. Finally, the chapter discusses the implications and enduring effects of the varied and ambiguous administrative ethos that developed during this period in Jijiga and surrounds.

[2] Tobias Hagmann and Benedikt Korf, "Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and sovereignty in the Ethiopian-Somali frontier," *Political Geography* 31, issue 8 (November 2012): 205-206.

3.2 The Reserved Areas during British Military Administration

As noted in the previous chapter, the Reserved Areas (RAs) in Ethiopia were established through the 1942 and 1944 Agreements and Military Conventions. The 1944 Agreement stated that with the cooperation of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, the BMA as part of the Allied forces wished that the territories designated RAs and Ogaden remain under its authority.[3] This demonstrates the strategic importance of these areas. The exact geographic limits of the RAs were specified in a technical Schedule at the rear of the Agreement. The 'Territories,' as they were called, were drawn on a map with hand-written boundaries of the grazing, Reserved and Ogaden areas. In this map Jijiga fell within the RA boundaries, but outside the Haud and the Ogaden.[4] A note from the Colonial Office (CO), dated 14 January 1943, determined the exact location of the RAs. However, the wording in the article that established the RAs gave the impression of a temporary arrangement – one that would be guided by military requirements.

The Agreement stated that the said areas would continue to be reserved "so long as the General Officer Commanding in Chief of the British Military Forces in East Africa in consultation with His Imperial Majesty considers it necessary."[5] A statement issued the following year belied the seemingly temporary nature of the reserved status of these areas. The note raised issues of uncertainty with regards to the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary and how the areas were part of the grazing grounds of "British Protectorate tribes."[6] Within the RAs, the areas that were used as military cantonments were already established regional centres – Dire Dawa, Harar and Jijiga. In 1942 all

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[3] The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Public Records Office (PRO), Colonial Office (CO) CO 535/138/13.
[4] See Figure 2 on page 89.
[5] CO 535/138/13.
[6] Ibid.

three towns were under the jurisdiction of what was then Hararge province of the Ethiopian Empire. The emperor had an acute awareness of the potential danger posed by the continued reservation and occupation of these border areas. These were areas that were predominantly inhabited by various Somali clans, with the exception of Harar. The CO was also aware that these were Somali-inhabited areas, hence the nature of its conduct in BMA affairs. The British administration of the RAs was seen as an opportunity to remove the impediment of Ethiopian sovereignty –making it easier to lodge an appeal for boundary rectification. This prospect deeply troubled the emperor since he had a personal interest in this region.

Emperor Haile Selassie was born on the outskirts of the city of Harar and spent his formative years in Harar. His father, *Ras* Makonnen, served as governor of Hararge province until his death.[7] The emperor's family had governed this region from the time of its incorporation into the empire in 1887. *Ras* Makonnen was instrumental in determining the boundary line with the British Somaliland Protectorate in 1897. Thus, the imperial family had a strong attachment to Hararge province and the city of Harar in particular. At the start of the BMA, Hararge was under the governorship of Prince Makonnen – Duke of Harar – the emperor's son. Not only was Hararge of great personal significance to the emperor, it was also of strategic importance due to its geographic location. The province shared territorial boundaries with British, French and Italian Somaliland territories. To fully comprehend and appreciate how this province and its major towns occupied such an important place in the empire, a brief historical background of the circumstances leading to the incorporation of some of its sections into the Ethiopian Empire follows. The discussion takes Jijiga town as the focal point of analysis. However, it is impossible to speak of Jijiga in

[7] Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 197.

isolation since the establishment of the town is closely linked to the capture of the Harar city-state by then King Menelik of Shoa in 1887.

The next section thus explores how the Kingdom of Shoa captured Harar, and within a few years incorporated it into the expanding Ethiopian Empire. Immediately following the capture of Harar, the empire expanded further eastwards towards the Jijiga plains. Indeed, Menelik and his generals would have found it a daunting task to reach the far eastern lowlands had they not first captured the independent Emirate of Harar. This chapter thus also establishes the rarely explored historical connection between Harar and Jijiga and draws attention to their emergence as centres in the periphery.

3.3 Jijiga in historical perspective: symbolic and strategic significance

It is almost impossible to speak of Jijiga and its environs in the context of the Ethiopian imperial state without referring to Harar. It is sometimes noted that the Somali who are dominant in the Jijiga area have looked to Harar for religious inspiration[8] because Harar has been a centre of Islam in the region since the eleventh century.[9] This is perhaps the most accurate reference to the otherwise tenuous Harar-Somali connection. It is undeniable that there is a connection between the Somali people and the former Muslim city-state of Harar. However, the extent and nature of this connection is somewhat ambiguous. In its irredentist rhetoric, the former Somali Republic often laid claim to Harar as noted in a government publication – "Harar is essentially a Somali city which is part and parcel of the

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[8] Robert L. Hess, *Ethiopia, The Modernization of Autocracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 10.

[9] Thomas Osmond, "Competing Muslim legacies along city/countryside dichotomies: another political history of Harar Town and its Oromo rural neighbours in Eastern Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 52, issue 1 (March 2014): 3-7.

Somali territory."[10] However, the claim to Harar was expressed rather tenuously in comparison to the claims made to areas such as the Ogaden. Gebru Tareke notes that economic interests featured strongly in Somali irredentism, particularly in their claims to the "rolling plains and lush valleys" of Hararge province.[11]

Nonetheless, the attraction and resonance of Harar with the Somalis is evident when we recall the long and rich religious history of the city combined with the equally long history of Islam among the Somalis. Indeed, Harar has a notable reputation as a centre for the propagation of Islam, and is often regarded as "the Timbuktu of East Africa."[12] With the Somalis occupying the territories immediately north, east and south of Harar, the strong ties to the city are almost to be expected.

3.3.1 The independent Emirate of Harar

Harar may have invoked images of a mythical place prior to the first visit by a European to the city-state in 1855 – not certain if such a place still exists, but convinced that it may have existed in the past. Harar was a mysterious place. However, the mystery was uncovered during the bizarre and controversial visit to Harar by Richard Burton in January 1855. The chapter will return to Burton's visit to Harar later in this section.

For the most part, the history of Harar prior to the 1875 Egyptian occupation was characterised by independence and prosperity in a rather hostile neighbourhood. For centuries, the city of

[10] This appeared in a document entitled: *The Portion of Somali Territory under Ethiopian Colonization*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Publications, Democratic Somali Republic, June 1974, accessed at the IES Library, Addis Ababa University, in November 2011.
[11] Gebru Tareke, "The Ethiopia-Somalia war of 1977 Revisited," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (2000), 638.
[12] This is often noted in conversations with Hararis, but the author heard this directly in an interview with Abdulsemed Idriss, Social Sector Adviser, Harari Regional Council, interview with the author, Harar, October 13, 2011

Harar served as a political and administrative centre of the independent emirate.[13] According to Richard Caulk, the emirate was engaged in self-defence undertakings for the most part between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Harari existence was defined by fending off Somali, Arab and Galla[14] (Oromo) encroachment,[15] with the latter posing the most imminent threat. The Oromo people occupied, and still occupy, the lands immediately around the walled city of Harar. The Amirs, though not able to check Oromo encroachments, managed to overawe them, together with the Somalis.[16] The independence of the emirate was finally shattered by the Kingdom of Shoa in 1887. Prior to this, Harar existed as a Semitic-speaking enclave that was surrounded by Cushitic-speaking peoples – a manifestation whose origins are difficult to ascertain.

The history of the relationship between the Oromo and the Harari is complex and cannot be done justice on these pages. Therefore a brief overview will suffice to provide the context for understanding processes of Harari identity formation, which are discussed in the next chapter. The neighbouring Oromo were mostly semi-nomadic pastoralists – however, overtime they were slowly drawn into the political economy of Harar as providers of agricultural produce to the city. Many converted to Islam. However, there still remained an element of cultural distance between the two populations, possibly facilitated by the wall surrounding the city. For a long time, certainly prior to 1887, none but Hararis were allowed to reside within the walls of the city. The Oromo, Somali and others groups could visit the markets and conduct business during the day, however, by night

[13] Abebe Feyissa, "A History of Harar Town (1936-1974)" (master's thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2009), 2.
[14] Archaic and derogatory name that refers to the Oromo ethnic group- the largest in Ethiopia, this name will be used here in the context of the historical discussion and the cited source.
[15] Richard Caulk, "Harar in the 19th Century and the loss of its Independence" (paper presented for the Interdisciplinary Seminar of the Faculties of Arts and Education, Haile Selassie I University, 1967, Institute of Ethiopian Studies library, Addis Ababa, October 20, 2012), 62.
[16] Ibid.

time they all had to exit[17] through the five gates of the city. It has also been suggested that the Oromo may have been subjected to the clandestine slave trade that was part of the Harar political economy.[18]

Caulk notes that "a certain section of Galla known as the Kottu became clients of the city folk and thus becoming peaceful and hardworking cultivators anxious to please the Amir."[19] On the other hand, a large number of the Oromo continued to pose a threat to the city-state, making frequent incursions on Harar. Thomas Osmond offers a nuanced and detailed account of this relationship. He argues that the two communities have been linked for centuries by a history of competing Muslim legacies that manifest in the city/ countryside divide.[20] Other (Anthropological) narratives depict Oromo-Harari relations as characterised by inequality and undercurrents of racial discrimination.[21] The cultural distance between the two groups is a trend that is likely to have persisted in various forms over time. As one visits the historic city today there is an unmistakable differentiation between the two groups, particularly in their social patterns of interaction. The Oromo still largely reside on the outskirts of the walled city, arriving every morning to buy and sell at the various local markets and leaving by night time.

Richard Burton's account of his travels to and from Harar is illuminating, not least because his was the first detailed Western account of this area. Burton's account of his visit to Harar is

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[17] Kabir Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir, interview with author, Harar, between October and November, 2011.

[18] Author unknown, *The Heart of Ethiopia* (London: Robert Hale, 1972) located at the Harar Documentation and Archives Centre at the Rimbaud Museum, Harar. It is also rumoured that the French poet Arthur Rimbaud who lived in the city participated in the slave trade in Harar.

[19] Caulk, "Harar in the 19th Century."

[20] Thomas Osmond, "Competing Muslim legacies along city/countryside dichotomies: another political history of Harar Town and its Oromo rural neighbours in Eastern Ethiopia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 52, issue 1 (March 2014).

[21] Camilla Gibb, *Sweetness in the Belly* (London: Random House, 2006), although presented as fiction, this is an autobiographical account by someone who deeply penetrated Harari society (she conducted extensive Anthropological research in the town and people still remember her presence vividly).

fascinating, but is not a comfortable read because of the combination of ignorance and arrogance with which it is written. Burton makes sweeping generalisations about the different ethnic groups he encountered, including the Harari. He relies heavily on racist physiognomic descriptions of different ethnic groups, and is convinced of the accuracy of his classifications. However, the strength of the book is in its coverage of previously unexplored geographic expanses of this region. Burton travelled from Aden to Harar via the port of Zeila and on the return journey to Aden he took another important route – via the port of Berbera. Burton provides incredible descriptions of the landscape and the people who occupied it. Through Burton's account of this terrain we recognise the strategic significance of the future location of Jijiga.

Burton's travel to Harar was characterised by danger and intrigue. There are a number of reasons for this state. Burton decided against writing a letter to the Amir of Harar announcing his impending visit and instead opted for the element of surprise. He did this because according to historical record, no Westerner had hitherto entered the walls of the city. Burton was not willing to jeopardise his chances, hence the decision to disguise himself as an Arab merchant for part of the journey. On the way to Harar, the travelling party encountered a group of Somalis that warned the Somalis that comprised Burton's party "not to accompany that Turk to Harar."[22] They thought Burton was a Turk, apparently a despised people at the time, and whose appearance in Harar would have stirred trouble. In addition, the route from Zeila to Harar is said to have been inhabited by inhospitable Somali groups. For instance, Burton notes that they passed the land of the Habr Awal, whom he was warned not to provoke.[23] Finally, Burton was uncertain of the reception he would receive in Harar.

Burton was not particularly impressed by the wall when he

[22] Richard F. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa or An Exploration of Harar* (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006), 120.
[23] Ibid.

reached the gates of the city on 2 January 1855. He notes that "the spectacle, materially speaking was a disappointment: nothing conspicuous appeared but two grey minarets of rude shape, many would have grudged exposing three lives to win so paltry a prize."[24] Regardless of the perilous nature of his journey, realising what he was about to accomplish if allowed inside, Burton further notes that "but of all that have attempted, none ever succeeded in entering that pile of stones…"[25] Burton spent ten days in Harar during which he was unable to explore as he usually did on his expeditions. He was kept on a tight leash by his Harari hosts and was thus limited in his account of the city and its peculiarities. The visit was so restricted that at the end of the ten days Burton noted that "…in fact, all these African cities are prisons on a large scale, into which you enter by your own will, and, as the significant proverb says, you leave by another's."[26] Burton was quite pleased to leave Harar as he suddenly became revitalised, with his "weakness and sickness leaving him."[27] Not providing too much information beyond his sharp observations of the 'tribes' and their social customs, Burton's party made its way back to Aden via Berbera. What is important for us in Burton's account of his travels is the relatively short distance and location of Harar from the Red Sea ports of Zeila and Berbera. Burton's account also describes an area that was on an important trade route between Harar and Berbera, one that was frequented by caravans travelling between Abyssinia and Berbera – the future location of Jijiga.

Skipping a few decades to the 1870s – Harar still enjoyed its independence, and continued to limit foreign visitors. However, there were internal political crises that foreshadowed a certain vulnerability to external forces for the emirate. Amir Muhammad was, according to Caulk, quite unpopular in the town. It was his unpopularity in the town

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid, 147.
[27] Ibid, 153.

and the uselessness of its defences against attackers that permitted the Egyptians to enter without striking a blow.[28] The Egyptians occupied Zeila in 1875 and immediately started for the interior. Upon reaching the Harar plateau they received a letter of submission from the Amir.[29] The acceptance of an Egyptian protectorate proved fateful for the Amir – within a month of the Egyptian occupation he was murdered.[30]

Some believe that the Egyptian occupation marked a major turning point in Harar's political history,[31] whereas others believe that the year 1887 was the turning point – when Harar fell to Shoa under Menelik II.[32] Both these episodes can be seen as equally decisive in the nineteenth century history of Harar, but in different ways. The Egyptian occupation has been viewed as a golden era. The Egyptians are believed to have initiated the economic revival of the city by reuniting it with its coastal outlets of Zeila and Berbera under one government.[33] They also created an ordered administration, rebuilt mosques and reintroduced Islamic culture.[34] This is in sharp contrast to the period following incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire. The latter is often perceived as an era of undoing what the Egyptians had established. It appears that Harari adherence to Islam also greatly assisted the Egyptian occupation by leading the locals to immediate submission.

However, the seemingly mutually beneficial relationship between the Harari and the Egyptians did not last for long. Within one decade of the Egyptian presence in Harar, by 1885 they were struggling to keep focus on their Harar protectorate in the midst of the Mahdi revolt in Sudan. The British also strongly believed that Egyptian finances could only be restored if all military expenses

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[28] Caulk, "Harar in the 19th Century."
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] This appears to be the view of Abebe Feyissa, "History of Harar Town, 2 and author unknown "The Province of Harar, Roads East," in *Ethiopian Journeys: Travels in Ethiopia 1969-72* (Rimbaud House Museum Library, Harar).
[33] Caulk, "Harar in the 19th Century."
[34] Ibid.

outside Egypt were eliminated.[35] And thus the Egyptians withdrew from Harar. In the meantime, the new, and what would be the last Amir of Harar – Abdullahi – rose to power. Abdullahi was unable to regain the early control exercised by the Egyptians over the surrounding Oromo and Somalis. He reverted to the isolationism that had previously made Harar a nearly forbidden city to foreigners, and he cut the city off from the coast.[36] What followed was a reign of religious fanaticism and xenophobia. The Amir is said to have intercepted a party of Italian commercial explorers and murdered them, he then ordered all foreigners in Harar to leave or convert to Islam.[37]

While burning his bridges and insulating himself from what he perceived to be his enemies, the Amir was oblivious to the real and more menacing enemy approaching from the west. Though not fully aware of the impending Egyptian retreat, Menelik still coveted the valleys east of Shoa, yet, it was "the Ittu Galla that stood between him and Harar."[38] However, on 6 January 1887 Menelik and Amir Abdullahi's forces met in battle at Chelenqo, about twenty kilometres west of Harar. The Shoans were victorious in what became known as the battle that signalled the decisive end to Harari independence. Caulk notes that according to Harari tradition the battle is described as long and hard, whereas Ragazzi, an Italian doctor in Menelik's camp claimed that it only lasted fifteen minutes.[39] Regardless of the length of the battle, the Shoans were decisive in a victory that opened the door to the eventual incorporation of the ancient city-state into the expanding Ethiopian Empire.

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

3.3.2 The capture of Harar by the Kingdom of Shoa

The military experience that Shoa had gained from the anti-Egyptian campaigns in the north was invaluable going forward with Menelik's expansionism. This experience also prepared the Ethiopians for the encounter with the Italians at Adwa in 1896.

The capture and submission of Harar was a major victory for Shoa – the city lay on a strategic trade route, among other things. In addition to being a commercial and religious centre itself, Harar presented the empire with access to the eastern expanse on the route to the port of Berbera on the Red Sea. Access to the coast has always been an important factor in the growing and expanding Ethiopian Empire, not least for access to firearms provided by Europeans.[40] This became increasingly important when Menelik ascended to the imperial throne and the capital of the empire moved to Addis Ababa – the geographic and political centre of the country. Harar lay on the route to two major coastal options, Zeila and Berbera. Even though Harar was captured by the Kingdom of Shoa, it was a mere two years before it was absorbed into the Ethiopian Empire when Menelik ascended the throne and became emperor.

The following section offers a brief background on how the city of Harar became the springboard for the empire's territorial expansion to the hitherto uncharted eastern lowland regions.

3.3.3 Harar under imperial rule and the eastward territorial expansion

The capture and incorporation of Harar into the expanding empire was undoubtedly a major achievement for the imperial rulers, because:

[40] Bonnie K. Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa, *The Invention of Ethiopia, The Making of a Dependent Colonial State in Northeast Africa* (Trenton NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1990), 98-100.

> Harar was an urban civilization in the midst of agrarian and nomadic life, a city-state that was a centre of Islamic learning, well-organized trade with an elaborate fiscal system. Compared with any place in Ethiopia during the nineteenth century, it had no equal.[41]

By most Harari accounts, the incorporation of Harar into the expanding empire signalled the beginning of the end. In store for them, they argue, was marginalisation and persecution by successive Ethiopian regimes. According to the Harari, the main consequences of the arrival of northerners in the city were the conversion of mosques to churches, the resettling of people from the north, and the attempt to make Orthodox Coptic Christianity the dominant religion.[42] This is the prevailing narrative of Harar beginning in the late nineteenth century, at least according to the Harari. For them, the destruction of their independence is seen as the most adverse consequence of their incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire. As to be expected, from the chronicles of the Shoan Kingdom and the Ethiopian Empire, the narrative is somewhat different. Here, the new governor, *Dajazmatch* (later *Ras*) Makonnen is portrayed as a modern innovator who contributed to the development of educational and health services in the town.[43]

For now, however, our interests rest less on the new governor's innovations and more on his campaigns for territorial expansion in the territories east of his new provincial capital. The lure of the vast lands east of Harar was there from the beginning. Eshete notes that no sooner had Emperor Menelik left Harar in February of 1887 than Makonnen dispatched expeditions into the outlying Oromo-inhabited highlands around the city. Military campaigns into the lowlands towards the Ogaden and the plains of Jijiga were waged within a month of the capture of Harar.[44] Others have also noted that "with the

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[41] Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1995), 43.
[42] Abdulsemed Idriss, interview with author.
[43] Feyissa, "History of Harar Town," 4.
[44] Tebebe Eshete, "A History of Jijjiga Town, 1891-1974" (master's thesis, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 1988), 19

fall of the buffer city-state of Harar, the Somali Ogadeen became an open field for Shoa despoliation."[45]

Makonnen's strategy was to establish armed posts and garrisons to serve as bases from which to penetrate the hitherto unexplored lowland regions. This strategy corresponds to the notion that the settlement of frontier towns is directly related to the consolidation of territorial gains.[46] Indeed, within the context of imperial expansion in Ethiopia, the garrison centres that were established in this manner signified the embryos of future towns.[47] This is how Jijiga town was established. From available accounts, Makonnen began by raiding the Somali-inhabited lands and collecting tributes of cattle from the Somalis as a show of force and an attempt to establish suzerainty over them.[48] However, the campaigns to subdue the Somalis east of Harar and further down into the Ogaden were not straightforward. The collection of tax in particular, often through violent means, meant a prolonged and highly contentious process of pacifying the region. The imposition of taxation was particularly challenging for the nomadic herdsmen whose existence depended on their livestock when suddenly they discovered that their land 'belonged' to some other entity – the 'state.'[49]

The campaigns intended for the pacification of the eastern Somali areas were made somewhat feasible by the establishment of a military garrison on the plains below the Harar highlands. The ability to establish military presence enabled the empire to occupy a strategic position on an important trade route. However, this did not translate to the establishment of effective power and authority by the empire. It is also important to note that at this time the Ethiopians had made no

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[45] David Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia, Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 53.
[46] Paul Nugent, "Arbitrary Lines and the People's Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries of West Africa," in *African Boundaries*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 37.
[47] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Portion of Somali Territory.*
[48] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 20.
[49] Tibebu, *Making of Modern Ethiopia*, 86.

attempts to fix a boundary. Rather, the main, and apparently immediate, concern was to establish tributary relations with the Somalis.

3.4 Jijiga: from garrison town to a centre in the periphery

The task of pacifying the Ogaden was entrusted to a principal officer, *Fitawrari*[50] Bangussie.[51] Bangussie finally broke through the resistance of the locals towards the Jijiga plains around 1890. According to Eshete, the plan was two-pronged – to obtain a better site from where to launch campaigns into the Ogaden and to gain control over the caravan trade passing through the Marda pass.[52] This was the same location where Burton had passed on his way to Berbera following his visit to Harar in 1855.

The Marda pass is a highly strategic area that served an important role in the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia following the fall of Jijiga town to Somali forces. Had the latter advanced beyond the Marda pass, the Ethiopians would have been greatly compromised. It was at Marda pass that Ethiopian forces held a strong defence against Somali forces.[53] Today the pass is a winding tarmac road that cuts across a mountain range marking a sharp demarcation between the Harar highlands and the Jijiga plains.

The establishment of a fort at Jijiga around 1891 marked an important turning point in the evolving geographic limits of the Ethiopian Empire. There were various Somali clans who inhabited this region, but because of their nomadic existence, there was limited permanent settlement. Following the breakthrough in the plains, Menelik intensified his efforts to solidify his influence in this region.

[50] This is an imperial designation meaning 'commander of the vanguard'
[51] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 21.
[52] Ibid, 22.
[53] Bekele, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.

Menelik, Makonnen and Bangussie were all aware of the advantages of establishing a permanent settlement on the Jijiga plain. Beyond the two objectives mentioned above, the area was relatively fertile and presented opportunities for cultivation and settlement by the farming communities of the northern regions of the country. The region also presented Shoa with a significant source of tribute and taxes in the form of cattle, often collected by force.[54] The trade route, in particular, later proved to be a significant source of transit fees from merchants, and thus a major source of income for the imperial state. Jijiga became a major customs centre and has since remained a customs centre for goods coming from the coast.

Jijiga slowly evolved into an administrative centre. However, the exact date of this development is not known but is estimated to be between 1892 and 1898.[55] Strong resistance by the Abaskul Somali who lived in the vicinity of Jijiga has been noted as a possible reason for what seemed to be a delayed decision to make Jijiga a centre.[56] The first governor, Bangussie, ultimately proved not a good choice. He reportedly used heavy-handed tactics against the Somalis in the Jijiga area and also overtaxed caravan merchants.[57] This contributed to the strong resistance against the nascent imperial authority. Resistance was widespread and determined, but so were the state's attempts to mark its influence and authority.

While these developments were taking place in Jijiga, negotiations on the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary also commenced. *Ras* Makonnen met with British envoy James Rennell Rodd in Harar to discuss the actual line of the boundary. Upon his arrival in Harar Rodd had recently completed lengthy discussions on British and Ethiopian spheres of influence with Menelik in Addis Ababa. In a confidential memorandum, Rodd notes Makonnen's apprehension with

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[54] John Drysdale, The *Somali Dispute* (London: Paul Mall Press, 1964), 46.
[55] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 29.
[56] Ibid, 30.
[57] Ibid.

regard to "the proximity of any line we might be striving for to the fort of Jig-jiga… and owing to a confusion of names, negotiations nearly broke down."[58] This note reveals essential information regarding the intentions of the imperial state during its eastern territorial expansions. It appears that more than anything else, it was a technical decision that resulted in Jijiga coming under the jurisdiction of the Ethiopian Empire rather than British Somaliland. It is also evident that, at this time, the consolidation of the acquired territory was now a serious consideration of the imperial state.

Makonnen's long-range plans to pacify the Ogaden and the role of Jijiga in this process led to the appointment of Abdalla Taha– a Yemeni Arab and long-time resident of Harar, to the position of governor.[59] Taha's governorship was welcomed by the population since he was familiar with the Somali, having engaged with them in his own business dealings, and also sharing the same religion with them. This appointment saw a departure from the established modus operandi in the administration of new towns in the peripheries of the expanding imperial state. Taha built a mosque in Jijiga instead of a church as was customary in other new garrison towns.[60] Indeed, the appointment of Taha lent an element of novelty to the administration of a centre in the periphery. Taha was a former merchant with no feudal background or army of his own and shared the same religion with the locals. The permanent presence of a governor in Jijiga also meant that people became accustomed to the physical manifestations of imperial authority – something that was difficult to establish in the southern regions in the Ogaden.

However, Taha's governorship was interrupted by the forces of Sheikh Mohammed Abdulla Hassan known to the British as the 'Mad Mullah.' On occasion, Abdulla Hassan has been invoked as a figure of

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[58] FO 881/6943, Negotiations on the Anglo-Ethiopian border, 1897.
[59] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town,"30
[60] Ibid.

Somali nationalism,[61] because of his role in leading a Dervish movement against 'European and Abyssinia colonialism.' However, other accounts are less idealistic, noting that Abdulla Hassan's movement unleashed a reign of terror on both the colonialists and the Somali people.[62] Fighting with Abdullah Hassan's forces culminated in the battle of Jijiga in 1900 where the Dervish forces were crushed by the Ethiopian army. Hassan is said to have retreated into the Ogaden desert while Anglo-Ethiopian forces were on the ready in Jijiga.[63] The Anglo-Ethiopian collaboration was a consequence of Jijiga being a border town – approximately sixty kilometres from the border. The Dervishes made frequent incursions on both sides of the border and thus presented a challenge to both the Ethiopian and British Protectorate administrations.

Regardless of these disruptions, the popularity of Taha is said to have grown steadily in the district administration of Jijiga. He developed amicable relations with the chiefs of various Somali clans, among other things.[64] He is also credited with infusing an element of urbanity to the town by bringing his Arab kin to establish various businesses and to encourage the practice of Islam. Significantly, *Ras* Makonnen, the overall governor of Hararge province is said to have visited Jijiga in 1902 and stayed for two months, during which he made contacts with local chiefs and held talks on how to maintain peace and security.[65] These developments should also be seen as the growing attempts by imperial rulers to exercise decisive control over both territory and people following the delimitation of the Anglo-Ethiopian boundary in 1897.

Relations between the state and the newly conquered territories in imperial Ethiopia were characterised by the arrival and activities of

[61] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Portion of Somali Territory.*
[62] Abdi I. Samatar, "Somalia: Statelessness as Homelessness," in *The African State, Reconsiderations*, eds. Abdi I. Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), 229.
[63] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 37.
[64] Ibid, 39.
[65] Ibid, 38.

the *neftegna*.[66] The role of the *neftegna* was central to consolidating and entrenching the territorial limits and authority of the imperial state. Their appointment generally required that they be persons of Amhara origin.[67] The nature of the presence of the *neftegna* in the new territories depended on the degree of resistance by local populations.[68] The only constant about the *neftegna,* according to Tibebu, was the brutality with which they established their authority, wherein "the language of the gun was the means of communication."[69] However, some of the *neftegna* who were district governors in the lowlands are reported to have exhibited high levels of apathy with their new posts. Some governors preferred to govern from a distance rather than spend time in the inhospitable lowlands. For example, the district governors of Wardere, Gebredarre and Derghabur in the Ogaden reportedly had indefinite stays in Harar.[70] Eventually it became common practice to administer the Ogaden from a distance, whereas the northern sections of Jijiga always maintained a permanent administration.

Following the retirement of Abdalla Taha around 1916, a period of confusion ensued in the administration of Jijiga. This was aggravated by the leadership crisis that had engulfed the political centre. In 1910 Emperor Menelik became incapacitated due to various illnesses, after which a succession power struggle followed. Many sought to oppose the rise to power of a teenaged Lij Iyasu – Menilek's grandson and heir-designate. However, Lij Iyasu managed to successfully claim his position in 1911. His was a brief, yet notable, reign. Iyasu was idealistic and apparently lacked the political acumen required for the role of Ethiopian Emperor. He held notions of a society in which religious and ethnic affiliations would cease to be of

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[66] These are northerners who acted as both soldiers and settlers in the newly conquered southern and eastern regions; see Markakis, *Anatomy*, 112.
[67] 'Amhara' in its diffuse meaning as a social and political signifier, see Teshale Tibebu, *Making of Modern Ethiopia*, 45 and Markakis, *Anatomy*, 294.
[68] Tibebu, *Making of Modern Ethiopia*, 44.
[69] Ibid.
[70] FO 371/ 108195, *Reports from British Consulate*, Harar, August 1954.

significance,[71] an idea that contradicted the central tenets on which the empire was founded. His unceremonious downfall was precipitated by his alleged courting of Islam and Muslims.[72] Iyasu had also chosen Jijiga as one of the centres from where to develop a new spirit of trust between the government and the people of the lowland periphery.[73] High-ranking officials in the imperial administration viewed Iyasu's efforts to integrate Muslims into the administration with extreme distaste.[74] He also apparently enjoyed cordial relations with Sheikh Abdulla Hassan who actively opposed imperial rule in the Somali-inhabited territories.[75]

When the intrigues that had gripped the political centre finally subsided Jijiga received a new governor in 1917 – *Fitawrari* Takla Hawaryat. It appears that the new governor was mandated to establish a modern administration. This included drafting a plan for the town, improving the water supply system, promoting commerce and encouraging (or coercing) the local Somali to engage in farming.[76] A treasury house was opened, Hawaryat also introduced the use of stationery, opened a court and an office for handling the affairs of the church.[77] The latter was a departure from the policies of the previous governor who encouraged the practice of the local religion. We can argue that Abdulla Taha had established the foundations of a 'modern' administration in Jijiga, while Hawaryat initiated 'modern' bureaucracy. Jijiga continued retaining visible imperial authority even after the abrupt departure of Hawaryat in 1920. The governor apparently encountered difficulties with higher authorities in Harar and Addis Ababa, leading Eshete to speculate that his style of administration was perhaps too progressive for the existing socio-

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[71] Markakis, *Anatomy*, 113.
[72] Richard J. Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa*, *Genealogies of Conflict since C. 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 130.
[73] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 45.
[74] See Markakis, *Anatomy*, 114 also Reid, *Frontiers of Violence,* 130.
[75] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 41.
[76] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 50.
[77] Ibid, 51.

political milieu.[78]

In the years prior to the Italian occupation, the then regent Tafari Makonnen (future Emperor Haile Selassie) was heavily involved in the affairs of Jijiga and wanted the town to be developed as a major source of customs revenue. He was aware of the trade volume that passed through Jijiga. However, by the 1930s the Ogaden region south of Jijiga was still not pacified. The imperial state had failed to establish an authoritative presence in the Ogaden since its incorporation in 1897 and the incoming Italian administration was to exploit this situation. The various attempts of the imperial state to establish authority in Jijiga as a way to 'broadcast' its power[79] found geographic impediments in the forbidding topography south of Jijiga. Instead of consolidating effective authority in Jijiga, the governor of Jijiga became engrossed in military campaigns that he was waging in the Ogaden. Certainly, the lack of political stability in the Ogaden cast a long shadow over the growth and development of the entire eastern region. However, the neglect of Jijiga rendered the latter and the entire eastern region particularly vulnerable to Italian influence when they occupied Ethiopia from 1936.

The scale of Italian territorial ambition seemed to either rival or surpass that of the Ethiopian Empire. When the Italians arrived in eastern Ethiopia, they were better equipped with resources for infrastructure development. Because of this they were in a better position to successfully broadcast their power and authority in the region. The Italians allegedly co-opted many Somali chiefs, particularly those close to the Shebelle River,[80] along the problematic Ethiopia-Italian Somaliland boundary. The Italian occupation brought notable changes to Jijiga and its overall character as they also favoured Jijiga as headquarters of district administration. The Italians initiated infrastructure projects, most notably road networks. They upgraded the

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[78] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 57.
[79] Herbst, *States and Power*, 40-41.
[80] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 57.

Harar-Jijiga road that was initially carved by the Ethiopians and added a new road across the Ogaden connecting Mogadisho to Jijiga.[81] Beyond the public works initiatives that were clearly aimed at proclaiming their authority, the Italians initiated fundamental changes that almost seemed guaranteed to challenge future claims of authority in the region. They reversed all semblance of administrative organisation that the Ethiopians had established in Jijiga. They did this in matters that counted the most in people's lives – both settlers and the indigenous populations. It must be remembered that at this time the Italians harboured grand plans of establishing an Italian East African Empire, and the occupation of Ethiopia, British Somaliland, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland appears to have brought them closer to that vision.

In Jijiga the Italians returned to the Somali population land that was previously occupied by highland settlers and they generally favoured the Muslim population as they built mosques and Quranic schools.[82] The Italians also initiated massive changes in the administration of the country, many of which were to become sources of major contestation. These included transferring the administration of Ethiopian territories to what had previously been different political entities – Tigray in northern Ethiopia was administered under Eritrea and the Ogaden under Somalia.[83] This presented remarkable changes in the exercise of authority in both the northern and eastern peripheries of Ethiopia, most of which had long- lasting effects. It is thus noteworthy that during these changes Harar and Jijiga remained nominally in Ethiopia, whereas the Ogaden was administered under Somalia. These differences are important for demonstrating the differential trajectories of incorporation of the various sections of the eastern periphery.

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[81] Ibid, 82.
[82] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 142.
[83] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 2nd ed. and Markakis, *Anatomy*, 150.

3.5 Conceptualising political organisation and authority in the eastern periphery

The history of administering Jijiga is characterised by processes that occurred within diverse political traditions. The administrative orders that oversaw the evolution of Jijiga into a centre were at variance with one other, not least the structures of authority that exemplified each of them. This section attempts to make sense of this administrative diversity and to explain how and why it bequeathed a legacy of capricious authority in Jijiga, but authority nonetheless.

Max Weber's broad conceptualisation of 'organisation' allows the term to be applied in an array of settings.[84] The notion of *Betrieb* (organisation), according to Weber, refers to a system of continuous purposive activity.[85] The presence of a leader and usually also an administrative staff, was seen by Weber as the defining characteristic of an organisation – it was they who preserved the structure.[86] The most important aspect of administrative order, according to Weber, was that it determined who was to give commands, and to whom.[87] More crucially, Weber's exposition leads to the discovery of another important element to the administrative order – authority. This is why Albrow refers to Weber's theory of bureaucracy as "grounded in a large set of related concepts."[88] Furthermore, Weber's distinction between power and authority leads to a better understanding of the actions of administrative staff.

If we take Weber's conception of organisation and its attendant variables and apply it to the various political administrative arrangements that developed in Jijiga, then an image of great variability emerges. The combined administrative sequence of a

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[84] Max Weber, "The Types of Authority and Imperative Co-ordination", *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation,* trans. A.M. Henderson, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York.: The Free Press, 1947).
[85] Ibid, 151.
[86] Martin Albrow, *Bureaucracy* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), 38.
[87] Ibid, 39.
[88] Ibid, 38.

'modernising' African imperial state, a fascist colonial administration, a liberating/invading colonial administration and then back to the first, produced a highly varied administrative ethos.

However, the imperial state was the one that shaped the fundamental administrative fabric of both Jijiga and Harar, the brief interludes notwithstanding. This is because the imperial state was able to offer compelling territorial claims and had initiated sustained attempts to assert its authority in these areas before the Italian occupation. The delimitation of a boundary in 1897 solidified these claims and eradicated the hitherto vaguely defined spheres of influence. The continuation of the practice of revenue collection from trade caravans was extended to ox-plough farmers who cultivated in the vicinity of Jijiga in the opening decades of the twentieth century.[89] It is, therefore, the legacy of a curious arrangement of traditional authority that was tempered by attempts to modernise within a socially fractured political structure that have prevailed in the administration of this region.

The disintegration of the 'feudal tendencies'[90] of the state gave way to the rise of the 'modern' state in Ethiopia.[91] However, as Addis Hiwet highlights, these processes overlapped, and thus the disintegration of feudal propensities was not a clear-cut process. The emergence of the provincial structure and the appointed administrative staff as the backbone of central state authority was not entirely 'modern.' The provincial structure fragmented authority in the sense that a lord that was appointed by the emperor to a provincial *gult* or

[89] Cedric Barnes, "The Ethiopia-British Somaliland Boundary," in *Borders & Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 126.
[90] As opposed to 'feudalism' a term whose applicability in the context of imperial Ethiopia is contested by Donald Donham, "Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian empire," in *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia: Essays in History and Social Anthropology* 2nd impression, eds. Donald Donham and Wendy James (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 8-9.
[91] Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia, from autocracy to revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy, 1975), 78.

fief had complete power to appoint functionaries under him.[92] Thus the nature of authority in the provinces was, for all intents and purposes, monarchical and traditional. Margery Perham notes that it is important to review imperial power from the standpoint of the provinces.[93] Indeed, the nature of the imperial administrative structure manifested itself most clearly in the provinces – particularly the evolving centre-periphery relationship.

The cornerstone of Emperor Selassie's initial policy approach was the "centralisation of administration."[94] Zewde notes that the political dimension of this policy was the systematic erosion of the power of regional nobility – particularly in the traditional central provinces.[95] Selassie could not tolerate the existence of semi-independent regional nobles as they would have posed a threat to his supremacy. These changes marked the beginning of the highly centralised provincial system in Ethiopia. Even though Selassie's reign before the Italian occupation has been regarded as a period of reform,[96] Donham argues that at no point did the centralised administration set up after 1941 approach Max Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy.[97]

Fascist Italy arrived in 1936 and instituted its own set of administrative practices. These, as can be expected, were contrary to those of the receding imperial state. Central to the fascist doctrine is said to be a theory of the state.[98] The Italians, thus, were determined to capture the imperial state intact and to use it to their own ends. Indeed, this is true when we recall that the Italians were preoccupied with the aim of establishing an Italian East African Empire. The Italians instituted ambitious and lingering administrative policies,

[92] For the broad application of this structure in imperial Ethiopia see Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 9.
[93] Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1969), 267.
[94] Bahru Zewde, "Hayla-Sellase: From Progressive to Reactionary," in *Ethiopia in Change, Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, eds. Abebe Zegaye and Siegfried Pausewang (London: British Academy Press, 1994), 33.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Markakis, *Anatomy*, 204.
[97] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 33.
[98] Albrow, *Bureaucracy*, 79.

which included the merger of Italian and Ethiopian Somaliland to make a huge, almost entirely Muslim block to the south-east.[99]

Following liberation from the Italian occupation and the start of the BMA, one of the key initiatives of the Ethiopian government was to redraw provincial boundaries. In the course of these changes, there emerged Hararge province, a fief of the imperial family that became by far the largest province of the empire.[100] It is important to note that in the process of provincial re-structuring, the demarcation of southern provinces tended not to have cultural or ethnic considerations. The criteria for homogeneity and historical identity gave way to considerations of political and administrative convenience.[101] Indeed, Hararge province comprised Somali, Oromo, Harari and other ethnic groups. Therefore, the provinces were, to a great extent, ethnically heterogeneous, an indication of how imperial authorities perceived the national identification of its populations – as imperial subjects.

Administrative changes in the post-Italian period found expression in the 1942 provincial administrative decree and two imperial orders of 1943 that reconstituted the functioning of the central state. Decree no. 1 of 1942 on administrative regulations established the roles of provincial directors-general, governors, courts and provincial secretariats, the decree also created structures such as the provincial council.[102] The Orders of 1943 laid out the powers and functions of the ministers, with the minister of Interior holding preponderant power and the Ministry mandated with supervising security throughout the empire.[103] The importance of these legal codes is noted by Zewde who states that "it was with these legislative measures that the provincial administration and the central

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[99] Perham, *Government of Ethiopia*, 345.
[100] Markakis, *Anatomy*, 289.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Decree No. 1 Administrative Regulations, *Negarit Gazeta*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1942).
[103] Order No. 1, Order to define the Powers and Duties of Our Ministers, *Negarit Gazeta*, Vol. 1, No 5, (1942-1951).

bureaucracy of our age were laid."[104] These measures manifested in the structures of provincial authority. For instance, military personnel from the centre were often appointed to positions of governor- general and deputy governor-general in Hararge province, whereas locals were appointed to the positions of 'adviser' and 'adviser-general.'[105]

If we take these changes to highlight the importance of centralised state power and authority in the context of 'modernising' the state, then Weber's broad conceptualisation becomes less fitting. Rather, Talcott Parsons' argument of "seeing power as a specific mechanism operating to bring about changes in the actions of others in the processes of social interaction"[106] becomes more appropriate. Similarly, Foucault's argument on the need to focus on the means by which power is exercised, rather than on power itself, and the consequences of the exertion of power by individuals over others,[107] also seems more applicable in this case. Thus, the provincial restructuring can be seen as directly related to the efforts of the state to broadcast its power and to lay the foundation for exerting imperial authority.

Within the context of diverse administrative traditions and the development of a centralised Ethiopian administration, Jijiga became a battle ground for the expression of these competing traditions. The following section analyses the manner in which the contestations between the various administrations manifested themselves and the consequences thereof for the populations of this area.

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[104] Zewde, "Hayla-Sellase," 34.
[105] These appointments appeared in the *Negarit Gazeta* , vol.3, no.8 (1962).
[106] Talcott Parsons, *Politics and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 353.
[107] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no.4 (Summer 1982): 786.

3.6 The administration of Jijiga during the British Military Administration

In the campaign to liberate Ethiopia from Italian occupation, British forces led by General Cunningham reached Jijiga on 17 March 1941, a force that comprised Nigerian Infantry troops and South African artillery men.[108] As prescribed in the 1942 and 1944 Agreements that established the BMA, this region became important, initially for strategic military reasons, then for purely political motives. Jijiga served as the main centre for the administration of the Reserved Areas from 1944 until the final evacuation of British forces in 1948. After 1948 Jijiga remained the main seat of the British liaison officer following the 1954 Agreement on the Haud grazing areas.[109]

From available records and opinions, the period of the BMA in Jijiga was one of great frustration for all parties concerned. The main reason for this state was British presence and the suspicions this aroused among the Ethiopians. From the outset, the British came with the intention to undermine Ethiopian sovereignty. According to Eshete, the first BMA officer to arrive in Jijiga lowered the Ethiopian flag and dislodged Ethiopian authorities from their offices.[110] As indicated earlier, the period of the BMA presented British colonial officials with an opportunity to reverse the decisions they had made decades earlier on the status of the Somali grazing lands. In a series of interventions they sought the return of the Haud to British Protectorate control. On the other hand, the imperial state was highly sensitive to the threats posed by the British on its territorial integrity.

British administrators and other colonial officials utilised their positions and offices to create an image of indefinite British authority in the region. Conversely, the Ethiopian state was increasingly suspicious of the vaguely defined nature of British presence. The

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[108] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 91.
[109] Ibid, 94.
[110] Eshete, "History of Jijiga Town," 95.

Ethiopians were also anxious about the nature of their own authority in the region, which was at best minimal, and at worst, questionable. Most significantly, the largely Somali population of this region was caught in an administrative tug-of-war, which seemed to leave them in a state of perpetual ambivalence.

3.6.1 The duplicitous British administration

The various British actors attempted to expose what they regarded as the 'bad' administration of the Ethiopians. They – particularly the Colonial Office, continuously criticised the performance of Ethiopian governors and the lack of development in Ethiopia. In a 1949 Ethiopian Annual Review of the Reserved Areas it is noted, among other things, that "Ethiopia's general allergy to progressive ideas is so evident that it is customary to describe her as unchangingly medieval." [111] The note further states that "the country is now governed by officials, for the most part venal and as grasping as the old provincial chieftains."[112] The British believed that they were in a more capable position to administer not only the Somali regions of Ethiopia, but the entire country as well.

At the start of the BMA the British appear to have held grand ambitions for the administration of Jijiga. In 1945 the new administration produced a document for an official policy of the Reserved Areas, and Jijiga in particular, for the years 1942-1948. However, the proposals made in this document reveal narrowly defined objectives. For instance, in reference to the nature of British administration in the RAs and Jijiga, it is noted that "It is therefore well situated for demonstrating a progressive British policy for Somalis, and what we accomplish there in the course of the next two years may well be an important factor when the time comes to press

[111] CO 535/138/13, *Ethiopian Annual Review*, 1949, the Colonial Office to Ernest Bevin, Britain's Foreign Secretary
[112] Ibid.

for the inclusion of the RA in any united Somalia project which may materialise."[113] This eventuality became the overall driving force of the so-called Reserved Areas policy, although very few of the policy proposals ever materialised. What did come to pass, however, was a relentless challenge and erosion of Ethiopian sovereignty by the British administration.

The Administration interfered with the judicial system that was created by the Ethiopians. Prior to the BMA, the Ethiopian government had full rights over existing postal systems, the courts, customs office and the municipality of Jijiga.[114] They had also established a *Danya* regional Court system in Jijiga. The BMA actively sought to have the Court under its influence. The Administration believed that by 1945 they were in a better position to do this under the 1944 Agreement.[115] In a Foreign Office correspondence it is noted that the Courts may continue in Jijiga with the judges appointed by the Ethiopian government, but the Court was to be under the control of the BMA.[116] The BMA in Jijiga went a step further and established a parallel court for the Muslim population, in other words, a court for the Somalis. The *Akil* Court, as it was known, functioned independently of the Ethiopian judicial system.[117] The Court was part of the 'Tribal Organisation' that represented Somalis from the Protectorate during their seasonal cross-border migrations to the Ethiopian Haud. An *Akil* was a representative of a sub-clan section, and they usually presided over clan related judicial matters.

Next, the BMA interfered in the delicate issue of land in the Jijiga area. The standard practice before the Italians was to grant land and titles to settlers from the north; however this system was reversed

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[113] War Office (WO) 230/63, Confidential Letter on the Reserved Areas Ethiopia- Policy, January 7, 1945.
[114] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 97.
[115] WO 230/63, Confidential Letter on the Reserved Areas Ethiopia- Policy, January 7, 1945.
[116] FO 1015/ 59, *Competency of Ethiopian Courts in the Reserved Areas*, Civil Affairs Branch, March 1948.
[117] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 98.

during the Italian occupation. The Italians restored what they regarded as 'pre-conquest' rights that included returning land to the Somalis, a practice which then adversely affected the northern settlers. With the land issue, the British administration was, however, not certain as to the best course of action. In a War Office policy document on Jijiga a question was raised on whether to allow Ethiopians who were evicted during the Italian occupation to regain possession of their land.[118] According to Eshete, the British continued the Italian policy of favouring the Somalis.[119] In the meantime, the Ethiopians made use of the *Danya* Courts and obtained eviction orders against the Somali occupants. The insistence of the British to establish the *Akil* Court was done to counteract the Ethiopian courts that assisted the previous land owners. The two Courts were essentially working against each other in their attempts to secure land for the respective population groups. Successive Ethiopian states reverted to the pre-occupation practice – with the reversals inevitably heightening resentment. Today there remains a noticeable division in the residential patterns of the settler and indigenous populations in Jijiga – with a clear territorial division between the Somalis and 'Amhara' sections.

The question of customs was another source of contention between the BMA and the Ethiopian government. The government of the British Protectorate required that Protectorate customs duties be applied in the Reserved Areas.[120] This was a highly contested issue. A letter from Hargeisa arrived in the BMA headquarters in Jijiga, expressing the desire for close cooperation between Ethiopian and Protectorate customs officials. However, the Protectorate government raised objections on the high nature of Ethiopian tariffs.[121] By 1949 Ethiopian customs operated in many of the areas that were already de-

[118] WO 230/63, Confidential Letter on the Reserved Areas Ethiopia- Policy, January 7, 1945.
[119] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 102.
[120] CO 1015/ 697, *Customs duties in Reserved Areas*, Letter from the Governor of Somaliland to Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1951.
[121] FO 371/ 80261, Letter from British Embassy in Addis Ababa to Hargeisa, Somaliland, March 1950.

reserved, namely Harar, Dire Dawa and Aisha. The latter was on the northern sector of the boundary with the British Somaliland Protectorate and was an important entry and exit point for goods between Ethiopia and Hargeisa.[122] The Ethiopians only established a customs point at the Togochale border after 1954,[123] following complete British withdrawal from the RAs.

The BMA also allegedly allowed, and arguably encouraged, open political campaigning against the Ethiopian government to take place in Jijiga. This was most notable in the period following the establishment of the Somali Youth Club, later Somali Youth League (SYL) in Mogadishu in 1943. The SYL opened a branch in Jijiga in 1946.[124] Matters came to a head in 1948 leading the Ethiopian government to lodge a complaint with the British representation in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopians learned that members of the SYL had hoisted their flags in Jijiga while the BMA police appeared on the scene and did nothing,[125] an accusation that was denied by BMA officials. The activities of the SYL reportedly became more brazen, ultimately forcing BMA authorities to take action against them. The Ethiopians sought to discourage and prevent the emergence of any form of self-identification that could potentially lead to strong ideas of group identity. Indeed, this was a real possibility as BMA authorities later noted that the SYL had "done a great deal towards bringing Somalis together and to crystallizing their ideas."[126]

The BMA first withdrew from Harar in 1943 and from the Ogaden in 1948, handing over Jijiga and adjacent areas between April and May 1948.[127] However, it was not until 1954 that the BMA completely withdrew from the Reserved Areas and transferred full authority back to the Ethiopians. Complete withdrawal was on 28

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[122] CO 537/ 5915, December 1949.
[123] FO 371/ 113516, *Reports from British Consulate in Harar*, October 1955.
[124] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town,"107.
[125] FO 371/69402, *Future of the Ogaden and the Reserved Areas*, February 1948.
[126] WO 230/63.
[127] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 116.

February 1955[128] through an Agreement that continued the uncertain existence of the Somalis in this Ethiopian periphery. The Haud Agreement, as it was so-called, was a decisive document that greatly impacted the future administration of Ethiopia's eastern periphery. The Agreement guaranteed the continued use of the Haud grazing areas by the population of the Somaliland Protectorate.[129]

Prior to signing the 1954 Agreement the duplicity of the British had reached its peak. The British initiated the so-called Zeila-Haud negotiations,[130] where they attempted to offer the Ethiopians the port of Zeila in exchange for the grazing areas. This proposal was a spectacular failure. The French did not entertain it from the beginning and the Ethiopians had no desire to cede their territory in exchange for the ancient port city. Following the 1954 Agreement, the British remained in a much reduced capacity in Ethiopia until 1959 on the eve of British Somaliland independence.

With the failure of the negotiations and the imminent independence of the Somaliland Protectorate, tension grew between the Colonial and Foreign Offices on the future of the Haud and Reserved areas. The two agencies disagreed on whether to facilitate discussions before or after independence between the future government of Somaliland and the Ethiopians. The Colonial Office felt that this is best left until after independence, whereas the Foreign Office wished to settle matters before the Protectorate gained its independence.[131] It appears that the FO was willing to go to great lengths to ensure that upon their exit from the strategic Horn of Africa in 1960, tension would eased between the Somali territories and what

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[128] FO 93/2/19, *Withdrawal of British Military Administration from "Reserved Area"- Agreement and Exchange of Notes*, London and Addis Ababa, November 29, 1954.

[129] Ibid.

[130] CO 1015/507, *Exchange of a Corridor leading to the port of Zeila in Somaliland for Grazing Areas in the Haud Ethiopia*, November 1951.

[131] CO 1015/ 1796, *Future Relations between Somaliland and Ethiopia*, December 1959.

they rightly regarded as an important actor in the region – Ethiopia.[132] On the other hand, the CO was more interested in the smooth transition of power in the Protectorate. Reflecting on events following the 1954 Agreement, I.M. Lewis notes the Foreign Office's continued support for Ethiopia and the Colonial Office's continued regret of the 1897 Treaty: "defending his government's decision in the House of Commons in 1955, the Colonial Secretary explained that he regretted the 1897 Treaty but that it was impossible to undo it."[133]

The legacy of duplicitous British policies was sufficiently entrenched in the administrative realities of the former Reserved and Haud areas of Ethiopia, as well as in people's minds. The 1954 Agreement created much discord between the Ethiopians and the British administration. The Agreement also exacerbated the uncertainty of the previous decade with regards to Ethiopian sovereignty in the eastern periphery.

3.6.2 The apprehensive Ethiopians

The Ethiopians sought to regain full sovereignty in the shortest time following liberation from the Italian occupation. However, this was not to be since the BMA exercised its authority through a vaguely defined agenda that significantly curtailed Ethiopian sovereignty in the BMA-administered areas. Relations had also deteriorated between the Ethiopian state and Somalis in the Harar and Jijiga areas following these interludes. However, there remained an opportunity to mend relations since the state had previously established nominal authority and enjoyed familiarity with the locals prior to the Italian occupation.

Yet, rather than developing a constructive approach to engage

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[132] In April 1956, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dodds-Parker visited Addis Ababa to smooth over disagreements from the 1954 Agreement, see Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 82.

[133] Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia, Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 152.

the local populations, the Ethiopian state responded with excessive and even hostile tactics in its efforts to (re)assert its authority. This threatened to widen the gap between the local populations and the central state authority. However, it is misleading for Perham to argue that it was because the Ethiopian government "seemed quite unready to undertake effectively the administrative, financial and military liabilities of this large section of Ethiopia that Britain insisted in both the 1942 and 1944 Agreements in retaining control of the Ogaden."[134] Initially, Britain had no intentions to hand over the Reserved Areas to Ethiopia. On the other hand, Ethiopia was more than ready to regain authority over the entire region and to continue implementing the administrative reforms of the pre-1936 period. Indeed, the Ethiopian state sought to establish an even more definite presence in the Jijiga area in order to continue the task of pacifying the Ogaden in the south, and thus consolidate both the territory and authority of the state in this periphery.

As noted in the introduction of this chapter, during the period of the BMA, Jijiga was located at a crossroads where different administrations intersected and overlapped – the limits of the Ethiopian state ended here while the BMA begun. The arrival of the British after signing the 1942 Agreement began on an unfortunate note in this area. There was an outbreak of violence between Ethiopian officials and Somalis on the main Harar-Jijiga road. The BMA political branch that reported on these incidents demonstrated an acute grasp of the situation. In the report it is noted that the Ethiopians appeared to be "showing an uncomfortable awareness that the borders of Ethiopia proper are not those customarily shown on the map," the note further stated that it should be expected for the Ethiopians and Somalis to be jealously watching what they conceive to be their interests or their rights.[135]

In order to avert complete alienation of the Somalis, the

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[134] Perham, *Government of Ethiopia*, 363.
[135] CO 535/ 138/13, *Reorganisation of the Somaliland Protectorate*, June 1942.

Ethiopians instituted material incentives toward the Somali populations in the Harar and Jijiga areas. These were exemplified by the establishment of the Somali Mutual Relief Society in 1947 whose *raison d'etre* was unclear. British officials speculated that the Society was an attempt by Emperor Selassie to contest the influence of the SYL. [136] The emperor was, indeed, directly involved in the establishment of this organisation and often received Somali leaders who belonged to the Society.[137] Similarly, the Duke of Harar – the emperor's son, invited Jijiga and Ogaden notables to his wedding, collecting them by lorry to Harar, where they were lavished with gifts.[138] These advances should be seen for what they were –attempts to appease the Somali populace and to divert their attention away from the intrigues of the BMA. It is important to remember that it was not the entire Somali population that was against Ethiopian authority – the Mutual Relief Society had members. A number of Somalis in this region, particularly in the Harar-Jijiga area, were willing to entertain the whims of the imperial state – depending on what they would benefit in return – this hardly suggests resistance to incorporation. Rather, it suggests a level of pragmatism on the part of the locals.

The imperial state also heightened its attempts to counteract the actions of the BMA in the RAs by asserting its presence in Jijiga. The Ethiopian *Danya* Court existed parallel to the BMA-created *Akil* Court. An Ethiopian post office was also operational in Jijiga town, so was the state bank of Ethiopia. [139] During and immediately after British withdrawal from the RAs and Jijiga, the state reversed the land ownership policy by transferring land from the Somali to the settlers who owned it prior to the Italian occupation. This situation became a major source of disagreement between the Amhara and Somali

[136] FO 1015/ 49, *Annual Report on Administration of the Reserved Areas of Ethiopia*, December 1947.
[137] FO 1015/ 49, *Annual Reports 1947, Somalia, British Somaliland and Reserved Area*, 1947.
[138] FO 1015/ 90, *Annual Report on the Administration of the Reserved Areas of Ethiopia*, 1946.
[139] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town," 116; also in FO 1015/ 49, *Annual Reports*.

residents of Jijiga.[140] The situation reached a tipping point when the military was sent to suppress mini-rebellions that were instigated by those who refused to hand over land to the previous owners.[141] This was followed by a new wave of settlement by northern farmers on the land between Jijiga and the border village of Togochale.[142]

The instances of Ethiopian defiance were designed to counterbalance the influence of the BMA in this area. However, these contestations exacerbated the enmity between the two authorities. Ethiopian and BMA officials that were stationed at Jijiga town endured mutual hostility for the duration of the BMA. The 1954 Agreement that officially restored full Ethiopian sovereignty in the RAs and the Haud also reinforced the enmity between Ethiopia and the British administration. Following the signing of the Agreement, the British Protectorate government sought an audience with Ethiopian officials to resolve the more pressing issues that arose from the Agreement. If not resolved, these issues threatened the very survival of the Agreement. It is likely, however, that the Ethiopians planned to terminate the Agreement upon Somaliland independence. Alternately, they may have believed that the future independence of the Protectorate would render the Agreement null and void. On the other hand, the government of the Protectorate still desired to secure a solid agreement for the grazing needs of the Somali populations of the Protectorate.

A Protectorate government delegation met with their Ethiopian counterparts in Harar and convened conferences from December 1955 to January 1956. Conference proceedings reveal the power struggle between the two sides. The minutes of the conferences suggests that the key protagonists were formidable opponents. These were J.R. Stebbing Esq., the Chief Secretary to the Somaliland Protectorate

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[140] Eshete, "History of Jijjiga Town,"117.
[141] Ibid, 118.
[142] FO 371/ 113556, *Petitions from Somalis about the settlement of Ethiopian Government of Amhara people on land which is traditionally Somali territory*, February 1955.

government and Kifle Erguetou, the deputy Governor-General of Hararge province. Stebbing employed accusatory language toward the Ethiopians and charged them with not honouring the key principles of the 1954 Agreement. Kifle Erguetou retorted and stated that, both the 1897 Treaty and 1954 Agreement recognised Ethiopian sovereignty, and that the clause granting access to the grazing areas was done on "humanitarian grounds" [143] by the Ethiopians.

The two sides disagreed on the interpretation of key terms of the Agreement. These included the terms 'nomadic pastoralist' 'sedentary' and 'migratory.'[144] The Protectorate delegation questioned Ethiopian sovereignty and authority in the grazing areas by arguing that the duties of the 'Tribal Organisation' that oversaw the migration of the pastoralists were often impeded by the Ethiopians. They also questioned the Ethiopians' extension of agriculture to the grazing areas. The Ethiopians on the other hand presented a strong defence and claimed that they did not have to justify their land use policies to the British Protectorate.

Based on the examination of key areas of disagreement, it appears that these were issues that concerned the control of the 'people' and the nature of authority over them. The 'Tribal Organisation'[145] that was created by the British, and roughly based on the traditional Somali form of social organisation, was at the core of the disagreements. It then seems that in the course of seeking territorial control, the Ethiopian state also sought to control the populations that inhabited the said territory.

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[143] CO 1015/ 876, *Minutes of Harar Conference between representatives of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Imperial Ethiopian Government*, 1956.
[144] Ibid.
[145] This consisted of *Akils* ('Chiefs' of sub-clan sections), *Illaloes* (who acted the role of police of sub-clan sections) and Elders (who acted as judges in cases involving sub-clan sections).

3.6.3 The ambivalent Somali

On the position of the Somalis, Margery Perham notes that the BMA and its ideas of unification enabled the many Somali problems to be dealt with as a whole for the first time, and thus lessening the chances of disorder.[146] This is not entirely accurate. Indeed, the BMA and the previous Italian administration had created a sense of (political) unity for the Somalis as they sought to erase traces of Ethiopian authority, but this did not necessarily lessen internal Somali disorder (s). Certainly, the periods of temporary unification led to the development of a large cross-border Somali political economy that transcended the ever-shifting boundaries of authority in this area. For instance, Somalis benefitted from the creation of a national economy through the regularization of prices and taxation, the extension of large scale agriculture and the building of roads and markets.[147] The period of temporary political unification lasted for approximately thirteen years, counting the years of Italian rule and the BMA. However, the symbolic unification has arguably been more enduring.

Does this then suggest that the Somalis presented a unified political voice when the ideas of Somali unification emerged? Not in the least. On the eve of BMA withdrawal, an official in the Administration noted that in the event of the Ethiopian government taking over the administration of Jijiga, there is likely to be no bloodshed as "the people of Jijiga have known some 30 years of Ethiopian administration…"[148] Regardless of Somali ambivalence during this period, it is paramount to note that Somalis in Ethiopia did not embrace similar ideas or aspirations with regard to their collective national fate. For instance, the fighting and skirmishes that ensued between Somalis and Ethiopian officials on the Harar-Jijiga road when this area was returned to Ethiopian administration involved the 'settled

[146] Perham, *Government of Ethiopia*, 363.
[147] David Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia, Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 62.
[148] FO 371/69402, *Future of Ogaden and the Reserved Areas*, 1948.

agriculturalist' Somalis and not the nomadic groups. The majority of the latter were waging a separate resistance elsewhere in the large province, mainly in the pastoralist Ogaden region.

A significant portion of the Ogadeen Somali whose territory is largely on the Ethiopian side and are predominantly nomadic, registered dissatisfaction with the return of Somali-inhabited areas to Ethiopian sovereignty in 1948 and 1954. The 1954 Agreement guaranteed the continued use of the Haud grazing areas by the Protectorate population – meaning continued competition for the fertile pastures. This was enshrined in Article two of the Agreement and it reinforced the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty that allowed the crossing of the frontier for the purpose of grazing.[149] The 1954 Agreement ostensibly generated wide spread opposition within the Somali populace. However, the response of the Somalis in the Jijiga area was largely muted.

Different sections of the Somali population viewed the Agreement very differently. The Ogadeen had hoped that the 1954 Agreement would terminate the clause on sharing the Haud grazing pasture. They petitioned Emperor Selassie in 1960 and claimed to suffer abuses and difficulties because of the Agreement, and that the British protected subjects were abusing the generosity shown to them.[150] The Ogadeen employed the same language as the Ethiopian representatives at the Harar conferences. They interpreted the clause that allowed seasonal migration as an 'act of compassion' on the part of the Ethiopians –including them.

Contrary petitions were being tendered in Mogadishu. These were directed at the United Nations-appointed Four Powers Commission of Investigation on the future of the former Italian colony. One such petition was "the Ogaden petition for amalgamation

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[149] FO 371/ 113458, *Haud Agreement*, February 1955.
[150] Author unknown, "Ogaden notables Petition Emperor," *Ethiopian Herald*, May 21, 1960.

with other Somali territories."[151] The unsuitable nature of the Ethiopian government to govern the Ogaden was outlined in this document, including what was termed "the hostility of the Ethiopians" toward the Ogaden region.[152] There is a marked difference between the latter and the previous petition to the emperor. The first petition was not so much concerned with the unification of Somali territories, but with the narrowly defined and immediate concern of access to the natural resource of the Haud. The second petition was overtly political and concerned with the broader issue of Somali nationalism – the support of which was, apparently, fragmented.

As indicated in the introduction of the thesis, caution should always be exercised when examining relations between the Ethiopian state and its Somali populations. This is a complicated relationship whose nuances are yet to be fully investigated. The Somali of Ethiopia do not represent a homogenous group. Indeed, evidence suggests that different sections of this population have enjoyed differential experiences of integration into the state – depending on historical circumstances and the geographic location of their territory, as this thesis demonstrates.

One of the critical issues raised at the Harar conferences was the issue of nationality, or rather, the official and legal status of peripheral populations, particularly in relation to the seasonal cross-border migrations. The two administrations struggled to reach a consensus on this particular issue, as demonstrated by the individual cases that were brought before the meeting. The government of the Protectorate claimed that Ethiopian officials had no right to arrest or question certain individuals from the Protectorate that were found in and around the grazing areas. The Ethiopians argued that the said individuals were Ethiopian nationals. This raised heated discussions about the issue of identity and belonging. The criteria used for

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[151] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Democratic Somali Republic, *The Portion of Somali Territory under Ethiopian Colonization*, June 1974.
[152] Ibid.

determining imperial subjects – the categorisation of the population in this periphery, is thus of interest and is the subject of analysis in the following chapter.

Donham has argued that the most intractable source of conflict created in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia was the developing tension between the definition of national and ethnic identities.[153] This tension was most evident in the vast territories on the margins of the state, including the eastern periphery. However, beyond the evident conflict lay more subtle processes that can be seen as instances of negotiation between the state and the populations on the margins.

3.7 Jijiga as a melting pot and the legacy of categorisation

Today Jijiga is a bustling centre and capital of the SNRS of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).[154] The town carries a nervous energy that is owed to a combination of lively economic activity and a pronounced security presence. As one descends the Harar highlands towards the Jijiga plain there is a decisive change. Beyond changes in the topography, random security checkpoints targeting passengers on public transportation present a notable difference between Jijiga and Harar. Yet, what one notices the most in Jijiga is that it appears to be a melting pot of different Ethiopian population groups as well as diverse Somali clans. Most of these Somali clans are engaged in different modes of subsistence, regardless of the dominant views that suggest that the unifying centre of all features of Somali culture is the pastoral base.[155] This variation is one of the distinguishing features of the northern section of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia.

[153] Donham, "Old Abyssinia," 33.
[154] See Figure 3
[155] Laitin and Samatar, *Somalia*, 21.

The cosmopolitan element in Jijiga can be traced to the early twentieth century, as described in earlier sections of this chapter. However, its recent origins can be traced to the Harar conferences of 1955-56.[156] The minutes of the Harar conferences demonstrate how the categorisation of colonial and imperial subjects was conducted in this periphery. But it was the clause on seasonal cross-border migration that crystallised the need for a definite articulation of the official status of the people concerned with this movement. As noted in the previous section, the categorisation of populations that are largely mobile was not going to be an easy task. The minutes of the conferences also suggest that the border, in and of itself, was not going to be a reliable barrier.

The charges made by the British delegation and the responses of the Ethiopians suggest that the Ethiopians had by this time adopted and implemented a policy akin to 'sedentarisation.' The Ethiopians were able to carry out such a policy for two main reasons. The first is that a number of 'Amhara' or northerners had settled in the Jijiga area since the late nineteenth century as administrators and other personages. Yet, many more had come because of the availability of arable land in this area. Thus, the availability of fertile land that is suitable for cultivation is the second reason why the Ethiopian state actively pursued a policy of settling pastoralists.

The British delegation expressed concern over what they saw as the "active encouragement of cultivating at the expense of grazing."[157] The delegation from the Protectorate sought, first and foremost, to secure grazing land for its Protectorate Somali subjects. The government of Somaliland had an intimate knowledge of the Somali way of life and their reliance on the Haud pasture for their livelihood. However, Kifle Erguetou, the leader of the Ethiopian

[156] CO 1015/876 *Meeting with Ethiopian Representatives at Harar- minutes of Harar Conference between representatives of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Imperial Ethiopian Government*, 1956.
[157] CO 1015/ 876, *Harar Conferences.*

delegation, maintained that the 1897 Treaty and 1954 Agreement were mainly concerned with pastoralists and not settled farmers, and that they did not negate cultivation. The Ethiopians insisted that the settled farmers on the fringes of the Haud were Ethiopian subjects and had every right to farm on that land. The two sides were compelled to reach a consensus on who is 'sedentary' 'nomadic' or a 'migratory tribe.' Key criterion was put forward as the determinants of 'nationality.' These included: property ownership, immovable property, payment of tax and tribute to Ethiopia.

The imperial state practice of imposing tax on sections of the settled Somali clans in the areas adjacent to the Haud and in the Jijiga area up to the border with the Somaliland Protectorate had started much earlier.[158] These people practiced agriculture and paid tax, yet, they were not entirely sedentary. Indeed, the 'settled' pastoralists often evaded taxation by fleeing across the border to the Protectorate, regardless of whether they owned property or not in Ethiopia. Barnes notes that the complaints of the British delegation were disingenuous since they were aware of the evasion of taxes by means of the border by people who were supposedly Ethiopian subjects.[159]

The attempts to categorise people led to the emergence of a new category of Somalis in Ethiopia – agro-pastoralists. Certainly, limited farming is likely to have existed much earlier in the fertile Harar-Jijiga-Togochale areas, even before it was made obligatory. However, its active pursuit in the vicinity of the Haud and Jijiga should be seen as a mechanism for asserting control and authority over territory and people by the Ethiopian state. In the 1950s, Ethiopia was in a desperate bid to consolidate its vast territory, particularly the peripheries that were previously under the BMA. Thus, attempts to categorise people as either sedentary or nomadic stemmed from the need to secure the territorial limits of the empire by identifying who belonged and who did not. However, this is something the Ethiopians

[158] Barnes, "Ethiopian-British Somaliland," 126-130.
[159] Ibid, Barnes has documented this prevalence of this practice in the 1920s.

were always going to struggle with since the people of this area have always been mobile, regardless of their subsistence mode. Barnes has demonstrated how, even before the BMA, the Gadabursi Somali clans of this border area had effectively exploited their ambiguous status and the affordances of the boundary.[160] Although they were supposedly 'sedentary tribes' according to the Ethiopians, they often crossed the border into the British Somaliland Protectorate, a practice that the Ethiopian state ultimately sought to end by force. Today, the polarised politics of the SNRS of Ethiopia can be linked to this history of categorisation. The next chapter examines this in detail and demonstrates that categorisation of the type described in this section tended to split further the various clans – creating more layers of identification and differentiation.

The nature of political disorder that is said to exist in this region has been described as "beyond clannishness and colonialism."[161] Hagmann postulates that a complex web of power relations between the federal government and regional elites, couched within a neo-patrimonial system, is one way to explain this disorder. According to Hagmann, contested political power is the main cause of the instability that is symptomatic of this town and its immediate environs. However, this argument only explains the current state of disorder to a certain extent. The most significant aspect of Hagmann's argument is that it identifies and acknowledges a fraught relationship between the federal government and regional elites and how it is characterised by patronage and neo-patrimonial tendencies. Yet, we cannot ignore clan politics, because they remain a potent force in the politics of the region. The clan of the regional president and their interactions with other clans matters a great deal to people. Indeed, the often latent antagonism between the clans contributes to the tense

[160] Ibid, 129-130.
[161] Tobias Hagmann, "Beyond Clannishness and colonialism: understanding disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991-2004," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no.4 (December 2005).

atmosphere in the town where an ordinary activity such as going to a tea house carries undercurrents of clan identification.

Contested political power and central state intervention can be traced to an earlier period. This is not a post-1991 phenomenon, hence the importance of the past in explaining the present. The potent nuances of power politics and complex 'identities' contribute to the tense atmosphere in Jijiga today. The next chapter examines identification and categorisation in more detail, and demonstrates how issues of identification often coalesce with power politics, particularly in the context of ethnic federalism.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the historical trajectory of the attempts of the Ethiopian state to broadcast its power and authority in the eastern periphery. The chapter established the historical interconnectedness of the key towns of Harar and Jijiga in the attempts of the imperial state to determine and consolidate its territorial limits in this eastern borderland region. The chapter argued that the unlikely combination of administrations – an indefinite and duplicitous BMA steeped in the tradition of colonial administration and a modernising African empire, created a situation of ambiguous authority, particularly in the Jijiga area.

The chapter explored the underpinnings of imperial authority and how this was exercised in the peripheries. The territorial expansions of the nineteenth century in Ethiopia were directly linked to the evolution of a 'modern' imperial administrative order, which was characterised by a centralised bureaucracy. The administration was, itself, situated within a contradictory process of the modernisation and centralisation of imperial administration. However, ambitions to consolidate the territory of the empire state experienced major setbacks due to foreign interventions. The first of these was the

1936 war with Italy and subsequent occupation that was immediately followed by an ambiguous British presence. Both these interventions gave rise to significant changes in the administration of Jijiga, and in the process created a muddled relationship between this area and the state. This complex relationship, however, did not completely isolate the two sides. An apprehensive Ethiopian state and an ambivalent population each sought to create a semblance of organisation. The population was not completely powerless as it sought to gain what it could during the periods of ambiguous administration.

The situation of ambiguous authority in this periphery was exacerbated by the 1954 Agreement that created uncertainty with regards to the legal/ official identity and belonging of a number of the people in the border areas adjacent to the British Somaliland Protectorate. The condition of uncertain 'nationality' saw an increase in the categorisation of imperial subjects in order to establish territorial control and imperial authority. Thus, the period following formal British withdrawal in 1954 saw the most determined efforts by the Ethiopian state to exert control over territory and the people who inhabited the region adjacent to the British Protectorate.

The following chapter examines the interplay between the state project of categorising populations and local approaches to identity formation in the Harar and Jijiga localities. The chapter explores how processes of identification have evolved against the background of various historical contexts, including the actors involved in these processes. The chapter highlights ethnic identification as one of the most useful forms of assessing identification in the peripheries because of its association with the power of the state to categorise people.

Chapter Four. Identity formation in Harar and Jijiga: negotiating identification in encounters with others

4.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates processes of identity formation in the Harar and Jijiga localities of eastern Ethiopia from the period of the British Military Administration up to the present. It does so by examining the interplay between state attempts to categorise the population and the evolution of local ideas of self-identification. The chapter demonstrates the significance of the presence of the BMA for people's perceptions of their national and ethnic identities in eastern Ethiopia. It highlights the complex and ongoing processes of identity formation in Ethiopia's eastern periphery, which are illustrated by Ahmed's story:

> Ahmed, an elder that was interviewed by the author in Jijiga recalled memories of growing up in Dire Dawa[1] in eastern Ethiopia in the late 1940s and early 1950s. According to Ahmed's recollections, although they lived in Ethiopia, his father was in possession of a passport that was issued by the British. He also recalled that his family lived in a separate section of town that was administered by the British, whereas the local market was administered by the Ethiopians. The elderly Ahmed is Isaq and his father's passport had been issued by the British Protectorate government in Hargeisa. Consequently, his father established himself in British administered Ethiopia, where he remained permanently. When deciding on his permanent residence Ahmed noted that he had a number of choices to choose from. He eventually settled in Jijiga following ventures in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the region.[2]

The choices that confronted Ahmed when deciding on his permanent residence can be attributed to the variable nature of political authority and territorial control to which he was accustomed. Indeed, similar to the border identities that Wilson and Donnan examined, the identities

[1] See Figure 4

[2] Ahmed, interview with author, Jijiga, October 20, 2012.

of the people who inhabit the Harar and Jijiga areas are multiple and often shifting.[3] However, rather than discussing the multiple identities that these people assume in different contexts, this chapter focuses on the narrowly defined 'ethnic' identity. This identity is the most useful category for investigating processes of identification because of the fundamental role of individual agency and group interests in its conceptualisation. Ethnic identity has also shown to be one of the most contested aspects of statehood in Ethiopia, and it is also the most resonant with contested territoriality in the Horn of Africa.

The formulation of identity, in its broad conceptualisation, can be seen as the intention to give meaning to an encounter with others.[4] Therefore, we can take meaning as the purpose for which identity is formulated in any given context. As noted by Wilson and Donnan, identity formation in border areas often evolves within a framework that is shaped by the centre,[5] but the context is also provided by events that are taking place across the border. What then becomes of significance is how these exogenous discourses are experienced by local actors in the border regions. The chapter argues and demonstrates that the encounters of various ethnic groups with the Ethiopian state, with each other, and with others from the neighbouring Somali territory have provided the key contexts for identity formation in Harar and Jijiga.

However, the term 'identity' is impractical as an analytical tool since it is capable of denoting heterogeneous and contrary usages.[6] Thus, this thesis refrains from the uncritical use of the ubiquitous yet ambiguous term – 'identity.' The term is ambiguous, contradictory,

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[3] Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, "Nation, state and identity at international borders," in *Border Identities, Nation and state at international frontiers*, eds. Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 13.
[4] John Markakis, "The Politics of Identity-The Case of the Gurage in Ethiopia," in *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*, eds. M.A. Mohamed Salih and John Markakis (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998), 130.
[5] Wilson and Donnan, "State and identity,"13.
[6] Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond "Identity,"' 8.

confusing and is characterised by reifying connotations.[7] In Ethiopia, peripheries are characterised by central state attempts to broadcast its power and authority as the previous chapter demonstrated. These attempts have been largely contested – making peripheries useful sites for investigating the evolution of key aspects of statehood. Indeed, a substantial amount of ink has been consumed in efforts to account for the contested nature of territorial boundaries in the Horn of Africa, not least in Ethiopia.[8] Central to these contestations are contrasting perceptions of self-understanding, self-interest, collective-interest, social and political action. In one way or another, these are all related to 'identity.'

Thus, the current investigation adopts the alternatives that have been suggested by Brubaker and Cooper who proposed identification and categorisation as alternative terms. With these terms we find further distinction between self-identification and external identification. This chapter focuses on the interplay between the two. The chapter examines the formalized, codified, objectified systems of categorization developed by powerful, authoritative institutions such as the state.[9] It also investigates how local populations have experienced and responded to these attempts, and indeed, continue to, in the Harar and Jijiga localities. Jenkins has posited the centrality of power in the process of categorising people, noting that categorisation has the potential to contribute to how the group eventually perceives itself – group identity.[10] The chapter, therefore, also reflects on the nature and role of state power in processes of identity formation.

The current federal system in Ethiopia underscores ethnic identity. However, this model has been shrouded in contradictions that

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[7] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity," *Theory and Society* 29, no.1 (2000): 5.

[8] Richard Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa, Genealogies of Conflict since C. 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne eds. *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010).

[9] Ibid, 15.

[10] Richard Jenkins, "Rethinking ethnicity: identity, categorisation and power," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no.2 (1994): 216.

challenge its ethnic basis.[11] The more apparent challenge is the extent to which ethnic groups can successfully lay claim to a specific geographic area. Decentralisation has introduced different and new forms of relating to both space and identity in Ethiopia. Asnake Kefale demonstrates how, compelled to identify with the larger Somali and Oromo identities, minority groups on the borders of the Somali-Oromo regions have been renegotiating their ethnic identity since the advent of ethnic federalism.[12] The author cites the presence of Italian and British colonial powers in the region as one of the contributing factors to the identification trajectory of these minority groups.[13] The influence of the past in the present thus suggests that the formation of ethnic identities is both contextual and historical. This confirms Jenkins' assertion that:

> Ethnic identity should be understood and theorised as an example of social identity in general and that externally located processes of social categorisation are enormously influential in the production and reproduction of social identities.[14]

Therefore, it is not adequate to only claim the existence of 'rigid' or 'fluid' identities – we must demonstrate how and why they arrive at such conditions. This essentially involves both context and history. This chapter argues that in response to the categories attributed to them by the state and other external agents – the various populations in Harar and Jijiga have been actively constructing and reconstructing their identities at the local level. The chapter demonstrates that current discourses on identification in these areas are not a post-1991phenomenon – but are part of an historical process of negotiating identification on the margins of the state.

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[11] See Asnake Kefale, "Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo-Somali Ethnic Frontiers," *Development and Change* 41, no.4 (2010) and Assefa Fiseha, "Theory versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism," in *Ethnic Federalism, The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed., David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 135-138.
[12] Asnake Kefale, "Federal Restructuring," 620.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Jenkins, "Rethinking ethnicity," 197.

The first section of the chapter provides a brief outline of the ethnic groups and the geographic area under investigation. The next section surveys initial and subsequent attempts from 'above' to shape identification in these areas. The chapter then moves on to demonstrate how self-identification, in encounters with others, has developed among the ethnic groups under discussion. The chapter endeavours to engage in a constructive discussion on the dynamics and patterns that exists in processes of identity formation in a multi-ethnic region on the margins of the state.

4.2 The multi-ethnic periphery

This section of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups. The Harari and Somali are indigenous to Harar and Jijiga, respectively.[15] The other notable ethnic group that is present in this region is the Oromo who inhabit the fringes of the Harari and Somali National Regional States. The Amhara settler community forms a significant minority, particularly in the SNRS. In Harar, the Harari are outnumbered by both the Amhara and the Oromo. The historical patterns of interaction between these groups and the state and amongst themselves have been markedly transformed since the adoption of ethnic federalism. There is now a more determined exchange that tends to heighten ethnic claims of identity within the ethnic federal regions.

[15] See Figure 3

Figure 3: Political map of Ethiopia showing regions and regional capitals
Source: maps of the world, 2012

The present investigation centres on how the Harari and Somalis have been engaged in processes of identity formation over time. Both have demonstrated much variability in their patterns of merging with, and remaining separate, from the Ethiopian national identity. It is useful therefore not to view the Harari and Somali ethnic groups as primarily distinguishable by cultural forms since this would imply a high level of continuity in their organisation,[16] which of course is not the case. The aim is to derive a better understanding of how they have fared as ethnic groups in encounters with others, not how they have persisted as ethnic units. In a later section the chapter demonstrates instances where both the Harari and Somalis have adopted certain 'Amhara'

[16] Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. Fredrick Barth (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), 11-12.

cultural traits without losing or compromising their ethnic group identity.

The Harari are the descendants of the Harar Emirate that was captured by Menelik of Shoa in 1887 and later incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire, as discussed in chapter three. The emirate is believed to have been a remnant of the ancient Sultanate of Adal. The Somalis are believed to have originated from Adal and were subsequently scattered throughout the region and beyond at the dissolution of the sultanate.[17] The seemingly intertwined history of the Harari and Somalis is, however, somewhat tenuous. The Harari have Semitic language origins, whereas the Somalis have a Cushitic language background. The most striking connection between the two groups is their adherence to Islam. Ioan Lewis notes that in Somali oral traditions Harar is mentioned as the place where the tombs of venerated ancestors of some Somali groups are said to be located.[18] This also seems to support the religious rather than the cultural connection, especially when we recall that Harar was previously the centre of Islamic propagation in the region.

The Harari have always occupied an ambiguous position vis-à-vis the central state and the dominant national identity in Ethiopia. Yet, common Semitic language origins[19] with the ruling classes of imperial Ethiopia never guaranteed close relations. This is mainly because of religion. Indeed, religion has been cited as one of the reasons for the marginalisation of the Harari in mainstream Ethiopian historiography.[20] The Muslim Harari and Somali have a historically troubled and often violent history with the Orthodox Christian state. The two sides often recall the exploits of Imam Ahmad Ibrahim Al-Ghazi or *Gran*. *Gran* was the Imam from Adal who raided northern

[17] Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia, Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988), 22.
[18] Ioan M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland, Culture, History and Society* (London: Hurst & Company, 2008), 2.
[19] Amharic and Harari are both Semitic languages
[20] Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir, Harari local historian and poet, conversations with the author, Harar, October, November 2011 and October 2012.

Ethiopia from Harar – coming dangerously close to bringing about the fall of the historic Ethiopian Empire – Abyssinia, in the 16th century.[21] In present day Ethiopia, the two sides have widely divergent versions of *Gran*.

This author witnessed the controversy that surrounds the narrative of *Gran* in an incident that took place at the Arthur Rimbaud museum in Harar. A young Harari tour guide was escorting a family from the northern regions of Ethiopia around the museum. As they viewed the different artefacts and collections, *Gran* came up in their conversation. A heated debate about *Gran* soon ensued between the tour guide and one of the tourists. From the perspective of the Harari and Somali, *Gran* waged a jihad against unbelievers. However, for the northern Christians, the mention of *Gran* arouses memories of untold terror, many of which have been maintained through oral tradition across generations. Northerners are said to have developed the habit of eating raw meat during the *Gran* era when entire villages were in hiding, with many people avoiding fires that would have attracted the enemy. Certainly, the maintenance of these divergent historical narratives of *Gran* is symptomatic of the challenges that exist in the construction of a pan-Ethiopian identity.

Although his ethnic identity remains uncertain, some believe that *Gran* was of Somali origin.[22] If this were true, then it would further isolate the Christian northerners from both the Harari and Somalis, while uniting the two. However, the Harari and Somali have never been a united force. The ethnic divide often comes into play, at times overriding the religious common ground. Regardless of how the Harari have interacted with other groups, they are well-known for preserving their unique culture.[23] Indeed, from observations made by

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[21] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia*, 2.

[22] Many 'Amhara' are adamant of his Somali background, see Mesfin Wolde Mariam, "The Background of the Ethio-Somalian Boundary Dispute," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 1964): 195.

[23] See for instance in Camilla Gibb, *Sweetness in the Belly* (London: Random House, 2006).

this author in the city of Harar, the Harari view the Somalis as very different from them. Marked difference in behaviour or cultural difference is often invoked by the Harari in encounters with the Somalis.

Another important dynamic among the various populations in this area is found amongst the majority Somali. According to the geographic area under investigation – the Jijiga zone of the Somali region,[24] there is a notable distinction between the Ogadeen and other Somali groups. This chapter identifies the Isaq as the dominant rival clan of the Ogadeen. The Isaq clan is dominant in the area between Jijiga and the border with the adjacent northern Somali territory. The Isaq and Ogadeen Somali have a historical clan rivalry whose genealogy will not be attempted here. However, the contrast between the two groups is most evident in the divergent ways in which they have historically identified with and constructed their identities in relation to the Ethiopian state. The rivalry between the two clans has, in the past, manifested itself in larger Somali politics as witnessed in the former Republic of Somalia. The Ogadeen are part of the larger Darod clan family and belong to a triad of clans that formed the power base of President Siad Barre's regime.[25] The Isaq on the other hand belong to a different clan family within the clan structure.

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[24] Jijiga zone, see Figure 4
[25] David Laitin and Said Samatar, *Somalia, Nation in Search of State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 92.

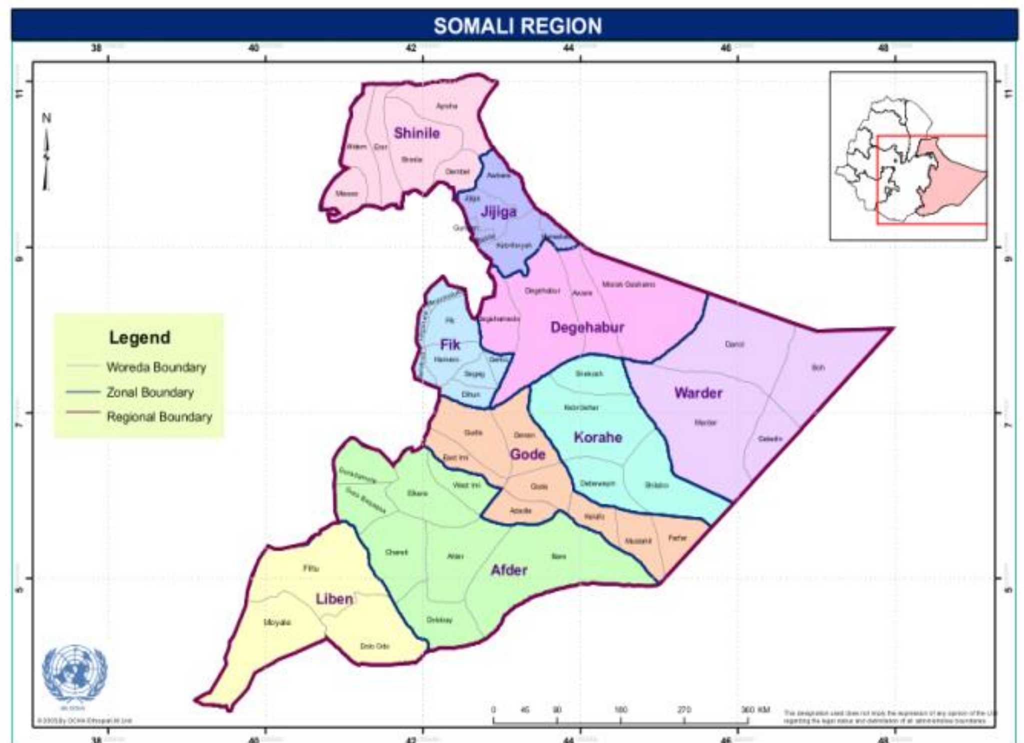

Figure 4: Map of the Somali region of Ethiopia

Source: Reliefweb.int.

The preceding discussion has provided a background of the various groups that inhabit this section of Ethiopia's eastern periphery. The rest of the chapter is largely confined to the Somalis and the Harari – the indigenous populations of Jijiga and Harar, respectively. The following section surveys initial Harari and Somali experiences of identification during the imperial period, including the era of British administration.

4.3 Categorising imperial/ colonial subjects (1942-1960)

The categorisation of imperial and colonial subjects from 1942 to the end of the 1950s in eastern Ethiopia was largely influenced by the presence of the BMA. This was most evident with the tension that ensued between the Protectorate and Ethiopian Governments

following the 1954 Agreement. This section elaborates on this tension and its impact on the general populace.

As established in the previous chapter, this periphery, and the Jijiga area specifically, was a battle ground as the caretaker BMA and the imperial state competed for authority. The consequences were that local populations were compelled to devise survival or coping mechanisms in the midst of ambiguous and contested authority. The BMA vied to gain substantial influence among the Somali while undermining Ethiopian authority. In contrast, the Ethiopian state was concerned with securing its state borders and further solidifying its territorial sovereignty. This contest affected people's perceived and real notions of their identities, especially in the period from1942-1954, when the BMA created a large borderless zone where Somalis moved freely with no territorial restrictions. Thus it was contrasting approaches from 'above' that influenced the evolution of ideas of identification after 1942 in this periphery.

4.3.1 The BMA and the creation of ambiguous boundaries

The BMA in eastern Ethiopia created, facilitated, and encouraged the free movement of people across the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary. This was done was through the creation of special administrative territories – the Reserved and the Haud grazing areas. The overlap of British administration – the BMA in Ethiopia and the British Somaliland Protectorate government, created an impression of spatial and political continuity. This situation was confirmed to this author by an elder who noted that during that time "the eastern part of Ethiopia and Somalia were one country…Jijiga, Hargeisa, Mogadishu as one."[26]

[26] Mohammed, interview with the author, Jijiga, October 27, 2012.

The presence of the BMA allowed the British Protectorate government in Hargeisa to play a leading role in creating an impression of political unity among so-called 'British protected' people. A largely pastoral society, the Somalis took full advantage of this situation by actively moving back and forth across the boundary with few or no restrictions. The largely unrestricted movement allowed them to become involved in many cross-border activities – trade, land acquisition, and criminal activities,[27] across what had become a seemingly 'invisible' boundary. There are hardly any people who are alive today who have first-hand experience of this period. However, a few elders recall stories they were told, or reflect on subsequent observations in later years. The people that were interviewed by this author were unanimous in their belief that this was a period of free and unregulated movement across the border. The extent of this free movement is revealed in Colonial Office (CO) archival documents. The archival sources demonstrate instances where BMA officials in Jijiga or Harar and their British Protectorate counterparts in Hargeisa jointly presided over security matters concerning both 'British Somalis' and Somalis of Ethiopia.

The element of criminality across the border is worth mentioning separately since it was prevalent but also because it brought to sharp focus the nature of authority in this border region. It was common to find either Ethiopian or British Somali subjects who had committed crimes on one side of the border fleeing to the other side. The relevant authorities would have to intervene and mediate in criminal cases involving subjects from the other side of the border. One such incident involved several men from the British Protectorate who were arrested on the Ethiopian side. These men had been to Harar where they allegedly purchased illegal rifles.[28] They were then

[27] Mohammed and Ahmed, Jijiga, October 2012.
[28] CO 1015/876 *Meeting with Ethiopian Representatives at Harar- minutes of Harar Conference between representatives of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Imperial Ethiopian Government*, 1956.

detained carrying Ethiopian Government rifles on camels headed for the Protectorate.[29] Cattle and camel raids were also common between the Ogadeen and Isaq Somali clans. Following a raid, the Isaq would flee across the border and retreat to the safety of the Protectorate. With serious crimes such as murder, establishing the official status of the perpetrators often proved particularly difficult for the authorities. For instance, the notion of a 'British protected tribe' referred to groups and not individuals.

It was within such contexts that traditional Somali authority surfaced and challenged central government authority in the Protectorate and Ethiopia – with clan elders employing their own machinery for the settlement of disputes.[30] With instances of disputes the decentralised nature of Somali authority calls for wide consultation – to ensure a fair trial. Lewis notes that it is in fact the elders who control clan affairs.[31] The system proved particularly problematic for formal (state) authority. This is examined in detail in a later section. For now, it is sufficient to note the 'openness' and free-flow of movement that was facilitated by the BMA.

4.3.2 Courting the borderland subjects

The period from 1942 to 1954 saw the Ethiopian state intensify its efforts to exercise authority over the Somalis in the British-administered territories – a process that evolved simultaneously with attempts to control territory. The Ethiopians were never at ease with the situation created by the BMA. This period saw the highest imperial personalities such as the emperor and his son, the Duke of Harar, make several overtures toward a number of Somali chiefs. These included cash distributions and inviting Somali chiefs to royal events. These

[29] Ibid.
[30] John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Paul Mall Press, 1964), 19.
[31] Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia, Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 10.

offers deceived even the otherwise vigilant BMA authorities. The latter saw these advances as an attempt by the Ethiopians to mend their relationship with the Somalis.[32] These actions, however, cannot be divorced from the fact that the Ethiopians were desperate to regain full territorial sovereignty and to assert their authority in BMA-administered areas. However, these seemingly benevolent incentives failed to pacify and to gain favour with the Ogadeen clans. Indeed, in the 1960s the state was yet to claim full authority in the Ogaden region south of Jijiga.

The de facto 'policy' of gaining favour with peripheral populations and the creation of new categories of local elites appear to have been common practice among Ethiopian imperial authorities. Feyissa notes that, because the British had ambitions to integrate Gambella with the Sudan, the imperial state had begun to dispense imperial positions among the Nuer in a bid to secure their loyalties.[33] In both the east and western peripheries, these advances were, for all practical purposes, aimed at maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state, rather than nurturing a meaningful integration of these areas into the state. This demonstrates the importance of peripheries in Ethiopia, because of the equally important role of territorial borders in the conceptualisation of statehood.

Similar to the Gambella region, the Ethiopians were yet to establish substantial presence in the area south of Jijiga – the Ogaden, prior to the Italian invasion.[34] This was despite having had official jurisdiction since the late nineteenth century. Initially, the area was occasionally raided by the Ethiopians for tax extraction from the largely nomadic population. However, this practice came to an abrupt end in 1915 after the massacre of one hundred and fifty Ethiopian soldiers by the locals.[35] Therefore, the post-BMA period presented the

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[32] FO 1015/ 90 *Annual Report on the Administration of the Reserved Areas of Ethiopia*, 1946.
[33] Feyissa, *Different Games*, 129.
[34] John Drysdale, *The Somali Dispute* (London: Paul Mall Press, Ltd., 1964), 56.
[35] Ibid.

state with an opportunity to establish a more permanent presence in this region. Geographic proximity and the extent of interaction were some of the key factors that shaped the nature of relations between populations in the Harar and Jijiga areas and the central state. The interaction was also dependent on the socio-economic organisation of the peripheral populations.

The Isaq Somali are divided into pastoralists and semi-agriculturalists – categories that developed as a result of categorisation by the state. Some Isaq and Gadabursi Somali are 'settled' and are dominant in the area between Jijiga and the Togochale border. Since the incorporation of this area into the empire in the late nineteenth century, the attention of the Ethiopians has been on these 'settled' groups.[36] Hagmann and Khalif also note that – the agro- pastoralists of the Harar plateau that descends to Jijiga have had more trade and other contacts with highland Ethiopia,[37] than their counterparts in the sections south of Jijiga. When the BMA was terminated in the 1950s, these groups had better recollections of the authority of the Ethiopian state because they had felt its presence prior to the Italian occupation.

However, the 1954 Agreement was to play a major role in further determining the issue of proximity and interaction between the populations of this periphery and the Ethiopian state.

4.4 The impact of the 1954 Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement on identification

4.4.1 The role of the Tribal Organisation in the Agreement

[36] Cedric Barnes, "The Ethiopia-British Somaliland Boundary," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2010), 123-4.
[37] Tobias Hagmann and Mohamud Khalif, "State and Politics in Ethiopia's Somali Region since 1991," Bildhaan: *An International Journal of Somali Studies* 6, Article 2 (2006): 39. http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol6/iss1/6/.html (accessed February 13, 2013).

The 1954 Agreement between Ethiopia and Britain heightened pre-existing anxieties on the legal status/ identity of the people in the areas that were previously under the BMA. Article two of the Agreement declared the "right of tribes, coming respectively from Ethiopia and the Somaliland Protectorate to cross the frontier for the purpose of grazing…"[38] For the first time since the 1897 boundary Treaty was signed there emerged a need to clearly articulate where people 'belonged.' The 1954 Agreement demanded that people's legal status and identity should be officially established, yet it failed to outline how this would be done. Both signatories of the Agreement noted the unclear nature of the document, particularly when translated into practice. This led Ethiopian and British Protectorate government authorities to convene the 1955-56 conferences in Harar.

The conferences heard a number of cases that demonstrated the inherent difficulties of translating the Agreement into practice. Cedric Barnes has noted that the individual cases that were heard at the Harar conferences reflected continuity in local strategies toward the boundary since the outset of Ethiopian and British rule over this region.[39] Indeed, from the minutes of the conferences it is clear that people wanted the best of both worlds. Individuals and sections of different Somali clans often claimed belonging to both Ethiopian and British jurisdictions.[40] British authorities realised that many of the Protectorate populations remained in the Haud grazing areas on the Ethiopian side for extended periods, "some remaining there continuously"…and "do not all pass backwards and forwards."[41]

The key aim of the conferences was to resolve the ambiguous and problematic issues that arose from the Agreement for the administration of the area. Instead, the conferences opened the

[38] FO 939/19 *Withdrawal of British Military Administration from "Reserved Area" - Agreement and Exchange of Notes*, November 29, 1954.
[39] Barnes, "Ethiopia-British Somaliland," 125.
[40] CO1015/876, *Minutes of Harar Conferences*.
[41] CO 1015/507 "*Exchange of a Corridor leading to the port of Zeila in Somaliland for Grazing Areas in the Haud Ethiopia,"* 1953.

proverbial Pandora's Box. British officials were faced with the conundrum of the legal and national status of their Protectorate subjects in relation to their seasonal presence in Ethiopia's eastern regions.[42] Both authorities were confronted with cases of unspecified nationality. These cases included people who were Ethiopian residents but in possession of British-issued passports. This led British authorities to ponder what is meant by a "British protected person" in international law, and whether the 1954 Agreement applied mainly to nomadic groups or others as well.[43]

Central to the ambiguous nature of people's statuses was the 'Tribal Organisation.' The latter was a corrupted version of the central institution of authority in Somali society. The Organisation consisted of clan elders, clan police and Sultans. However, the Sultans were called 'chiefs' by British and Ethiopian authorities, a concept that was previously unknown among the Somali.[44] Traditionally, clans are led by their own Sultans known as *Suldan, Garad*, *Ugas*, etc. in the Somali language.[45] Their key role was to arbitrate and act as peace makers concerned with the maintenance of clan solidarity. However, during the nineteenth century, Italian, British, French and Ethiopian authorities delegated local authority to these sultans, whom they called 'chiefs,' in order to have direct influence over the otherwise non-hierarchical Somalis.[46]

Failure to reach a consensus at the Harar conferences threatened the continued existence of the 1954 Agreement. Issues surrounding the operations of the 'Tribal Organisation' that was established to implement the Agreement appeared to threaten Ethiopian sovereignty, they also had the potential to create groups of people with dual national statuses. The Protectorate government charged the Ethiopians with obstructing the work performed by some

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[42] FO 371/ 118773 "*Ethiopian Nationality Question,*" May, 1956.
[43] FO 371/ 118773 British Consulate, Harar, February, 1956.
[44] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 18-20.
[45] Lewis, *Modern History*, 1980, 9.
[46] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 18-20.

of the structures of the Organisation. The activities of the latter often resulted in the government of the Protectorate claiming individuals with British-issued passports as their subjects, regardless of their Ethiopian residency. In such cases the Ethiopians responded by stating that the said individuals owned land and paid tax to the Imperial Ethiopian government, and were therefore Ethiopian subjects.

Finding common ground on a suitable definition of 'the people' became the primary bone of contention at the conferences. The Ethiopians consistently avoided the question of nationality. To the exasperation of the Protectorate delegation, Kifle Erguetou the key Ethiopian negotiator maintained that nationality was "beyond the scope of this conference."[47] In addition, finding a satisfactory arrangement to manage the seasonal cross-border migration of the pastoralists proved to be one of the more difficult tasks. Ethiopian intransigence on the nationality question can be explained by their definition of 'nationality,' which at the time was narrowly defined and based on the all-encompassing Amhara national identity. It appears that the seasonal cross-border movement of people who had no apparent allegiance to the Ethiopian state did not sit well with the Ethiopians who would have preferred complete control and authority in the border regions.

At the time of the conferences, the Ethiopians had also created a parallel 'Tribal Organisation' solely responsible to the Ethiopian government. To add weight to the legitimacy of their Organisation, the Ethiopians appointed chiefs known as *balabbat* in the Amharic language. The *balabbat* were given rank and distinction, assurances were also made that those Somali clansmen who followed them would receive special treatment.[48] The special treatment included, among other things, access to the Haud grazing pasture. The Protectorate government took exception to these developments and demanded an explanation since the Ethiopian 'Organisation' claimed authority over

[47] CO 1015/876 *Minutes of Harar Conferences*.
[48] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 80-81.

the same 'tribes' for which they were responsible.[49] Kifle Erguetou responded to this by stating that "[same] tribes exist in the Protectorate and on our side."[50] Indeed, he was quite right, they did exist on both sides, but mostly with indeterminate and ambiguous official identities, as the presence of Ahmed's family in Dire Dawa illustrates.

To counter the claims of the Protectorate over certain clans, the Ethiopians opted for an all-encompassing territorial definition of belonging that conflated legal status with nationality. They declared that any Protectorate subject who stayed in Ethiopia for more than six months would be considered an Ethiopian subject.[51] In the concluding notes of the Harar conferences, the Ethiopians pressured the Protectorate delegates for a specific length of time that pastoralists from the Protectorate would spend in Ethiopia. Protectorate officials failed to provide a time frame – a failure to which the Ethiopians responded: "the Ethiopian delegation maintains – if a tribe remains in Ethiopia through greater part of the year, it is the Imperial Ethiopian Government rather than Protectorate government which is entitled to lay claim to nationality and jurisdiction over such a tribe."[52]

These unresolved issues and the seething tensions between the two authorities continued unabated until the end of the 1950s when the prospect of independence for the Somaliland Protectorate was fast approaching. British authorities became increasingly anxious and desirous to secure a satisfactory deal for Protectorate pastoralists in the Ethiopian Haud grazing area. However, the clause on the British Liaison Officer in the Agreement became a source of contention as it signified the physical manifestation of British authority on Ethiopian territory. The first and most well-known liaison officer – John

[49] CO 1015/876 *Minutes of Harar Conferences.*
[50] Ibid.
[51] Samuel Negash, "Colonial Legacy, State Intervention and Secessionism: Paradoxical National Identities of the Ogaden and Ishaq clans in Ethiopia" in *Society, State and Identity in African History*, ed. Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008), 283.
[52] CO 1015/876, *Minutes of Harar Conferences.*

Drysdale – has labelled the issue of the grazing areas a "fiasco,"[53] noting that ultimately the losers were the various Somali populations. Somali independence in 1960 added an additional dimension to the unresolved issues from the Agreement.

4.5 Implications of an independent Somali Republic for identity formation in the Ethiopian periphery

The failure of the1954 Agreement to resolve the ambiguities on the legal /official statuses of people led to further complications following the independence and unification of the former Italian and British Somali territories in 1960. However, the reality is that the Republic of Somalia wielded a moderate influence in the lives of Somalis in Ethiopia's eastern periphery. Indeed, this influence was much less than is often believed. The popular myth is that the Republic issued directives to the Somalis of Ethiopia, and that all Somalis supported the post-independence struggle for the unification of Somali territories. This misconception was evident during the Ogaden rebellion of 1963-64.

The timing of the rebellion coincided with what was gradually becoming the overriding foreign policy objective of the new government in Mogadishu – the pursuit of a Somali nation-state. The project of 'Greater Somalia' is said to have emerged in Mogadishu under the auspices of the Somali Youth Club, later Somali Youth League (SYL), and immediately expanded to other Somali-speaking lands in the region.[54] Indeed, political parties in Somalia proliferated following Somali independence. However, the rebellion in the Ethiopian Ogaden was motivated by internal and local concerns.

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[53] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 74.
[54] Annalisa Urbano, "Imagining the Nation, Crafting the State: The Politics of Nationalism and Decolonisation in Somalia (1940-60)" (PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2012), chapters 4 and 6.

Markakis notes that the fervour of Somali nationalism was in its infancy in the Ogaden, and political leaders in Mogadishu had "little contact with and no control over events inside the Ogaden."[55]

Yet, the political leadership in Mogadishu was able to usurp the rebellion. Lewis has labelled the 1963 Ethiopia-Somali conflict a "Somali uprising in the Ogaden,"[56] but does not fully explain its genesis and motives. We can therefore argue that the Somali leadership in Mogadishu seized the 1963 rebellion in the Ethiopian Ogaden to advance the pursuit of Somali unification. This would then suggest that the popular tendency to subsume the interests and actions of actors in the Ethiopian periphery to the irredentist discourses of the Somali Republic tends to conceal local political processes within the Ethiopian periphery.

There is strong evidence to suggest that the nature of Somali presence in eastern Ethiopia has been dogged by external challenges to customary Somali institutions of authority. The latter had been under pressure since the official scramble for Somali territory by Ethiopia and European colonial powers in the nineteenth century. The creation of Somali 'chiefs,' in particular, wreaked havoc on the decentralised nature of traditional Somali authority. This is evident in Drysdale's observations when he notes that:

> …as one clan aligned itself with one government, and then with the other, shifting according to the expediency of the moment, each government would be provoked into action to preserve its dignity, and would intensify the competitive struggle for the nationality of the clan in question.[57]

This most explicitly played itself out in the work of the so-called Tribal Organisation. The post-1960 identification trajectory in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries reflected this vacillation among the

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[55] John Markakis, *National and Class Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 176.
[56] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia,* 37.
[57] Drysdale, *Somali Dispute*, 82.

Somali. Notwithstanding the inroads made by Somali nationalism in the previous decade, binding ties of patrilineal kinship appear to have often taken precedence in the organisation and mobilisation of the Somali people.

Following Somali independence and unification in 1960, the new government in Mogadishu sought the loyalties of clans – thus further heightening the tension between clan and nationality. Indeed, the foreign policy objectives of the new Somali Republic depended on the level of influence it enjoyed in the Somali-inhabited regions of its neighbours. Conversely, the emergence, development and dissolution of notions of self-identification in these other Somali-inhabited regions were, largely, also influenced by the extent of contact with the Republic.

The most notable effect of the formation of the Republic for the Ethiopian state was the potential threat posed by Somali nationalism. Having previously gone to great lengths to discourage any form of Somali unity, the Ethiopian state was now confronted with suggestions of Somali nationalism in its eastern periphery. At the time of Somali independence, Ethiopian government publications and newspapers started to display a seemingly conciliatory rhetoric. A Ministry of Information publication congratulated the Republic on its formation. In the publication it is noted how Ethiopia had "championed and unswervingly supported that territory's (Somalia) emancipation from alien rule throughout the previous decade." [58] However, the publication also expressed disappointment at what it perceived to be imprudent rhetoric by the Republic when the latter accused Ethiopia of "Black Imperialism." [59] These publications suggest unease on the part of the Ethiopian state vis-à-vis its new neighbour. This tension culminated in the 1963-64 interstate conflict

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[58] Ministry of Information, *Ethio-Somali Relations*, Imperial Ethiopian Government, (Addis Ababa, 1962).
[59] Ibid.

between Ethiopia and Somalia, whose origins were, in fact, a rebellion in the Ethiopian Ogaden region.

This conflict served as a harbinger of the nature of Ethiopia-Somalia relations for the next three decades. During the course of these decades, the extent of Ethiopian state control and authority in its eastern frontier would be tested – raising questions about the nature of Ethiopian sovereignty in the Somali-inhabited regions.

The next section shifts the focus to the people of the Harar and Jijiga localities and explores the various ways in which they constructed and negotiated their ethnic identities from 1960 to 1991 within the context that was outlined in the preceding sections.

4.6 Constructing ethnic identity in encounters with the 'Amhara' state (1960-1991)

In the quest to examine identification in this periphery, the present investigation does not confine itself to the dominant and opposing 'primordial' and 'instrumental' approaches. Indeed, these approaches find resonance in some instances in this periphery; however, they tend to overlook other factors that may be involved in the construction of ethnic identities. If we limit ourselves to the primordial and instrumental approaches, then we run the risk of omitting context-specific processes that may underpin the development and maintenance of specific identities.[60] Thus, for the ensuing discussion Turton's clarification is useful:

> The point is not to deny the reality and importance of the 'ethnic construct', but to question the usefulness of treating it as the logical prerequisite and sufficient condition for the existence of a group. An ethnic group, in other words, is not a group because of ethnicity but because its members engage in common action and share common interests. Having identified the group on the basis of these 'operational' criteria, it is then a matter for empirical investigation to determine how the 'ethnic construct' is related to it – as principle of

[60] Barth, "Introduction," 10-11.

> recruitment, for example, or simply as symbolic expression of unity and solidarity.[61]

With its ambiguity, the term 'identity' becomes even more complex in Ethiopia. In the peripheries people assign themselves ethnic identities that are sometimes perceived as 'primordial,' based on the invocation of cultural particulars by the group. Feyissa found this to be the case among the Anywaa of Gambella in their encounters with the Nuer and highland Ethiopians. The Anywaa emphasise notions of common origin, marriage practices, and a belief system based on particular understandings of territoriality.[62] On closer inspection, however, this self-identification tends to much changeability due to the many influences on individual agency and group interests that exist in any given context.[63] What is certain is that in the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia:

> Identifications are central to the ways in which similarity to and difference from others are understood and constructed, and they are connected to processes of inclusion and exclusion, to degrees of openness or closedness to others…the boundaries that designate relations of self to other result, at least in part, in tolerance or prejudice, legitimizing peaceful or conflict relations.[64]

This is the prevailing condition in Ethiopian peripheries where ethnic identities often assume significant meanings in inter-ethnic group relations and in the groups' interactions with the state. The following discussion is divided into two periods. The first period is from 1960 to 1991; the second period from 1991 up to the present. However, before discussing the ways in which the populations in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries have constructed and negotiated their ethnic identities, a

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[61] David Turton, "Mursi Political Identity & Warfare: The Survival of an Idea," in *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa,* eds. Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (London: James Currey, 1994), 17.
[62] Feyissa, *Different Games*, 31.
[63] Elizabeth E. Watson and Günther Schlee, "Introduction," in *Changing Identifications and Alliances in North-East Africa*, eds., Elizabeth E. Watson and Günther Schlee (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 2.
[64] Ibid, 1.

brief background of the dominant national identity in Ethiopia is necessary.

The absence of a unifying discourse on identity in imperial and socialist Ethiopia has contributed to the current difficulties of establishing a pan-Ethiopian identity. Edmond Keller notes that Haile Selassie's social policy paid no attention to "the national question," in spite of the fact that a large part of the empire consisted of culturally subordinated ethnic groups.[65] Nevertheless, the existence of an "Amharised Ethiopian state"[66] and the process of *Amharization* were very real.

Amhara became the social indicator of inclusion and exclusion, even though 'Amhara' does not symbolise a particular ethnic group. Indeed, in imperial Ethiopia, Barth's boundaries were defined and maintained according to Amhara culture.[67] There is general consensus that Amhara as an ethnic unit has never existed in Ethiopia prior to ethnic federalism. There is similar consensus that Amhara is best defined as a social category that denotes the possession of power,[68] and that it is most useful as a cultural reference.[69] A background of this seemingly nebulous yet dominant identity helps to explain its longevity and resilience, and consequently, how others have constructed their identities in encounters with it.

4.6.1 Amhara as national identity

The decade from 1950-1960 was the apogee of state centralisation in imperial Ethiopia. The decade saw the acquisition of Eritrea and what

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[65] Edmond J. Keller, "Ethiopia: Revolution, Class, and the National Question," *African Affairs* 80, no. 321 (October 1981): 534.
[66] Kjetil Tronvoll, *War and the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia, the Making of Enemies and Allies in the Horn of Africa* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2009), 46.
[67] Barth, "Introduction," 10-12.
[68] Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974* (Trenton NJ: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1995), 45.
[69] Tegegne Teka, "Amhara Ethnicity in the Making," in *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*, eds. M.A. Mohamed Salih and John Markakis (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1998), 117.

Reid calls "the steady erosion of that territory's federal autonomy."[70] The same decade witnessed the return to Ethiopia of the Ogaden and other territories that were previously under British military administration. Overall, the 1950s were a decade of determined attempts of territorial consolidation and political centralisation by the imperial state.

These twin processes were closely accompanied by an uncompromising project of entrenching Amhara as the dominant all-encompassing national identity. Indeed, Ethiopia's ruling classes had no interest in promoting an Amhara ethnic group identity. Instead, nation-building followed a categorical process of imposing Amhara national identity on the entire population of the empire because the ruling Amhara and *Amharised* [71] elite felt that they were the embodiment of the state.[72]

Indeed, in the case of the Amhara, we can assume "no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences."[73] The origins of the Amhara identity can be found in a vaguely defined territory (the northern highlands),[74] which was inhabited by various peoples who represented the population that comprised the historic Ethiopian state – Abyssinia.[75] In the latter, the secular court language was Amharic, with Ge'ez[76] the language of liturgy in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Markakis calls this assemblage the "Abyssinian core," one that provided the template for the hegemonic Ethiopian national identity.[77] However, these people never

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[70] Richard Reid, *Frontiers of Violence in North-East Africa, Genealogies of Conflict since c.1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 154.
[71] Those that had assimilated to this culture, in the processes eschewing their previous ethnic origins
[72] Teka, "Amhara Ethnicity," 121.
[73] Barth, "Introduction," 14.
[74] Roughly in the area of the current Amhara region, though not precisely, see Map 3
[75] Adhana Haile Adhana, "Mutation of statehood and contemporary politics," in *Ethiopia in Change, Peasantry, Nationalism and Democracy*, eds. Abebe Zegeye and Siegfried Pausewang (London: British Academic Press, 1994), 19.
[76] Ibid.
[77] John Markakis, *Ethiopia*, *The Last Two Frontiers* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 32.

made claims to common ancestry, territory, religion or shared experience, only language. [78]

The history and culture of this historic 'core' region are in stark contrast to that of the Harar and Jijiga peripheries. As noted earlier and in previous chapters, the latter's political histories are characterised by adherence to Islam, resistance to northern advances, conquer and subordination. Since official incorporation into the Ethiopian empire, people in these peripheries have been confronted with this identity that appears in stark contrast to their own. Because Amharic was the official national language, people in the peripheries had limited options and many were compelled to learn the language. Those who opted not to learn Amharic were almost guaranteed political, social and economic exclusion and marginalisation. Indeed, many others did not learn Amharic – surviving on the margins of the state, with very little connecting them to the state. Nonetheless, due to its ubiquitous and hegemonic nature, Amhara was the identity against which identification was negotiated.

4.7 Flight, hesitancy, rebellion and cautious engagement

Edmond Keller maintains that there was "no conscious policy of national political integration"[79] during Haile Selassie's reign. In truth, there was no need for such a policy as *Amharisation* was implicitly and explicitly the de facto policy. It was, therefore, in response to, and within the context of this process cum policy, that populations in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries negotiated their identities.

[78] Teka, "Amhara Ethnicity," 120.
[79] Keller, "Ethiopia," 534.

4.7.1 The proud Harari take flight

The *Gey usu*[80] are a small and private community, one of the smaller ethnic communities in eastern Ethiopia. As mentioned previously, the Harari have not attracted much scholarly attention within the large corpus of Ethiopian studies. This is primarily because they are a 'peripheral' people with a political history that involves Islam and perceived resistance to Amhara rule. The geographic location and religion of the Harari has made them less appealing to some of those who purport to write Ethiopian history. These authors have generally focused on the historic 'Abyssinian' core and its contemporary remnants. In recent times, however, the Harari have become subjects of anthropological inquiry because of their distinct culture.[81]

The beginning of what the Harari perceive to be their persecution by successive Ethiopian regimes is often traced to the time when Menelik of Shoa and *Ras* Makonnen captured the city-state in 1887.[82] According to Abdulsemed Idriss,[83] the start of their problems can be directly traced to the arrival of the Christian government that converted Mosques into Churches and resettled Christians from the north. In conversations with this author, it often emerged that the Harari are particularly attached to their religion, a version of Islam that leans toward the Sufi tradition.[84] Foreign intervention in their city is often judged according to its attitude toward the local religion. Idriss further noted that after British withdrawal in the 1940s, a new wave of people (Amhara) from Shoa arrived in Harar – further imposing Christianity and Amharic culture.

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[80] The culture-specific term that the Harari use to identify themselves, meaning 'people of the city.'
[81] David Vô Vân and Mohammed Jami Guleid, *Harar, A Cultural Guide* (Addis Ababa: Shama Books, 2007); Gibb, *Sweetness*.
[82] This is the common contention in conversations with the Harari.
[83] Abdulsemed Idriss, Social Sector Adviser, Harari Regional Council, interview with the author, Harar, October 13, 2011.
[84] Inside the *Jegol*- walled city of Harar, there are over 80 mosques and several shrines – graves of saints and deceased Amirs, with all-night chanting sessions as common occurrences in the numerous mosques.

During the attempts of the state to entrench its authority, "the exodus of Hararis from this region began,"[85] and continued steadily over the years. Harari assessment of their experiences during the imperial and military-socialist periods indicates a level of continuity. They often note that the oppression they experienced under the Selassie era was continued by the terror of the *Dergue*.[86] In conversations with some Harari informants it emerged that during the latter's reign the greatest exodus of people from Harar took place. The Harari are said to have left for Addis Ababa, other countries in the region, and an even larger number went to the United States of America. Indeed, today a number of Harari families inside the walled-city often trace at least one family member to the United States.

Even though the Harari had a troubled relationship with the imperial order, they did not welcome the *Dergue* with open arms. They contend that they were often viewed with suspicion because of their traditionally autonomous identity. This independent identity can be seen to have been a survival strategy for the Harari. In the face of what they viewed to be a dominant and hostile Amhara state, they took flight, and those left behind became even more isolationist. Some, like Abdulnassir would have otherwise been notable scholars, but they were forced by circumstances to abandon their university studies and leave the country.[87]

However, in conversations with the Harari it emerged that it was more than their independent nature that proved to be incompatible with the agenda of the military rulers. Some Harari appear to have actively opposed the military government. The Harari were desirous of a comprehensive political transformation following the revolution in 1974, yet they were soon convinced that the military rulers were still 'Amhara' and therefore no different from the previous imperial

[85] Abdulsemed Idriss.
[86] Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir, local historian and resident, interviews and conversations with author, Harar, October, November 2011 and October 2012.
[87] Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir fled to Kenya in the 1970s when he actively opposed the *Dergue* while at Addis Ababa University.

establishment. This was not a rejection of Amhara ethnic identity by the Harari, but of Amhara as the basis of political and social organisation in Ethiopia.

The most remarkable manifestation of Harari desire for political change was during the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. Some sections of the Harari joined forces with the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF).[88] The latter was the first separatist movement to emerge from the Ogaden region in the mid-1960s. The WSLF subsequently received support from the government of the Republic of Somalia. After the capture of Jijiga during the 1977 war, WSLF forces swept on towards Harar in pursuit of their ultimate objective – freeing the entire Somali area of Ethiopian domination, up to the Awash Valley.[89] Harari collaboration with the WSLF is suggested by Lewis who has noted that, during the war, the initial victory of the Somali forces in the Ogaden was a result of a joint effort of WSLF and people from neighbouring provinces who were against Ethiopian rule.[90] Although tenuous and often fleeting, there are instances where the Harari-Somali connection makes an appearance. In the past, the two groups often found common ground in their opposition to the 'Christian' government. However, there is no indication to suggest that Harari opposition to Ethiopian rule has had a particularly religious motivation.

Following the end of the Ethiopia-Somalia war in 1978, Harari existence in eastern Ethiopia became increasingly unbearable. The *Dergue* dispensed severe reprisals on the Harari. Many were denied access to education and were deliberately side-lined from high positions in public office.[91] The number of Harari fleeing Ethiopia is said to have multiplied.

[88] Abdulsemed Idriss.
[89] Lewis, *Modern History*, 1980, 234.
[90] Ioan M. Lewis, "The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary Nationalism," *African Affairs* 88, no.53 (October 1989): 574.
[91] Abdulsemed Idriss and Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir.

4.7.2 Ogadeen hesitancy and rebellion

The process of identity construction among the Ogadeen Somali from 1960 to 1991 was characterised by two overlapping phases. These can be loosely termed as phases of hesitant engagement with the Ethiopian state and open revolt against the state. Known Ogadeni revolt against the Ethiopian state has existed since the region was officially incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire.[92] Since then, uprisings have occurred intermittently, hence the dominant narratives of resistance and conflict that characterise this eastern region of Ethiopia.

However, there has also been an element of hesitant engagement with the state. As noted earlier, several Ogadeen 'chiefs' were courted by the emperor who sought the support of the Ogadeen in his attempts to consolidate his authority following British withdrawal. However, the 'chiefs' and their Ogadeen clansmen often demonstrated that their loyalties could not be located. Yet, they consistently demonstrated a single preoccupation in their interactions with imperial authority – securing grazing pastures for their livestock and avoiding state taxation. In a May 1960 Ethiopian Herald newspaper article it was reported that an Ogadeni delegation had sought the emperor's intervention on the issue of the Haud grazing area.[93] The survivalist approach to identity construction in the early 1960s by the Ogadeen was influenced by the problematic nature of the 1954 Agreement. Many Ogadeen also found the increasingly involved and centralised Ethiopian state incompatible with their pastoralist ways.

However, petitioning the emperor or other similar gestures should not be seen to suggest Ogadeni acceptance of Ethiopian authority. The 'chiefs' merely sought the protection of the state, and to

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[92] Most notably the exploits of Sheikh Muhammad Abdille Hassan who declared a jihad against colonial forces including 'Abyssinia' in the early 20th century, see Lewis, *Modern History*, Chapter IV.

[93] Author unknown, "Ogaden Notables Petition Emperor," *Ethiopian Herald*, May 21, 1960.

safeguard a resource that was of vital importance to their livelihoods. They were appealing to the imperial state as would-be citizens – the definitions of which were still largely uncertain.

The extent to which the Ogadeen were directly confronted with *Amharisation* was less than the Harari. The appointment of 'chiefs' or *balabbat* by the Ethiopian state wreaked havoc with traditional forms of Somali authority – intra-clan rivalries proliferated among the Ogadeen as sub-clans vied for favours with the state. As opposed to more integration with the Ethiopian state, this further isolated the Ogadeen. There were no schools in the Ogaden region until 1957.[94] There were only a few Catholic and Arabic schools in the Jijiga area of the huge Hararge province.[95] Even these schools were not in a position to advance *Amharisation*. Authority – Provincial Governors and deputy-Governors, was often Amhara, whereas lower level officials were Somali.[96] Thus Somalis witnessed their decentralised form of social organisation disintegrate as they were increasingly confronted with a highly centralised external authority.

Ogadeen peripheral existence was transformed into a definitive struggle beginning in 1969. Ogadeni hesitancy overlapped with open revolt against Ethiopian authority – as a response to the militarisation of this region by the imperial state.[97] Since the militarisation and centralisation of state authority contradicted the Ogadeen way of life, many Ogadeen embarked on a revolt that took the form of a separatist agenda. This agenda was eventually influenced by events that were taking place in neighbouring Somalia – the 1969 coup that brought an end to civilian rule. The revolt in the Ogaden, aided by the increasingly belligerent regime in Mogadishu, simmered and culminated in the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. For the most part, however, the evolution of Ogadeen-state relations during

[94] Markakis, *National and Class*, 175.
[95] Hawa, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.
[96] General Notice no. 223, Awards and honours given to Ogaden officials, *Negarit Gazeta*, Vol.2, no. 143, 1954.
[97] This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

this period was characterised by Ogadeen experiences of, and responses to events that were taking place *within* the Ethiopian periphery.

The war in 1977 inevitably shone a spotlight on the Ogadeen Somali. Gebru Tareke notes that the war is known as the Ogaden war, because the Ogaden region was both the cause and main site of the conflict.[98] Because of this, the Ogadeen Somali were viewed by northern Ethiopians as separatists and aggressors. This view was, evidently, formulated without taking into consideration the origins of the rebellion and the military responses of the state to what had initially begun as local grievances.

For fear of reprisals, large numbers of the Ogadeen clan began to flee as soon as Ethiopian victory was declared in 1978. Many crossed the border into Somalia – via the southern and northern sectors of the long boundary. Shortly after the war, Hawa, a female elder, noted that she was captured and detained at Togochale while attempting to cross the border into Somalia.[99] She was attempting to make her way to Hargeisa in northern Somalia, where she would remain until the mid-1980s. Many others like her wanted to escape the charge – real or imagined – that Somalis, especially the Ogadeen, had supported Somalia during the war. The war produced a similar fate for both the Harari and the Ogadeen, although to varying degrees. They were perceived to be actively against the state and thus they struggled to find a peaceful existence in the post-war period, hence many, but certainly not all, took flight.

4.7.3 The circumspect Isaq

It is difficult to speak of, or to present a single narrative that encapsulates the presence of the Isaq Somali in eastern Ethiopia. The

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[98] Gebru Tareke, "The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no.3 (2000): 636.
[99] Hawa, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.

Isaq are divided into several socio-economic groups and even smaller sub-clans. There are the pastoralists who constantly move back and forth across the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland. This group roams and inhabit the Haud pasture on a regular basis. There are also the agro-pastoralists who settled in the Haud and former Reserved Areas along the boundary during the period of the BMA. Many of the latter were declared Ethiopian subjects when they opted, or were compelled, to pursue a sedentary life.

Regardless of socio-economic status, Isaq presence in this region occasionally fuels their rivalry with the Ogadeen. The source of this rivalry, at least on the surface, appears to be access to grazing land. Yet, competition between the two groups continues even when they are in an urban setting such as Jijiga. Researchers at the Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention in Hargeisa were able to shed some light on this rivalry. The researchers noted that the sources of conflict between Ogadeen and Isaq clans when they are found on the same side of the border are mainly livestock pasture, land issues, access to water and issues of revenge.[100] To this list we can also add access to political power, especially in the contemporary and urban context of Jijiga. However, Isaq presence in eastern Ethiopia has attracted less scholarly attention – because they have never expressed a separatist or hostile agenda toward the Ethiopian state. The difficulty of locating the loyalties of the Isaq was evident during the 1977-78 war when their indifference was conspicuous. This then serves as a reminder of the need to always avoid conflating the Somali of eastern Ethiopia into one homogenous group.

A sizeable number of Isaq Somalis found themselves on the Ethiopian side of the border following the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian boundary Agreement. Along with sections of the Gadabursi clan, the Isaq were also the main British Protectorate population group that was

[100] Researchers at the Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention, interview with author, University of Hargeisa, Hargeisa, January 9, 2012.

granted indefinite cross-border movement to the Haud grazing area.[101] The Isaq also benefitted the most from the free cross-border movement that was created during the period of the BMA. Some also crossed the border to settle in Ethiopia after the1969 coup d'état in Somalia. Thus the Isaq have a cross-border settlement pattern because they straddle the Ethiopia-Somaliland boundary. However, the 'sedentary' groups mostly identify with the Ethiopian state.

The Isaq were central to the disputes over the 'Tribal Organisation' following the 1954 Agreement. Because they straddled the boundary, the Isaq took full advantage of the ambiguous status they occupied after 1954. However, this period also crystallised the extent to which the Isaq had been integrated into the Ethiopian state.

Colonial archival documents reveal that as the period of the BMA drew to a close in Ethiopia, several Isaq sub-clans had become sedentary agriculturalists in the Togochale area adjacent to the boundary with the British Protectorate. Following the unresolved issues from the 1954 Agreement, conflict erupted over access to grazing and agricultural land between two Isaq sub-clans – the Abaskul cultivators and Habr Awal pastoralists.[102] The Isaq cultivators were joined by some Gadabursi clans who had also settled in the fertile strip of land between Jijiga and the Togochale border.[103] In this rare instance of solidarity the cultivators of the different clans came together against the pastoralists. This area enjoyed permanent waters and greater rainfall and thus encouraged agriculture, from which "the prospect of land revenue excited the Ethiopian Ogaden administration."[104] Many of the cultivators were relatively co-operative with the Ethiopian state as many of them had for a long time

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[101] See Lewis, *Modern History*, 56-62.
[102] CO 1015/ 1398, *Disturbances on the Ethiopian-Somaliland Boundaries*, 1957-1959.
[103] The Gadabuursi and Isaq belong to two different clans and clan families, although they often cooperated against the pastoralists, their sedentary existence as neighbours was, however, not without conflict.
[104] CO 1015/ 1398, *Disturbances.*

contributed to Ethiopia's agrarian-based taxation system.[105] Indeed, most of the cultivators in the Harar-Jijiga-Togochale section are mostly Isaq and Gadabursi, with a scattering of Darod, thus Ogadeen-related clans.

The emergence of 'agriculturalist' and 'sedentary' groups needs to be contextualised since they presented new categories of people in this periphery. Lewis notes that the 'sedentarisation' process was gradual.[106] It was naturally supported by the better watered and fertile areas that straddled the British Somaliland Protectorate and the Harar province of Ethiopia. On the other hand, the Ethiopians also actively encouraged this process by supporting the emergence of plough cultivation and stable villages that replaced the nomad's temporary encampments.

By the 1950s the imperial state was more vigorously promoting a sedentary lifestyle by extending and actively encouraging agriculture among nomadic pastoralist groups. From the minutes of the Harar conferences it emerges that one of the key complaints of the Protectorate delegation was the alleged conversion of grazing land for agricultural purposes by the Ethiopian state.[107] The Ethiopians responded to these charges by stating that nowhere in the 1954 Agreement was the issue of cultivation mentioned, and that the Protectorate government had no say in Ethiopian land use policy. The pursuit of cultivation in this area was part of the overall strategy of the state to control territory and assert its authority in the areas adjacent to the boundary by limiting the largely unrestricted cross-border movement that was occasioned by seasonal migration. The Harar conferences can thus be seen as contexts of social categorisation, which signified official classification and administrative allocation.[108]

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[105] Barnes, "Ethiopia-British Somaliland," 126.
[106] Lewis, *Modern History*, 1980, 12.
[107] CO 1015/ 876, *Minutes of Harar Conferences between representatives of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Imperial Ethiopian Government*, 1956.
[108] Jenkins, "Rethinking ethnicity," 120.

Indeed, these categories seemed to have found legitimation at the conferences.

Beyond socio-economic modes of subsistence, the distinction between Isaq and Ogadeen Somali extends to how the two groups have constructed and negotiated their identities in relation to the Ethiopian state. Samuel Negash notes that following the 1977-78 war, the Isaq threw their weight firmly behind the *Dergue*.[109] He goes on to note that the sizeable cross-border migration of the Ogadeen from Ethiopia to Somalia after the war gave way to Isaq ascendancy within the Ethiopian political establishment,[110] particularly in the district administration headquarters of Jijiga. It can be argued that the relatively uncontested integration of some sections of the Isaq into the state was facilitated by the relationship they had established and maintained with the Ethiopian state through the taxation system, among other things.

Perhaps one of the clearest examples of the diverse attitudes of the two groups over their identities is the way they view the Somali region of Ethiopia. Hagmann and Khalif highlight the opposing narratives of 'Ogadenia' and 'Western Somalia' as exemplars of the contested interpretations of "who Somalis in Ethiopia are and who they might be."[111] For the Ogadeen, the Somali region of Ethiopia is Ogadenia, and for the Isaq it is Western Somalia because it lies to the west of Hargeisa – the Isaq homeland.

Another aspect of Isaq presence in this periphery relates to their position during the Somali civil war in the early 1980s. The political situation in Somalia had deteriorated following the military defeat in the war with Ethiopia in 1978. A number of insurgencies rapidly surfaced in several parts of the country. In the midst of these developments the Somali National Movement (SNM) was formed in 1981 in London. The movement was largely perceived as an Isaq clan

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[109] Negash, "Colonial Legacy," 282.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Hagmann and Khalif, "State and Politics," 39.

initiative. On its formation, the movement drew support from central and northern Somalia,[112] an area that is predominantly, though not entirely inhabited by the Isaq. The insurgencies inside Somalia proved highly destabilising and led to the outbreak of the civil war between the north and south of Somalia in February1982.[113] The SNM found a willing host and supporter in the Ethiopian *Dergue*. The SNM made eastern Ethiopia its operational base.[114] This led to large numbers of Isaq and other northern and central Somalis to cross the border into eastern Ethiopia as refugees. This period presented yet another context in which Isaq identity was reconstructed in this periphery.

The story of the Guleid family and their relatives perhaps best demonstrates the constantly shifting ways in which the Isaq have constructed and reconstructed their identity in this section of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia:

> Jama Guleid worked in veterinarian services across eastern Africa; he arrived in eastern Ethiopia from the British Somaliland Protectorate *circa*. 1965. In Harar he found a wealthy Somali widow with two daughters. Partly to unburden the widow, Jama asked for permission to marry one of the young daughters, his wish was granted. By the time he left Harar, the young wife was with child, and Mohammed Jama Guleid who kindly narrated his family history was born in 1968. Because of his travels, Jama Guleid often left his young wife in Harar for long periods. Mohammed and his three siblings were all born in Harar and grew up there. His mother and two of his siblings still live there today.[115]

The extent to which the Guleids and their relatives have constructed their identity indicates an ongoing process. Mohammed and his siblings speak three different languages fluently – Somali, Harari and Amharic. Their mother only speaks Somali and Harari. The Guleids do not deny their Isaq Somali identity, nor do they reject the Ethiopian

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[112] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia*, 67.
[113] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland; Understanding Somalia and Somaliland* (London: Progressio, 2008), 58.
[114] Boobe Duale Yusuf, former SNM guerrilla fighter and researcher at Academy for Peace and Development, interview with author, Hargeisa, January 9, 2012.
[115] From conversations with Mohammed Jama Guleid and his family between November 2011 and January 2012.

one – they appear to have found a middle ground between the two. The Guleids have many family relations in Somaliland where their father had another wife or wives. In the 1980s, when the SNM began their military operations from this region, the Guleid family home in Harar is said to have resembled a mini-hospital for injured SNM fighters. In doing this, the Guleids actively participated in discourses of identification in the neighbouring Somali territory by contributing to the struggle against the regime of Siad Barre. They did this because they identify themselves first and foremost as Isaq before they are Ethiopian or Somali.

Yet, *Amharisation* has not escaped the Guleids. The younger generation speaks and writes Amharic as a first language, Harari as a second language, with Somali as a spoken third. Mohammed further speaks Oromifaa, the language of the Oromo. In addition to this, the Guleids have acquired certain 'Amhara' cultural practices, which include the celebrated coffee ceremony. From the time spent with this family, this author observed that at the Guleid family home in Harar the coffee ceremony is performed[116] almost on a daily basis after the midday meal. In this case, Amhara culture appears to have broken a barrier that would have otherwise been difficult to break if Amhara were a pure ethnic identity. The participation of the Guleids in these Amhara cultural practices is suggestive of a claim to the national identity of Ethiopia. Mohammed's cousin, Hayat, who also grew up in Harar and is married to an Isaq man from the sub-clans around Togochale, has also not escaped the influence of 'Amhara' culture. At her house in Jijiga, Hayat performs the coffee ceremony, where it is sometimes punctuated by Somali cultural practices. For instance, the coffee is usually served as a prelude to a *khat*[117] chewing session. While roasting the coffee beans there is also a moment where she

[116] The ceremony is elaborate and involves the roasting of coffee beans until they become coffee and are mixed with hot water and served in small cups.
[117] The mildly intoxicating amphetamine leaf that is chewed across East Africa especially by the Somalis.

would burn incense and say a short prayer in Arabic. Hayat noted that she enjoys the coffee ceremony but admitted that very few Somali families perform it.[118]

The Guleids do not necessarily represent a typical case of constructing Isaq identity in eastern Ethiopia. They appear to have partaken of both Ethiopian legal status and national identity, while also recognising their Isaq-Somali identity. The novelty of their condition lies in the extent to which they have been able to blend these identities.

The close association of the Guleids with the state and its discourses and practices has played a role in their trajectory of identification. Mohammed and his siblings went through the Ethiopian school system, where they were taught in Amharic. Perhaps their social status also afforded them an opportunity for discernment with regard to their engagements with the Ethiopian state. This author was told that Mohammed's uncle was a renowned academic who had been involved in the establishment of one of the local universities – Haramaya University. However, he later went into exile in the United States where he is said to have had an illustrious academic career. It appears that Mohammed's father was also a political figure, and is said to have spent his last days languishing in a prison in Mogadishu.

Nonetheless, it is not uncommon to find Somalis with similar social statuses appropriating certain Amhara traits, especially the language, as they intermingle and negotiate their way in the Amhara-dominated milieu. Members of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia, most notably the Oromo, underwent total assimilation, and became 'Amhara' in every aspect of this social category – names, language, religion, dress code, etc. Yet, this was not the case for the Guleids, indeed, not for most Somalis of similar social category in Ethiopia. The close association of the Guleids to the Amhara identity can be explained by their geographic location and exposure to the 'Amhara state.' It is thus worth remembering, that the biggest and most

[118] Author's observations and conversations at Hayat Omer's house, Jijiga, January 2012; October 2012.

immovable boundaries created by the Somalis are the ones between themselves, at the level of the clan and clan family, rather than with other ethnic groups. This is demonstrated by the social relationships of the Guleids.

Two of Mohammed's siblings married non-Somali Ethiopians. His younger brother married a non-Muslim 'Amhara' woman, while his sister is married to a Muslim Gurage man. However, when time came to find a wife for Mohammed, he looked to his father's native land. Mohammed found a wife in Burao, in the Togdheer region of Somaliland. This was perhaps an attempt by Mohammed to authenticate his otherwise diluted Isaq identity. In conversations with this author, Mohammed often attributed his family's 'peculiar' situation to the absence of his father.

Harari, Ogadeen and Isaq strategies of constructing their ethnic identities between 1960 and 1991 were first and foremost influenced by immediate and local conditions. The activities of the Ethiopian state and developments in neighbouring Somalia were secondary. The 'close' contact of the Harari and Isaq to the Amhara state ensured a shaky connection, a connection nonetheless. On the other hand, the geographic, political and cultural distance of the Ogadeen from the Amhara ensured further isolation. This was the dominant image up to 1991. Developments after 1991 reveal that the construction of identities in this periphery is a work in progress and far from being settled.

4.8 Reconstructing identities under ethnic federalism

4.8.1 Restructuring the state

A series of socio-economic crises together with bouts of famine and ethno-national conflict plagued the military-socialist state in the course of the 1970s and 1980s in Ethiopia. Throughout this period, the

'national question' remained a perennial issue that threatened the survival of the state. In March 1983, the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of the military regime issued a ground-breaking proclamation. This was the "Institute of the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities Establishment Proclamation."[119] According to the Proclamation, one of the key objectives of the proposed Institute was to study the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of Ethiopian nationalities.[120] However, the PMAC did not get the opportunity to implement these proposals, because in 1991 the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) forces captured the state and took over political power. The EPRDF "remapped"[121] the Ethiopian state by adopting ethnic federalism. By underscoring ethnicity, this radical and pioneering restructuring of the state gave new meaning to identity politics in Ethiopia.

Inevitably, the form of state that was crafted by the EPRDF created a new political framework in which identity formation would evolve. This change had major implications for the vast territories on the margins of the state. In addition, events taking place in neighbouring Somalia once again affected the eastern periphery. Unlike Ethiopia, the state in Somalia did not survive the civil war. Insurmountable clan family and clan divisions within the complex clan structure proved to be the decisive factor in Somalia when "Somali nationalism ultimately dissolved into its clan components."[122]

The next section examines how the Harari, Ogadeen and Isaq communities have been affected by the national and regional structural changes that have come into effect since 1991.

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[119] Proclamation on the establishment of an "Institute of the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities," *Negarit Gazeta*, Vol. 8, no. 236, 1983.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Donald Donham, "Introduction," in *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After*, eds. Wendy James, Donald Donham et al (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 5.
[122] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers* 213.

4.8.2 Harari revival

The Harari were assigned the Harari National Regional State. Markakis notes that the region is contentious because the Harari people are a minority in the region, even in the city of Harar, where the Oromo are the majority.[123] Indeed, the region is a geographic oddity that does not naturally correspond to the ethnic logic that underlies the federal system. A state official who preferred to remain anonymous noted that there was no logical reason for allocating a federal region to the miniscule Harari community.[124] The region is an enclave in the middle of a vast Oromia region.[125] The official also expressed the opinion that, the allocation of the region is a consequence of attempts to appease the previously marginalised Harari community. He further noted that the existence of this region can only be guaranteed as long as the current ruling EPRDF remains in power.

At the Harari regional state offices in Harar, this author was made aware of internal power struggles that exist in the administration. These are mainly between the Harari and the Oromo and relate to the occupation of senior positions. These power struggles led to the compromise that allows the regional president to always be Harari and the deputy an Oromo. Yet, fiercely contested political power has not completely dissipated even with this precarious arrangement. Within the context of such a highly politicised regional administration, it can be expected that identity formation would reflect people's interpretations and ascriptions of their ethnic and cultural qualities.

The Harari appear determined to reclaim their city by promoting themselves and their culture as the defining identity of the Harar regional state. As demonstrated in the political power struggles that plague the region, the utility of the regional administration as an instrument to access state and other resources is evident. Since the

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[123] Ibid, 235.
[124] Anonymous, conversation with author, Addis Ababa, January 19, 2012.
[125] See Figure 3

1990s many Harari have returned from exile and appear determined to initiate a Harari renewal through business ventures and other economic pursuits. On the streets of Harar I was often introduced to or shown people who had returned from Canada or the United States. Harari culture also appears to be central to the reconstruction of Harari identity. This is often expressed by emphasising ethnic differentiation between the Harari and the Oromo.

The Harari are constructing this difference not only as a means to thwart the ambitions of their political foes, the numerically dominant Oromo, but also to guarantee the continuation of their ethnic group. The use of culture as a mode of Harari revival is a natural response to the federal system that promotes the *ethnic* identity and its attendant cultures. The extensive and colourful history of the Harari is being promoted and celebrated with much pride. Prominent Harari families who live inside the *Jegol* (ancient walled city) have transformed their homes into guest houses for tourism purposes. This comes in the aftermath of the *Jegol* being declared a world heritage site in 2006.

This author spent time at one of these homes during extended visits to Harar. The Waber family is prominent in Harar and was described as a part of the Harari 'ruling classes.' Two of the five Waber sisters have converted their homes into guest houses. This author stayed at Zubeyda Waber's where she operates a guest house in her home with two of her other sisters. The history and 'prominence' of the family is reflected in the colourfully decorated living area, which takes pride of place in the house. The living area is decorated with locally woven baskets, enamel plates and Islamic art. The sitting area is divided into sections and denotes a hierarchy of traditional sitting arrangements. The male head of the family, who was also the most religiously educated, sat at the highest level of the two-tier sitting area, and the lowliest members of the household such as the servants,

sat on the floor close to the entrance. The Waber home is usually described as a ‘typical traditional Harari home.’

Another Harari native, Abdallah Sherif, a self-appointed Harari cultural conservationist, has created a museum out of his home. Sherif has an impressive collection of ancient coins and artefacts, including spears and daggers. Most impressive is how he has revived the ancient Harari skill of manuscript binding. In addition to a collection of a few ancient bounded manuscripts, Sherif is also refurbishing others and transferring the skill of manuscript binding to young Hararis. Sherif noted that he felt a strong need to revive Harari culture in order to move away from a negative past. Sherif was also candid when talking about relations with the state, which he immediately interpreted as ‘Amhara.’ He noted that “we have to live with them, and follow the example of Mandela.”[126]

What appears to be taking place in Harar indicates a people who are constructing their identity by asserting their unique culture – not for the sake of culture alone, but to ensure that the ethnic group persists in order to survive within an ethnic federal region where they are a minority.

4.8.3 Material benefits and the construction of Ogadeni identity

The post-1991 political context in Ethiopia’s Somali region reflects the consequences of the fractured indigenous form of Somali authority. The tense clan rivalries not only demonstrate the loss of a broad Somali national identity, they also symbolise the struggles of the Somalis with centralised authority, which dates back to the nineteenth century. This is ironic since ethnic federalism in Ethiopia supposedly promotes both ethnic ‘nationalities’ and decentralisation. Indeed, as

[126] Abdellah Sherif, museum curator and collector of Harari artefacts, interview with author, Harar, October 14, 2011.

Markakis has noted, it is in the Somali region that the success of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism will be determined. It is in that region where it will become clear whether the Ethiopian central state finally crosses the 'last frontier.'[127]

Samatar has noted that the initial decision of the majority of Somalis in Ethiopia to adhere to EPRDF rules was a wise one, given an alternative that would have thrust the region into war with the new rulers.[128] However, the manner in which the struggle for regional positions of power manifested itself threatened the reappearance of the Ogadeen-Isaq rivalry. From the outset in 1991, the Ogadeen appeared ready to (re)claim the region. This was of course problematic since the vast Somali region occupies a diverse terrain with five distinct sections,[129] which are occupied by equally distinct Somali clans and sub-clans. It is then not surprising that divisions soon emerged between and within clans.

In the early 1990s the Ogadeen were politically divided, and they still are.[130] At the outset of political (re) negotiation in 1991 the lines were drawn between two loose factions. There were the 'hardliners' who supported the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and then there were those who were more accommodating and willing to negotiate the new political landscape.[131] The details of the intense power struggles that ensued in the pursuit of political

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[127] See John Markakis, *Ethiopia, The Last Two Frontiers* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011) for an analysis of what he sees as the last two frontiers in the history of state and nation building in Ethiopia.

[128] Abdi I. Samatar, "Ethiopian Ethnic Federalism and Regional Autonomy: The Somali Test", *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies* 5, Article 9 (2005): 51 http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/bildhaan/vol5/iss1/9/.html (accessed November 14, 2012)

[129] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 53.

[130] At the time of writing a fresh round of negotiations was set to begin between the ONLF and the Ethiopian government following an almost year-long break in the talks, see Crisis Group, "Ethiopia: Prospects for Peace in Ogaden," *Africa Report* no. 207, August 6, 2013.

[131] Abdi M. Abdullahi, "The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF): The Dilemma of its Struggle in Ethiopia," *Review of African Political Economy* 34, no.113 (September 2007).

power have been explored sufficiently elsewhere.[132] Our interests in the current investigation are on the strategies of identify formation that have been pursued by the Ogadeen in the post-1991 period.

As noted earlier, some members of the Ogadeen clan took flight in large numbers at least since the1960s and most notably in 1978. Many went to Somalia, but others were scattered throughout the region and beyond. The migration to Somalia was partly motivated by the idea of Somali unification, but overall, the migration was based on the need to escape state centralisation and the militarisation that was taking place in the Ogaden. However, since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991, the idea of a united Somali nation appears to have disintegrated along with the Somali state. This prompted an exodus in the opposite direction when large numbers of the Ogadeen returned to Ethiopia in what can be regarded as a more meaningful return that was laden with undercurrents of belonging.

For the Ogadeen, their entire clan family of the Darod had become pariahs within the Somali body politic, and their future in Somalia was uncertain. However, those with Ethiopian origins were now offered their own semi-autonomous region within a decentralised Ethiopian state. They soon returned in numbers. It seems that this homecoming was an opportunity for the Ogadeen to persuasively claim the region. However, the ONLF struggled to find overwhelming support after 1991 – some Ogadeen no longer saw separatism as a necessary or even viable option, hence the emergence of factions in 1995.[133] However, some groups operating under the banner of the 'ONLF' are still waging an insurgency against the Ethiopian state in the Ogaden desert.

Nonetheless, many Ogadeen appear to be firmly rooted in Ethiopia both geographically and politically. Many returnees have

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[132] Samatar, "Ethnic Federalism," and Tobias Hagmann, "Beyond clannishness and colonialism: understanding political disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991-2004," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no.4 (December 2005).
[133] Hagmann and Khalif, "State and Politics," 40.

demonstrated firm claims of belonging. The categories of the returnees are wide ranging – war and famine refugees, economic and other types of migrants. At this point the categories of the returnees are not as important as the fact that they all have similar sentiments about returning –a strong sense of belonging. This is illustrated by Hawa's story:

> Born and raised in Dire Dawa, later moving to Jijiga upon marriage, Hawa left Jijiga in the 1970s for Hargeisa in northern Somalia. She remained there until the outbreak of the Somali civil war in the early 1980s. She returned to Ethiopia in the early 1980s as a refugee fleeing the civil war in Somalia. She spent three years at a large UNHCR camp in Hart Sheik on the Ethiopian side of the Ethiopia-Somaliland border. In 1991 she returned to Jijiga. Hawa received a government house and started working as a member of a *kebele*.[134] She became a leader of the mothers of the *kebele*. In this capacity she was afforded an opportunity to travel to Addis Ababa for the first time – an experience she greatly delights in. Hawa is very proud of her achievements and her experiences under the EPRDF government.[135]

Hawa only has good things to say about returning to Ethiopia under the current political climate. She has been constructing an identity as an active citizen – engaged in political activities and serving the state in various capacities. In her capacity as a member and leader of the mothers of the *kebele*, she noted her participation during the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war. Hawa noted that "as a leader of the mothers of the *kebele* I encouraged other mothers to make their sons join the military and fight in the war."[136]

This particular war has been noted for the popular support it received in the peripheral regions of Ethiopia. Prior to 1991, it would have been highly unusual for Somalis of Ethiopia to actively participate in a war on the Ethiopian side. Similarly, the western periphery of Gambella produced similar support, where a significant number of the Anywaa joined the Ethiopian army – surprising many

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[134] A kebele is the smallest administrative unit in the regional state organisation – a 'neighbourhood.'
[135] Hawa, interview with author.
[136] Ibid.

with their bravery on the battlefield. This can be interpreted as an attempt by both the Anywaa and the Ogadeen to express and reinforce their claims of belonging, not only at the local level, but also nationally. Both groups demonstrate some approval of the federal experiment by forging a congenial engagement with the central state – perhaps for the first time in the history of their existence under Ethiopian state authority. This can be seen to suggest the 'successes' of the federal experiment. Such an assertion would of course be problematic, because we have to bear in mind the role of the *ethnic* identity in the federal narrative. What appears to be the case is that fierce contestations of political power between different ethnic groups at the regional level produce strong claims of belonging, which then suggest limitations on the territorial and identity logic that informs the federal project.

Other returnees in the Somali region include those who left as economic migrants. This author's first visit to Jijiga in November 2011 produced unexpected and surprising revelations about some Ogadeen returnees. Upon establishing the author's nationality, an official at the regional immigration offices noted that the majority of Somalis living in South Africa are Ogadeen from that region. This author was not aware of this and enthusiastically pursued this information. Indeed, the research took an interesting turn. Coincidentally, the author found lodgings in the Ogadeen part of Jijiga town, at an establishment that is managed by a returnee from South Africa.

It then became apparent that Millennium Hotel is the meeting place for many Ogadeen returnees from South Africa, where they discuss politics, but mostly business opportunities in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya. The hotel also hosts businessmen from other zones[137] of the Somali region –Korahe and Gode – in the Ogaden heartland. The author then had the opportunity to converse with many

[137] See Figure 4

of the returnees, some of whom were fluent in the author's mother tongue, which they had learnt while in South Africa.

There are two types of Ogadeen who have connections to South Africa. Many have full South African citizenship, with property and businesses there. They return to Ethiopia to take part in business opportunities that are afforded by the new political climate. Some of these men have no desire to return permanently to Ethiopia.
One man noted that he had received a multi-million *birr*[138] government contract for the construction of wells in the Somali region. He was going to spend at least one year in Ethiopia to oversee the project. However, he noted that he plans to travel back and forth between Jijiga and Johannesburg.[139]

Others have moved back permanently to Ethiopia. One man noted that he had left his South African wife and business because he wants to be home. We had met initially in January 2012 and then subsequently in October of the same year. At the second meeting, Yassin stated that he was in the process of building a hotel in Jijiga.[140] But he also light-heartedly added that he will occasionally travel back to South Africa to satisfy his nomadic Somali lifestyle.

The Ogadeen appear to be capitalising on the material opportunities that are presented by the federal arrangement. Their strategy of constructing their identity as active citizens has gained them unprecedented access to state resources. However, the inherent contradictions of a Somali-Ethiopian identity persist. Hagmann and Khalif have explored the contested meanings of the term 'Ethiopian-Somali,' and concluded that there is a long way to go before the people of this region universally accept such an identity.[141] This is most evident in the post-1991 Isaq strategies of identity formation, which are quite contrary to the approaches of the Ogadeen.

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[138] Name of the Ethiopian currency.
[139] Mohammed Dolal, interview with author, Jijiga, October 20, 2012.
[140] Yassin Mohammed, interview with author, Jijiga, October 20, 2012.
[141] Hagmann and Khalif, "State and Politics," 25-27.

4.8.4 Straddling territorial and mental boundaries

The post-1991 Isaq experience of identity formation differs from the Ogadeen. In addition to the nature of political development in the Somali region, one of the sources of difference is the secession of the northern region of Somalia. The secession and subsequent relative success of Somaliland has created a new dimension to the way in which the Isaq view themselves within the Ethiopian political establishment. It can be argued that the Isaq are currently straddling both the territorial and mental boundaries – because of the symbolic meaning of Somaliland.

The experiences of the Isaq in the current political context can be conveniently juxtaposed to those of the Ogadeen. The latter are the majority in the Somali region, and thus appear to have an advantage. The Ogadeen also have a history of acrimony with central state power and authority, whereas the Isaq do not. However, as noted in the previous section, the Ogadeen appear to be reclaiming the region – spatially and politically. As the political rivalries in the Somali region demonstrate, the Isaq who hitherto had cordial relations with the Ethiopian state now appear to be on the political margins.

Initially, the Isaq were persuaded by the EPRDF to forge and lead a coalition of other Somali clans in the region – to neutralise Ogadeen power and influence. [142] Samatar argues that federal intervention is one of the biggest causes of the political problems facing the Somali region of Ethiopia.[143] However, Samatar does not once mention clan politics as a source of the disorder that has characterised the Somali region since 1991. He does not acknowledge that, although lamentable, federal intervention has been largely necessitated by disputes caused by ‘clannishness.’ Samatar does not concede the fact that undue federal intervention and clan discord have been mutually reinforcing forces of disorder in the Somali region.

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[142] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 310.
[143] Samatar, “Ethnic Federalism,” 51.

Hussein Adam offers a more nuanced line of argument, noting that "in Somali society, clan concerns have tended to focus around struggles for 'recognition.'"[144] The political struggles that are often framed around clan consciousness have a basis in historical socio-cultural dynamics.[145] As the preceding sections have sought to demonstrate, upon closer inspection, 'clannishness' contains elements of identity formation, which we cannot overlook. This is evident when we recognise that, "identity-related actions are often motivated by the desire to promote personal interests and positions."[146] Indeed, notions of 'recognition' and 'personal interests' can be identified in the ways in which the Isaq have negotiated their identity since 1991.

The idea of Somaliland symbolises a potential 'homeland' for the Isaq of eastern Ethiopia. This manifests itself in a number of ways and demonstrates the pervasiveness of exogenous narratives in the Somali identity in Ethiopia.[147] However, before revealing Isaq experiences of identity formation, it is fitting to also demonstrate how the Isaq, together with other minority Somali groups, have been confronted with the emergence of a dominant Ogadeen local identity in the Somali region. Three cases warrant mention – controversies surrounding the name of the region, its capital and flag.

Upon being granted their *kilil*[148] by federal authorities, Somali representatives were asked to decide on a name for the region. The Ogadeen wanted the region to be called the 'Ogaden,' whereas the rest preferred the name 'Somali' region. Eventually the name 'Somali National Regional State' was approved and adopted following lengthy negotiations. Next on the agenda was the issue of choosing a regional capital. Initially, Gode, which is arguably the heartland of the Ogadeen clan, was chosen as the capital. With the ensuing political struggles

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[144] Hussein M. Adam, "Somalia: Militarism, Warlordism or Democracy?" *Review of African Political Economy* 54 (July, 1992): 14.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Watson and Schlee, "Introduction," 2.
[147] Hagmann and Khalif, "State and Politics,"38.
[148] Federal region

and discord, by 1994 the capital was relocated to Jijiga. In addition to being a neutral location, Jijiga has a history of being an administrative centre – as seen in chapter three of this thesis. The new regional elites were then mandated to select a pattern for the regional flag. To the outrage of federal authorities and other Somalis, the flag appeared with green, white and red stripes with a white five pointed star on a blue background on the left – the symbol of Somali nationalism made an appearance. Since 2008, however, the five pointed white star has been replaced with a camel – a symbol of Somali culture.

With what appeared to be the 'Ogadenisation' of the new Somali region, the Isaq were compelled to re-evaluate and reconstruct their identity. Somaliland secession instigated cross-border movement of the Isaq in the other direction. Many made their way to Hargeisa for various purposes. Contacts with families have been renewed as Somaliland is perceived to hold the promise of belonging by some.

This is the case for the Guleid family that we met earlier. One of Mohammed's brothers, Hussein, permanently moved to Hargeisa in the mid-1990s and lives there today. This author visited Hussein at his home in Hargeisa in January 2012. Hussein noted that his life is comfortable in Somaliland, more than he thinks it would be in Ethiopia. Mohammed also worked with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Hargeisa for about five years but eventually returned to Harar due to ill-health. One of Mohammed's nephews, a recent first degree graduate from Jijiga University, noted that upon completing his MSc degree he is going to look for work in Hargeisa. This is an option for Ismael, not merely because of the presence of international organisations and opportunities in Hargeisa, but also because he is Isaq.

The possibility of straddling the boundary at a mental level, and the complex processes of self-identification within the context of ethnic federalism are demonstrated in a football match incident that was conveyed to this author in Jijiga:

> A football match took place between the police forces of the Ethiopian Somali regional state and Somaliland. The match was played at the stadium in Jijiga and was transmitted on local television. The Somaliland police won the match. While celebrating the goal (s), some spectators reportedly waved the Somaliland flag. They were later identified as Jijiga residents, therefore, Ethiopian nationals. Based on the television footage they were later picked up from their homes and arrested.[149]

For reasons known to them, these spectators felt the urge to celebrate the goal by waving the Somaliland flag. They were perceived to be traitors by regional authorities. However, their arrests were not carried out to punish disloyalty to the Ethiopian state or national identity. In fact, it is quite possible that these people were actually from Somaliland, regardless of their residency in Jijiga. Rather, the arrests were a rebuke to those who do not display loyalty to a specific local identity – Ogadeni, which is being vigorously promoted in the Somali region. The arrests were a possible message to the Isaq or others who are not Ogadeen. Indeed, Somaliland is regarded as an Isaq homeland, and thus it is instinctively perceived as an enemy of the Ogadeen.

Many were puzzled and not particularly impressed at the Millennium hotel when this author revealed her intentions to travel to Hargeisa in January 2012. Similarly, the close company of the Isaq that the author was allegedly keeping was occasionally questioned at the hotel, although in a light-hearted manner. Nonetheless, these cases support Hagmann and Khalif's postulate on the inherent difficulties of constructing a cohesive local identity within the Somali region of Ethiopia.

[149] This story was kindly told to the author by Abdurahman Omer, in Jijiga, October, 2012.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined processes of identity formation among the Harari, Isaq and Ogadeen of the Harar and Jijiga peripheries of eastern Ethiopia. The chapter explored the interplay between external identification and self-identification among these groups. The chapter demonstrated that these communities have negotiated their identities against the backdrop of competing and shifting strategies of categorisation by colonial and imperial authorities. The chapter also highlighted that strategies of self-identification among these groups have emerged in interactions and encounters with other ethnic groups in the peripheries – most notably the dominant Amhara national identity.

The experience of the period of the BMA engendered new ideas of thinking about ethnic identity and belonging among the Somali of eastern Ethiopia. These ideas gave rise to diffuse approaches toward self-identification. The Harari, however, experienced a quietly marginal existence, largely because of their limited numbers. During the imperial and *Dergue* periods, the Harari took flight; the Isaq began a cautious but deliberate engagement with the state, whereas the Ogadeen simultaneously rebelled against and engaged with the state. The examination of these narratives of identification suggests that there is no single factor that influences ethnic identity construction in this periphery. Encounters with the state and the neighbouring Republic of Somalia have also historically provided the context for constructing identities, while encounters with other identities at the local level have also had an influence.

In the post- 1991 period, the Harari and Ogadeen have sought political power in their respective regions –however, this is contested by other groups at the regional level. Consequently, they have sought ways to create ethnic barriers with their political rivals, or to make overt claims of citizenship and belonging. The consequences are that

ethnic federalism is creating potent dynamics of identity formation at the local level, and is thus exhibiting some of its limitations. This situation, thus, creates the danger of the emergence of "local tyranny"[150] within the supposedly homogenous ethnic regions.

The following chapter continues to reveal evidence that suggests the negotiation of statehood in the Harar and Jijiga areas. The penultimate chapter of the thesis examines how people in these peripheries have experienced and responded to attempts of the state to control territory. It does this by examining the movement of people across the boundary between Ethiopia and Somaliland, against the backdrop of attempts by the state to control this movement since the 1960s. The penultimate chapter thus seeks to highlight territoriality at its most basic level – at the national territorial boundary.

[150] Assefa Fiseha, "Theory versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism," in *Ethnic Federalism, The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed., David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 176.

Chapter Five. Negotiating territorial statehood: local agency and the transformation of territorial control at the Togochale border

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is informed by the notion that "experienced territory or space is not abstract and homogenous, but located, relative, and varied."[1] The chapter foregrounds the control of territory by the Ethiopian state in the eastern periphery. It does so by examining the interplay between the attempts of the state to control territory and assert its authority and the experiences and responses of various local actors to these efforts in the Togochale border area.

Previous chapters have established that the margins of the state have a life of their own, one that is independent of the central state, but one that can enlarge our understanding of processes taking place in the centre. However, this is not to suggest that the margins have conditioned processes in the centre. Rather, the margins help us to make better sense of the broader image of statehood. Previous chapters have suggested that "territoriality is a historically sensitive use of space,"[2] thus the current chapter explores the narratives of territorial control beginning in the period following the withdrawal of the British Military Administration from eastern Ethiopia.

The current chapter traces and examines patterns of cross-border movement at the Togochale border over time. It follows patterns of migration, refugee movement and cross-border trade since the 1960s. The chapter argues that a multiplicity of local actors have been involved in the negotiation of territorial statehood by transforming the nature of territorial control and state authority in the

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[1] Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, "Territorialization and State Power in Thailand," *Theory and Society* 24, no.3 (June 1995): 389.
[2] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality, Its theory and history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.

border area. These actors are diverse and range from borderland populations who often claim the border space by defying state rules and regulations by means of utilising local systems and networks, to state authorities who, in their attempts to establish statehood, often have to adjust their mandates in order to suit local conditions. From the mid-1950s, following the withdrawal of the BMA, there has been competing ideas of what the border means and represents on the Ethiopian side. These ideas range from notable perceptions of Togochale as an 'invisible' boundary to an acute awareness of the boundary and its role as a 'regulator of people and goods.'[3]

The experience of varied administrative authorities, as described in chapters two, three and four, has shaped local perceptions of cross-border movement and indeed, of the border. In the traditional sense, borders mark a legal division of power over a territory in the process of state building.[4] This was certainly the case in nineteenth century Ethiopia. Borders, therefore, should be seen as directly linked to the determination of the limits of the state and marking the limits of the intended exercise of power by the state. Borderlands on the other hand raise a different set of dynamics vis-à-vis the state and the exercise of power – these are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter. However, borderlands have similar characteristics – as spaces that owe much of their character to the nature of the border, regardless of whether they are in Ethiopia or elsewhere in Africa.[5]

Analysing the role of local agency in the transformation of cross-border movement is an important element to the overall argument of this thesis, which seeks to demonstrate that a variery of local actors have been involved in the negotiation of statehood in the

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[3] Paul Nugent, "Arbitrary Lines and the People's Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa," in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 199), 37.
[4] Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, "Towards a Comparative History of Borderlands" *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (2007): 214.
[5] Anthony I. Asiwaju, "Partitioned Culture Areas: A Checklist," in Anthony I. Asiwaju (ed.) *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1984* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1985), 1-18.

periphery. This negotiation is most visible in the border areas where those who inhabit the borderlands often challenge the legal and rigid assumptions of the border, and where those who are tasked with the role of manifesting the state find themselves participating and presiding over the transformation of the border. Cross-border migration, in particular, influences state formation because it "puts the border into question and challenges the nature of a seemingly established system, i.e. the nation."[6] Horstmann and Wadley argue that marginal history thus explores the entrenchment of the border in the local imagination.[7]

The chapter begins with a discussion of a period of rigid state borders in the post-BMA period in Ethiopia. It examines how this period influenced people's 'imaginations' of the border. To provide the context for examining people's experiences, the section explores internal political dynamics within the eastern periphery under imperial rule. Next, the chapter surveys how people negotiated the use of the border during a period of increased militarisation and further rigidification – during the period of the *Dergue* from 1974. Finally, the chapter examines the nature of this border since 1991 – a period that has experienced unprecedented levels of cross-border movement, most of which is underlined by cross-border trade.

5.2 Attempting territorial control by militarising the eastern periphery

The rationale for the uncompromising approach of the imperial state with regards to the border with the Republic of Somalia in the early 1960s can be found in the events of the preceding decade. As discussed in chapters two and three, the period of the BMA presented

[6] Alexander Horstmann and Reed L. Wadley, "Introduction: Centering the Margin in Southeast Asia," in Alexander Horstmann and Reed L. Wadley (eds.) *Centering the Margin, Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), 10.

[7] Ibid, 14.

a significant threat to the territorial integrity of the imperial state. This was mainly because the state was yet to consolidate its territory and political authority in the eastern peripheral regions. However, the official end of the BMA in 1954 left residual territorial ambiguities, particularly in people's minds. Therefore, the formation of the Somali Republic in 1960 added another dimension to the anxieties of the imperial state vis-à-vis its presence in the east. The recent history of the dominant narrative of conflict and resistance with regards to Ethiopia's eastern periphery can be traced to this period.

The 1960s began with a series of rebellions in the southern and eastern regions of Ethiopia – in Hararge and Bale provinces. These revolts were staged by pastoralist populations in response to increased state centralisation, particularly the introduction of livestock tax. The revised Ethiopian Constitution of 1955 was, ostensibly, meant to signify a shift to a modern state and government. The supposed transformation entailed the introduction of new revenue collection measures,[8] which implied a more centralised bureaucracy. Many, particularly the pastoralists, found the increasingly centralised administration to be offensive as it curtailed some of their movements and freedoms. This led to a conflict that was ignited when a police force was deployed to collect taxes in Bale province. On arrival, the police were immediately surrounded and overpowered by the local tax rebels, who until then were no more than a loose formation.[9] The rebellion was exacerbated by the formation of a secessionist movement – the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) in south-eastern Ethiopia.

Patrick Gilkes notes that there were similar movements against taxation and tax collection among pastoralists in the Ogaden district of Hararge province. However, he also states that "these are impossible

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[8] Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion, Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London: Julian Friedmann Publishers Ltd., 1975), 68- 69.
[9] Ibid, 214.

to verify since most of the area is closed to outsiders."[10] This statement indicates the initial stages of the militarisation of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia, a legacy that has survived successive states and appears to epitomise the 'Ethiopian Ogaden region.'[11] The state insisted on tax collection as part of a comprehensive effort to assert its authority in these remote areas. The militarisation of the region also coincided with the commencement of oil and gas exploration in the late 1960s. What then developed was the state's territorialisation of resource control,[12] where the state mobilised means of coercive enforcement in the Bale and Hararge provinces. Gilkes notes that, by the early 1970s the Ethiopian Army's third division was permanently based in the Ogaden district, where it "spends a substantial amount of time collecting tax."[13] The administrative ambiguities that were created by the BMA in the eastern periphery led to suspicions by imperial state authorities regarding the loyalties of the borderland populations. This created a situation where the state deployed punitive measures, including what can be termed as state terrorism, in order to transform uncertain borderlands into national landscapes.[14]

The presence of the imperial state in this periphery was first and foremost about making claims to the territory but also increasingly, to claim the population. However, this was going to be challenging since the majority of the population was Somali, who, as described in the previous chapter, were often caught between loyalty to ethnicity and nationality. The decision of the Ethiopian state to conflate the two issues of taxation and the emergence of a secessionist movement indicates the importance of this region to the imperial rulers. The territorialisation of central state power and authority thus increased exponentially in the 1960s up to the 1970s and suggests an

[10] Ibid, 221.
[11] Tobias Hagmann and Benedikt Korf, "Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and sovereignty in the Ethiopian Somali frontier," *Political Geography* 31, issue 8 (November 2012): 205-214.
[12] Vandergeest and Peluso, "Territorialization," 389.
[13] Gilkes, *Dying Lion*, 221.
[14] Horstmann and Wadley, "Introduction," 8.

increasingly territorial approach that reflects a range of possible objectives:

> Rulers territorialized state power to achieve a variety of goals. Foremost among these was the need to make claims on territory to protect access to people and income from taxes and natural resources, in a world in which only territorial claims were recognised as legitimate. Second, territorialization enabled increased efficiency in the collection of regular taxes. A regular money income was necessary to finance permanent militaries, assess the viability of young men for a conscript military, and finance a growing bureaucracy as well as government investments that sustained local production in a context of global competition.[15]

The foregoing was true in Ethiopia where the imperial state deployed severe tactics in the administration of its peripheries in order to comply with its ideas of territorial statehood. The 'modernisation' of the state, which included increased revenue collection measures and establishing an elaborate bureaucracy, provided both the context and pretext for the militarisation of the eastern periphery. The means to achieve this 'modernity,' particularly in the Ogaden, manifested itself in the institutionalisation of a violent mode of governance.[16] This region has experienced recurring states of emergencies over the years, prompting Hagmann and Korf to argue that, "emergency measures in the Ogaden have become governmental norm rather than exception."[17]

With modernisation as the leading refrain in the post-liberation period, people in the peripheries would have been forgiven for thinking that the nature of state power was undergoing significant transformation. However, they were soon alerted to the realities of the apparent transformation when the imperial state adopted a version of modernisation that was implemented within already established political structures of traditional hierarchy. The focus on centralisation, often framed as modernisation, was underlined by a

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[15] Vandergeest and Peluso, "Territorialization," 390.
[16] Pietro S. Toggia, "The State of Emergency: Police and Carceral Regimes in Modern Ethiopia," *Journal of Developing Societies* 24, no.2 (July 2008):107-108.
[17] Hagmann and Korf, "Agamben," 210.

conceptualisation of territorial control as a key component of political power. There was, therefore, more continuity than transformation in the processes of modernising the empire.

What could have occurred in Ethiopia as part of political change in a traditional polity is outlined by Huntington, who states that:

> To cope successfully with modernization, a political system must be able, first, to innovate policy, that is, to promote social and economic reform by state action. Reform in this context usually means the changing of traditional values and behaviour patterns, the expansion of communications and education, the broadening of loyalties from family, village, and tribe to nation, the secularization of public life, the rationalization of authority structures, the promotion of functionally specific organizations, the substitution of achievement criteria for ascriptive ones, and the furthering of a more equitable distribution of material and symbolic resources.[18]

This was not to be in Ethiopia since the overriding concern was to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state. The making of territorial claims, protecting resources and collecting taxes, often through violent means, marked the beginning of the problematic administration of this periphery in the post-BMA period. Subsequently, the state would "employ the territorial administration to organize surveillance, gather information about the population, force them to settle down and organise close control over their everyday activities."[19]

The pastoralist populations who formed a majority and other 'cross-border populations' were the most affected, as the policies favoured a sedentary lifestyle. As noted in chapter four, the imperial state favoured a sedentary existence particularly for the Somalis whose loyalties the state could not guarantee. To a large extent, a sedentary way of life was achieved in the Jijiga area up to the border at Togochale where a number of Isaq and Gadabursi Somali were 'agro-

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[18] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 140.
[19] Vandergeest and Peluso, "Territorialization," 390.

pastoralists.' However, cultivation in the Ogaden 'proper' regions south of Jijiga remained elusive, partly because most of the Ogadeen Somali have a nomadic pastoralist form of subsistence due to the landscape they inhabit, which is largely desert.

The 1955-56 Harar conferences between Ethiopian and British Protectorate authorities were convened to reconcile the main points of difference that emerged from the 1954 Agreement. However, the conferences failed to make the two sides reach a consensus. For instance, the Ethiopians avoided addressing issues such as 'nationality,' and equally evaded the definition of terms such as 'migratory' and 'sedentary' in relation to the populations that straddled the boundary, or those who were allowed seasonal cross-border migration.[20] The Ethiopians were more interested in regaining control and authority, and thus willing to live with a vague Agreement. The unwillingness of the Ethiopians to address these issues led to problems regarding cross-border movement and determining people's legal and official statuses following Somali independence in 1960.

5.3 Post-BMA patterns of cross-border migration

The unstable political climate in Hararge and Bale provinces and the nationalist fervour that accompanied the formation of the Somali Republic led to the strengthening of rules that governed cross-border migration in Ethiopia. Policies on the use of the borders of the empire were decisive in their intention to determine who belongs and who does not.

Some of the most important decrees that were passed on the use of the border appeared in the *Negarit Gazeta.*[21] These included the

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[20] TNA, PRO, CO 1015/876 *Meeting with Ethiopian Representatives at Harar – minutes of Harar conference between representatives of the Somaliland Protectorate and the Imperial Ethiopian Government*, 1956.
[21] Ethiopian Government publication of laws, proclamations and decrees.

Immigration Proclamation of 1943.[22] This was followed by the Customs and Export duties Proclamation of 1943.[23] The customs and duties proclamation also defined illegal activities such as smuggling and the penalties they carried. To confirm these proclamations, a former government employee who worked in Hararge province in the 1960s and 1970s noted that there were customs posts at the border at Togochale as well as sixty five kilometres further inland at Jijiga.[24] Elders interviewed by this author all confirmed that more rigid rules and regulations were introduced by the imperial state, and in particular they noted the regulation of customs duties at the Togochale border in the 1960s.[25] Customs duties were collected by state agents and went directly to the state and not to local leaders. In the Jijiga-Togochale region, unlike in the Ogaden 'proper,' the state rarely used local Somali 'chiefs' or *balabbats*. This is because this section of Hararge province had been directly administered by central state authority since its official incorporation into the state. Therefore, it was the northern military-settlers – the *neftegna* who oversaw administration, including revenue collection, in the Jijiga and Togochale areas.

Based on the limited archival material that is available, beyond delimiting the state's territorial sphere, there is little evidence to suggest that the border was a major concern of the imperial state before 1954. A number of reasons can account for this. The first is the ambiguous definitions that characterised identification, as noted in the previous chapter. During the period of the BMA up to 1954, a number of people from the Protectorate settled in the Haud and Reserved Areas of Ethiopia. Some of these people were involved in

[22] Order No. 36, Immigration Proclamation, *Negarit Gazeta*, Volume No.1 1942-1951, Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library, Addis Ababa University.
[23] Order No. 39, Customs and Export Duties Proclamation1943, *Negarit Gazeta*, Volume No.1 1942-1951, Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library, Addis Ababa University.
[24] Former government employee, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.
[25] In a series of interviews conducted with several Elders in Jijiga, 2012 – these will be presented in a later section.

cultivation.[26] An elder in Jijiga noted that this was commonplace and was accomplished with relative ease since "the eastern part of Ethiopia and British Somaliland were one country."[27] Needless to say, during the BMA cross-border migration was a rather fluid process. As the elder noted, the major challenge with crossing the border was poor transport, and nothing else.[28] However, free movement was radically altered by the 1954 Agreement. The elders noted that the biggest change following the departure of the British was the need to use a passport to cross the border.[29]

Interviewees in Jijiga noted that imperial authorities were very strict about the use of passports at the border. The state became even firmer following Somali independence. This change coincided with the beginning of the territorial claims of the Republic on Ethiopian territory. Yet, regardless of these changes, the reality of people moving back and forth across the boundary remained and continued beyond 1960. The rules of the prevailing political authority – imperial state, attempted to alter the movement of people on this border. However, these rules were flouted by those crossing the border since they had always known and engaged in unhindered cross-border movement. Furthermore, as noted previously, the majority Somali who straddled this boundary were still to a large extent guided by their traditional forms of authority.

In the latter part of 1963 a guerrilla movement that opposed imperial rule emerged from south-eastern Ethiopia. The WSLF was a force conceived entirely from within Ethiopia, but had the sympathies of the Somali Republic. Early in 1964, the Republic was drawn into the internal conflict that was raging across Ethiopia's eastern region. The Republic gave military support to the WSLF. Because the latter

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[26] Samuel Negash, "Colonial Legacy, State Intervention and Secessionism: Paradoxical National Identities of the Ogaden and Ishaq clans in Ethiopia," in *Society, State and Identity in African History*, ed. Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008), 282.
[27] Mohammed, interview with author, Jijiga, October 27, 2012.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Mohammed, Ahmed, and Hawa, interviews with author, Jijiga, October 2012.

materialized at the same time as the tax rebellions, their activities were viewed by the Ethiopians as an attack on the territorial integrity and authority of the state. The Ethiopian state retaliated by launching ground and air attacks on Somali border posts and towns.[30] Soon after these attacks started, an Ethiopian newspaper reported that Ethiopian officials from Jijiga met with their Somali counterparts at the border post of Togochale to discuss "the situation existing on the borders of the two countries."[31] The meeting is reported to have been amicable and fruitful.

This conflict shaped the territorial (border) discourse between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia for the next few decades – at least from above. At the local level people continued more or less as they always had. The rest of the chapter demonstrates how political developments within the eastern periphery shaped the border discourse from 'below.' The antagonism and conflict at the state-level merely provided the broader context for the development of local responses to the attempts of the state to control its territorial limits and assert its authority. The first movement of refugees across this border was one of the ways in which its discourse was transformed from below in the 1960s.

5.3.1 The start of a refugee problem

In the 1960s and 1970s, refugees in sub-Saharan Africa were mainly a consequence of "explosive internal social and political situations."[32] In eastern Ethiopian, in addition to internal conditions, the Ethiopia-Somalia conflict in 1964 produced the first wave of refugees across the Togochale border. However, this movement was not massive and did not lead to the establishment of refugee camps. In the 1960s, the vast

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[30] For more detail see Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 146-148.
[31] *Ethiopian Herald*, December 1, 1964.
[32] James Milner, *Refugees, the State and the Politics of Asylum in Africa* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 19.

majority of refugees in Africa lived in rural settlements located in the host countries.[33] Unfortunately there is little documentation on this particular movement of refugees. Yet, we can assume that the refugees were, in one way or another, absorbed into the border villages of eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia. The movement of large numbers of refugees across state borders has since become a defining characteristic of human migration in the Horn of Africa – shaping the various states from below in ways that we still lack complete knowledge of.

During the 1963-64 Ethiopia-Somalia conflict, one of the catalysts for the movement of people from eastern Ethiopia was the "Declaration of State of Emergency in the Region Bordering the Republic of Somalia Order."[34] This Order brought the Ethiopian army to the region and severely restricted the movement of people, causing many to flee across the border. The entire region came under emergency laws as the imperial state failed to distinguish between those who were fighting against taxation and those advocating for secession.

Following the conflict, a number of Ogadeen from the Ogaden region of Ethiopia sought refuge in Somalia. Some of them were prominent individuals who were members of the WSLF and feared reprisals from the Ethiopian state. Many were persuaded by authorities in Mogadishu to remain in Somalia and to abandon their secessionist ambitions.[35] Others, who would be classified as refugees, took flight in fear of the militarisation of the Ogaden region, which began immediately following the conflict.

In 1964 the Somali Republic initiated a ceasefire that remained until the close of the decade before the civilian government in Mogadishu was overthrown by a military junta in 1969. The latter later re-visited the 1964 conflict and the unresolved issues thereof, and in

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[33] Ibid, 2.
[34] *Negarit Gazeta*, Vol. 3 No. 32 1964, IES Library, Addis Ababa University.
[35] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*, 148.

the process plunged both Ethiopia and the Republic into a deadly war that generated the greatest number of refugees.

5.3.2 Limited cross-border trade

There is no indication that the Togochale border was involved in extensive cross-border trade during the imperial period. This is partly due to the limited available data on this area during this period. There is evidence, however, of trade in *khat,*[36] to the Protectorate and beyond. The export taxes of this popular drug are reported to have been high – at two Ethiopian dollars per kilo.[37] It is likely that this was the only Ethiopian export that passed through this border. Following Somali independence, all forms of cross-border trade were official and heavily regulated. *Khat* remains one of the main Ethiopian exports to pass through at Togochale. As part of the process of modernisation and centralisation in the 1960s, cross border trade was standardised and formalised according to strict customs rules and regulations. However, this did not stop the borderland populations from engaging in unofficial cross-border trade.[38] During both the imperial period and the military regime, many people were involved in unofficial or illegal trade at the Togochale border. Contraband was rife and smugglers are reported to have customarily paid people who lived in the border villages to take goods across the border.[39]

Trade activities that take place outside official channels are perhaps the most common and rooted forms of cross-border trade at Togochale. In conversations with people in Jijiga, several people had personal stories of smuggling small quantities of goods and products across the border. Consequently, the long history of unofficial trade

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[36] The narcotic amphetamine leaf that is chewed in the region, especially by the Somali.
[37] FO 371/108195 *Reports from British Consulate,* Harar, January 1954.
[38] Interviews in Jijiga, October 2012.
[39] Ahmed, interview with author, Jijiga, October 20, 2012.

activities has become the most evident in the post-1991 period, as a later section of this chapter demonstrates. Considering the historical roots of the illegal/ unofficial activities, the practice of smuggling can be seen as "a social activity that is regulated de facto by a series of tacit codes and practical norms"[40] at Togochale. As in Blundo and De Sardan's investigation of corruption, these tacit codes and practical norms differ from public codes and official or legal norms, but they find support to exist within the 'generalised informal functioning of the state.' This is demonstrated more aptly in a later section that examines cross-border movement since 1991.

Regardless of strict rules at the border, local populations often managed to utilise the border for their own needs, where they deployed practical norms based on personalised understandings of the meaning of the border. The populations were, overall, aware of the rules and regulations on cross-border trade, however, because of their familiarity with the landscape, they still managed to smuggle a limited number of goods. They were engaged in these activities because the goods were useful for daily consumption and for other more immediate needs.[41] Indeed, these people were not engaged in smuggling to demonstrate protest or opposition to the state.

However, the changing official nature of the border had an impact on how the locals experienced it. The transformation of the border from a loose defined concept during the BMA to a more clearly defined entity after the BMA, created a situation similar to what Nugent sees as a 'dual aspect,' where the border presents both constraint and opportunity.[42] Indeed, from the perspective of central authorities, the strict measures and practices were a way of

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[40] Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, "Why should we study everyday corruption and how should we go about it?" in *Everyday corruption and the state*, eds. Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, trans. Susan Cox (London and New York: Zed Books, 2006), 5.
[41] Interviews with elders in Jijiga.
[42] Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* (London: James Currey, 2002), 8.

constituting a state.[43]

Unfortunate for the imperial authorities, regardless of their determined attempts to manifest the state in the border areas, the fixation on centralisation, coupled with the implementation of a contradictory idea of modernisation, appears to have contained the seeds for the downfall of the empire. However, the successors to the imperial state used a language and conceptualisation of territorial control that did not significantly differ from their predecessors.

5.4 The revolutionary state and the continued militarisation of the eastern periphery

By the early 1970s it was clear that the contradictions inherent in the modernisation agenda of the imperial state could not be sustained. It was drought, however, that brought the contradictions to the fore and exposed the ambiguities that underlined the imperial state. The emperor found the task of reconciling competing interests an insurmountable task because the much needed reforms appeared to be at variance with the persistent traditional state. Schwab notes that, "drought and famine was an economic catastrophe that became Haile Selassie's political coffin."[44]

Initially led by university students who were the dominant force of protest between 1960 and 1974, civil unrest swept across urban centres in Ethiopia.[45] However, military dissidents proved to be the decisive factor when they turned their backs on the head of state during the civil turmoil. On 12 September 1974, the 120-man *Dergue* (Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and the Territorial Army) dissolved the parliament and formally overthrew the

[43] Tim Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 94.
[44] Peter Schwab, *Ethiopia: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), 14
[45] Gebru Tareke, *The Ethiopian Revolution, War in the Horn of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 24.

emperor.[46] The *Dergue* then moved swiftly to create a Provisional Military Committee (PMAC) to administer the state.

The military rulers not only radicalised and militarised the state, but also its peripheries. According to Clapham, “the *Dergue* represented the centre-periphery conceptualization of Ethiopia in its most intense form.”[47] This led to the development of a mutually reinforcing state of conflict between the state and its territories on margins. This was exemplified by the state’s increasing militarisation of the eastern periphery and the militant response of the locals.

5.4.1 Limitations on cross-border movement

The conciliatory spirit of the 1964 ceasefire between Ethiopia and the Republic of Somalia was short lived. Border skirmishes resumed when the *Dergue* came to power in 1974. This was followed by reinforced security at the Togochale border – as noted by an elder in Jijiga. Hawa recalled that after the *Dergue* came to power she set out on a journey to Hargeisa in northern Somalia but was detained at the Togochale border.[48] By her own admission, she was crossing the border illegally without the correct documentation. She spent a night in jail and was released the following day after her brother in Hargeisa received news of her arrest and intervened. Hawa noted that she was interrogated throughout the night, where she was shown photographs and asked to identify the people in the photos. She recalled that the photographs were of Somali men and people she believed to have been from Tigray. It appears that the main objective of regulating cross-border movement was the apprehension of those that were deemed to be dissidents – the new role of the border was to contain and eliminate dissent.

[46] Schwab, *Economics and Society*, 20.
[47] Christopher Clapham, “Controlling Space in Ethiopia,” in *Remapping Ethiopia, Socialism and After*, eds. Wendy James et.al. (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 14.
[48] Hawa, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.

A recurring theme from the interviewees at Jijiga is that everyone needed a passport to cross the border, but that not everyone had one or could have one. All the interviewees were of Somali ethnicity, except for one 'Amhara' man. They recalled that only "rich Somalis of Ethiopia had passports." One elder noted that:

> You had to be rich or a government person to get a passport. The Saudi government used to sponsor ten thousand Ethiopian Muslims [annually] with passports for Hajj, but the Ethiopian government would only issue one thousand.[49]

This implies that wealthier Somalis in Ethiopia found it relatively easy to cross the border, whereas poor ones did not, or that the wealthy Somalis were not even using the border. This selective method of issuing state documents demonstrates the level of surveillance that was exercised over population movement, particularly in the border areas. Achieving this level of surveillance was assisted by the territorialisation of the peripheries, a process that had begun during the imperial period. From this we can also deduce that there were not many non-Somali Ethiopians who crossed the border to Somalia. This has to do with the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, Oromiffa[50] and Amharic speakers who crossed the border into Somalia were suspected to be spies.[51]

From 1974 to 1978, immigration policies and practices were radicalised at the Togochale border. The period after the war with Somalia in 1978 saw the most significant changes in the usage of this border as internal political dynamics in the eastern periphery of Ethiopia were radicalised. The militarization of the region and the increasing tensions between Ethiopia and the neighbouring Republic of Somalia led to stricter measures at the border. These measures were, indeed, a consequence of the radicalised conception of territorial

[49] Ahmed, interview with author, Jijiga, October 20, 2012.
[50] The language spoken by the Oromo people.
[51] Boobe Yusuf Duale, researcher at Academy for Peace and Development, interview with author, Hargeisa, January 9, 2012.

statehood by the central state. This conceptualisation entailed the removal of perceived sources of discontent,[52] which the state was only too aware of their origin – on the margins of the state. The security apparatus of the state is reported to have routinely arrested people suspected of engaging in activities deemed hostile to the state, and generally terrorised anyone with contrary nationalist ambitions.[53]

5.4.2 Radical centralisation, war and a refugee crisis

The conceptualisation of territorial statehood took a more radical form after the revolution in order to correspond with the prevailing project of 'encadrement.'[54] Rather than (re) distribute land among the peasantry, the 'capture' of the peasantry in a way that subjected them to increasing state control[55] shaped the new discourse on the centre-periphery relationship in many parts of Ethiopia. As noted by Clapham, the land reform policies promised by the revolutionaries bore the potential to transform centre-periphery relations, however, this potential was never realised. It appears that the peasantry may have been rid of its previous local landowners, but it encountered an even more threatening overseer – the radical and militarised socialist state.

In order to create and sustain the required levels of centralisation and structures, the socialist state needed to secure its territorial borders. Unstable borders not only threatened the revolution, but also the territorially defined state, which was an integral component in the ongoing transformation of Ethiopian society. By 1977, the Ethiopian state was involved in a military confrontation with

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[52] Clapham, "Controlling Space" 14.
[53] Mohammed Hassen, "Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo: A Historical Assessment of Human Rights Conditions in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002," *Northeast African Studies* 9, no.3 (2002): 25.
[54] Incorporation into structures of control, for more detail see Clapham, "Controlling Space,"14.
[55] Clapham, "Controlling Space," 15.

the Eritreans in the north and at the same time faced increasing threats from Somalia in the eastern frontier. These confrontations and threats heightened the urgency to maintain the territorial integrity of the state. The resolve to maintain territorial control is evinced in a statement that was delivered by col. Mengistu Haile-Mariam, head of the PMAC, to the 14th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Libreville, Gabon, in July 1977:

> …the frontiers between Ethiopia and Somalia are regulated by a series of international treaties. If Somalia refuses to recognise these treatises, then Somali itself which owes its very existence to a set of international agreements and decisions to which it was not a part must cease to exist. This fact may well be unpalatable to the Somali leaders, but is a reality nonetheless. Somalis are infiltrating with terrorists recruited, trained and financed by the government in Mogadisho for sabotage and subversion in Eastern Ethiopia…[56]

By July 1977, the Republic of Somalia had intensified its hostile rhetoric towards Ethiopia. The leaders of the Republic erroneously took advantage of the seeming disorder that characterised Ethiopia during the revolutionary transition. In response to the provocative rhetoric of the Republic, an Ethiopian government newspaper editorial expressed its contempt for the "cowardly provocations…of the renegade ruling class in Mogadisho…"[57] Following this was a series of reports and opinion pieces in the newspaper on the infiltration of Somali troops in the eastern border regions, vitriolic propaganda against the Somali Republic and President Siad Barre, and a concerted effort to galvanise the peasantry.[58]

This time the motives of the Somali Republic appear to have been much clearer than in 1964. The goal was to retrieve the Ogaden

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[56] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, *War drums on the Horn of Africa: March of Somalia's expansionism* (Addis Ababa: July 1977), National Archive and Library of Ethiopia (NALE), Addis Ababa.
[57] Editorial, *Ethiopian Herald*, July 17, 1977, NALE.
[58] Editorials and Opinion pieces, *Ethiopian Herald*, July 17-29, 1977, NALE.

region of Ethiopia.[59] President Siad Barre prepared with a high level of confidence to preside over the demise of what then seemed like an Ethiopian state under anarchy. Indeed, Barre was in a good position to advance his ambition of seizing the Ethiopian Somali region. By the mid-1970s, Somalia boasted the most powerful army in sub-Saharan Africa.[60] The Republic possessed a formidable arsenal of Soviet weaponry, whereas the United States had recently cut off the supply of arms to the Ethiopians.[61] Ultimately Ethiopia emerged victorious in the war mainly due to foreign (Cuban and Soviet) assistance.[62]

This war was one of the earlier indications of the exceptional nature of the state system in the Horn of Africa. The trajectory of this war and the role of Ethiopia's eastern regions in its development demonstrate the interconnectedness of the region as noted in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Gebru Tareke offers a compelling narrative of the progression of this war, which includes the military strategies of the Ethiopian army.[63] The narrative demonstrates the organisational capacity of the Ethiopian army during the war and the small margin by which the Ethiopians achieved their victory.

The ferocity and speed with which the centralisation of the state and the defence of its territorial sovereignty were pursued was evident in the accomplishments of the military state by the end of the 1970s. By 1978, Mengistu Haile-Mariam the Chairman of the *Dergue* and Head of state had "defeated the Somalis, the Eritreans, civilian dissidents, and opposition within the *Dergue*."[64] These achievements were important, even though temporary.

The combination of internal upheaval in Ethiopia and the war with Somalia gave rise to the first major wave of refugees in the

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[59] Tareke, *Ethiopian Revolution*, 187.
[60] Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland, Understanding Somali and Somaliland* (London: Progression, 2008), 38.
[61] Tareke, *Ethiopian Revolution*, 184.
[62] Robin Luckham and Dawit Bekele, "Foreign Powers and Militarism in the Horn of Africa: Part 1," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 30 (September 1984): 8.
[63] Tareke, "Ethiopia-Somalia war," and Tareke, *Ethiopian Revolution*, chapter 6.
[64] Marcus, *History of Ethiopia*, 2nd ed., 195.

Togochale border area. The reasons for refugee flows in this region are not always political, but tend to be a combination of social, political and environmental factors. The human tragedy is often compounded by drought and famine.[65] This was aptly noted by a refugee camp coordinator in Jijiga who stated that:

> Environmental issues are additional, but it is political issues that are the major factors contributing to refugee inflows. If there was political stability, environmental issues like drought would not force people to flee and become refugees.[66]

Political causes, however, tend to be the overriding factor, as demonstrated in the 1977-78 war. Branding the war as a case of Ogadeni secession and Somali irredentism was widespread in Ethiopia. This contributed to the mass exodus of Ogadeen Somali from Ethiopia to Somalia after the war. This opinion on the role of the Ogadeen clan in the war is evident in Tareke's statement when he notes that "the pastoral/ nomadic population of the lowlands universally and enthusiastically embraced the (Somali) fighters."[67] However, this is an exaggeration. Furthermore, Tareke's narrative contains inconsistencies. While citing one source, he notes that when the town of Jijiga eventually fell, the Somali soldiers were received with jubilation by the Somali residents.[68] Yet, elsewhere he notes that "the population of the south east was less loyal to Ethiopia than its counterpart in the Dire-Dawa-Harar-Jijiga triangle."[69]

The prevalence of muddled opinions on the loyalties of the borderland populations suggest the difficulties that many Somalis of Ethiopia may have faced following the war. These perceptions also demonstrate the recurrent challenge of locating Somali loyalty and

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[65] Richard Hogg, "Changing Mandates in the Ethiopian Ogaden," in *In Search of Cool Ground, War Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*, ed. Tim Allen (London: James Currey, 1996), 153.
[66] Bekele Mugoro, eastern Refugee camps coordinator, Administration for Refugee Returnee Affairs, interview with author, Jijiga, 1 December 2011.
[67] Tareke, "Ethiopia-Somalia war," 641.
[68] Ibid, 648.
[69] Ibid, 644.

Ethiopian paranoia thereof. Lewis estimates the influx of Ogadeni refugees into Somalia from Ethiopia to have been at least one million.[70] These refugees settled mostly in the predominantly Isaq northern region of Somalia, and according to Lewis, the relations between the two clans were amicable. This is significant because of the rivalry between the two clans. The cordial relations at the time are understandable because in the late 1970s the regional tension between north and southern Somalia had not yet translated into open conflict.

Many Ogadeen began to flee into Somalia for fear of the accusation of collaboration with Somalia in the war. Indeed, the war has been misleadingly called the 'Ogaden war.' In reality, Oromo guerrillas in Bale province were also involved in igniting the war as part of their own struggles against the Ethiopian state.[71] Indeed, the ranks of the WSLF – a leading force in the war, consisted of both Somalis and Oromo.[72] The framing of the conflict as an Ogaden affair inside Ethiopia was misleading. However, framing the war as an Ogadeni affair in Ethiopia can be understood within the broader framework in which the war was framed in Somalia – as an attempt to liberate the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.

Following the massive cross-border movement of refugees in the late 1970s, the Togochale border was later transformed into a frontline zone during the Somali civil war that began in the early 1980s. The border experienced unprecedented cross-border movement, which included combat fighting.

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[70] Ioan M. Lewis, "The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary Nationalism," *African Affairs* 88, no. 353 (October 1989): 575.
[71] Ioan M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland, Culture, History, Society* (London: Hurst & Company, 2008), 43.
[72] Ioan M. Lewis, *A Modern History of Somalia, Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1980), 234

5.4.3 The enemy of our enemy is our friend

Siad Barre's regime caved in as soon as the Ethiopian victory was evident in 1978. Barre's insistence on suppressing clan-based political associations while at the centre of a clan-based coalition himself could not be sustained in the long term. The humiliating defeat by Ethiopia and the refugee influx led to public demoralisation and an upsurge of clan loyalties.[73] Consequently, there emerged an array of 'fronts and movements' that opposed the Barre regime. For the purposes of the geographic area under consideration, the most significant opposition to emerge was the Somali National Movement (SNM), which was founded in London in 1981. When the Movement was formed it drew support from central and northern Somalia,[74] an area that is predominantly, although not entirely, inhabited by the Isaq.

Insurgencies inside Somalia were potent and tensions simmered between the northern and southern regions, leading to open conflict in the early 1980s.[75] As previously mentioned in chapter four, the SNM found a willing host and supporter in the Ethiopian *Dergue*. The SNM and the *Dergue* had a mutual foe – Siad Barre's regime in Mogadishu. Through this collaboration emerged a classic example of the 'security interdependence' that exists in the Horn of Africa. Lionel Cliffe calls this phenomenon "mutual intervention," one that leads to…"conflict between states or across borders fuelling and amplifying others, and to conflicts at local, national and inter-state levels interacting with each other."[76] When the SNM made eastern Ethiopia its operational base from the early 1980s, significant changes were

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[73] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia*, 67.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, 58.
[76] For a detailed explanation see Lionel Cliffe, "Regional Dimensions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 20, no.2 (February 1999) and in Lionel Cliffe, "Regional Implications of the Eritrea-Ethiopia War" in *Unfinished Business, Ethiopia and Eritrea at War*, eds. Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (Asmara and Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2004), 152.

made to the nature and use of the Togochale border, with wider regional implications.

The SNM operated primarily from eastern Ethiopia as Barre's forces were focused on destroying the rebels in northern Somalia.[77] According to Lewis, northern Somalia looked more like a colony under foreign military tyranny than a region of the same state.[78] People in Hargeisa (the major town in northern Somalia at the time) remember this period vividly. The city was completely destroyed, and the majority of women and children took flight and crossed the border to refugee camps that were located in eastern Ethiopia.[79] SNM fighters were mostly fighting along the border, making occasional incursions into Somali territory, whereas refugees crossed the border into Ethiopia in large numbers.

One of the elders who had been arrested at the border on her way to Hargeisa returned to Ethiopia as a refugee, having left in the 1970s. Hawa found herself in Hart Sheik, one of the largest refugee camps operated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ethiopia in the 1980s. She spent three years at the camp where she was reunited with other family members, and only returned to Jijiga town after 1991.[80] The refugee camp hosted two main types of refugees. The first category relates to Hawa – Somalis from Ethiopia, mostly from the Ogadeen clan who had left Ethiopia after the war in 1978. The second group comprised Somalis from central and northern Somalia, with a likely Isaq clan majority.

It appears that the 'opening' of the border because of SNM activities and the refugee crisis contributed to the permeability and ease of cross-border movement that currently exists at Togochale. As

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[77] Boobe Yusuf Duale, researcher at Academy for Peace and Development, interview with author, Hargeisa, January 9, 2012.
[78] Lewis, "Ogaden,"576.
[79] Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, has noted that this flight of civilians was one of the fastest and largest forced movements of people recorded in Africa. As a reminder of the war, a monument of a fighter plane that was used to bombard the city stands imposingly in the centre of Hargeisa today.
[80] Hawa, interview with author, Jijiga, October 19, 2012.

earlier sections have demonstrated, the people of these borderlands have continuously moved back and forth across the border, regardless of regulations. Today, the situation at the border crossing can be described as one of great permeability, where the boundary is crossed often by large numbers and with great frequency, especially by the borderlands people.[81] On both sides of the boundary the borderlanders cross frequently without being subjected to bureaucratic scrutiny. In fact, the immigration officers do not even bother with them. Whether we can solely attribute this to the events described in the preceding sections is not certain since there is no strong evidence to suggest that the movement of the borderland populations had previously been subjected to bureaucratic scrutiny. However, the present situation is noteworthy because of what it represents in the context of previous attempts by the state to control and assert its authority at this border. The situation demonstrates the unique dynamics that exist in border areas – as spaces quite different from others, and raises questions about the compatibility of these local dynamics with the state project of territorial control.

The level of permeability has been reinforced by the current relationship between the Ethiopian state and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. However, Isaq Somalis are prominent in the appropriation of the status quo of permeability. Some arrived as refugees in the 1980s and found their kin who had long settled in this region of Ethiopia. Many of the latter, as demonstrated in chapters three and four, found themselves on the Ethiopian side of the boundary in 1897 and subsequently formed close alliances with the Ethiopian state. However, the extent and nature of these cross-border ties and alliances has become much clearer since 1991 – a period that has seen the transformation of Togochale from a village to a bustling border town.

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[81] Ieuan Griffiths, "Permeable Boundaries in Africa" in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, eds. Paul Nugent and Anthony Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 73.

5.5 Reconstructing the state

November 1987 was the beginning of the end for the military socialist state when the *Dergue* was dissolved and a new parliament instated alongside the adoption of a new constitution that established the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE).[82] However, these changes proved belated as the state was severely weakened from a recent famine and an increasingly powerful insurgency in the north of the country.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) joined forces with other Ethiopian political entities (liberation fronts) and established the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition. In May 1991, the joint forces entered Addis Ababa. The TPLF emerged as the main actor within the EPRDF coalition, and have since remained in that position. The TPLF rebels came with an agenda and moved swiftly to implement it, and in the process reconfigured the Ethiopian state. The main rhetoric of the EPRDF was on democracy and constitutionalism. These developments notwithstanding, the boldest policy proposals that were discussed and adopted by the EPRDF's Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) centred on the conceptualisation of the new state.

The adoption of ethnic federalism provides us with clues to the manner in which the new rulers conceptualised Ethiopian statehood. The rebels from Tigray were more than familiar with marginalisation and were well vested in an existence as a 'peripheral' people. Although they are culturally and historically part of the traditional political 'core,' there had been a century-long hiatus during which the Tigrayans were systematically excluded from the Ethiopian political establishment.

[82] *Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, September 1987, Addis Ababa, (NALE), Addis Ababa.

Clapham notes that as far as the TPLF were concerned, 'national unity' was no more than a pretext for suppression,[83] as they recalled the effects of previous nationalist rhetoric during the imperial and *Dergue* periods. Rather, the TPLF has used national identity not to promote the 'nation' per se, but to legitimise their political objectives.[84] Indeed, both territorial statehood and identification have taken on different meanings for the new rulers. Statehood is envisioned in a decentralised fashion in the form of federal regions that comprise "Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia."[85] Regardless of these ambiguous groupings, the territorialisation of the state and centralisation of political power has remained central to the TPLF's vision of the Ethiopian state. Although presented in a veneer of devolved political power, federalism along ethnic lines has introduced new undercurrents of territoriality in the border areas. Yet, it is not only internal Ethiopian politics that have brought changes to the borderlands. The collapse of the Somali Republic in 1991 and the 'rebirth' of Somaliland through its unilateral declaration of independence the same year,[86] have contributed to the emergence of new forms of statehood at the Togochale border.

5.5.1 The transformation of Togochale through cross-border movement

Togochale has always been a key border crossing since the establishment of the Ethiopia-British Somaliland boundary in 1897. However, the patterns of settlement in and around the border crossing area have undergone changes. Historical sources refer to Togochale as a border crossing, and an area where people had settled – in the

[83] Clapham, "Controlling Space," 26.
[84] Kjetil Tronvoll, *War & the Politics of Identity in Ethiopia, The Making of Enemies & Allies in the Horn of Africa* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2009), 199.
[85] David Turton, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Federalism, The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed. David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 18.
[86] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia*, 74-75.

"Togochale area."[87] However, the impression from these sources and from this author's observations and conversations in the border area is that, certainly until very recently, Togochale has never been a town per se. Togochale is the name of the river on which the boundary was established. And until recently, there has never been settlement near the actual border crossing. Today, the town of Togochale is literally located on the boundary, where the dried up river boundary separates Ethiopia and Somaliland.

The present structure of the town extends up to the actual border crossing, where it is interrupted by Ethiopian customs and immigration posts. The town then proceeds on to the Somaliland side under the same name but with a different Somali spelling – Tug Wajaale. The Ethiopian side is composed of one street, which is also the main asphalted road[88] that links the border to the rest of Ethiopia. The main and only road is lined by shops and other structures on each side for a distance of less than a kilometre. Most of the shops are made from corrugated iron. It is evident that these structures are relatively new – many of them are tea/coffee houses and eateries. There is a bank and a hotel – Addis hotel and the Ethiopian Commercial Bank, which are among the few concrete structures. At the last visit to Togochale by this author in January 2012, a large Ethiopian Orthodox Church was under construction a short distance away from the town 'centre.' Behind the main road there are more unsteady structures where there is much commercial activity. Further away from the main road, the familiar structure of the round and collapsible Somali hut can be seen dotting the dusty landscape.

At the border area the outside observer is struck by the disparate levels of infrastructure development in the two sides of Togochale town. With the exception of the asphalt road on the

[87] FO 371/118773 "Ethiopia Nationality Question" May 1956.

[88] The asphalt ends at the border crossing on the Ethiopian side of the border; on the Somaliland side the road is rough and bumpy for approximately ten kilometres on the way to Hargeisa.

Ethiopian side – the Somaliland side looks and feels more permanent because it has more concrete buildings and intersecting streets. For instance, this author was advised by locals to find accommodation on the Somaliland side since there is more variety there. Ultimately, I took up lodgings at the Addis hotel on the Ethiopian side. Things are generally much cheaper on the Ethiopian side. This was proven by the observation of a Somaliland immigration officer who crossed the border to have his lunch at an eatery on the Ethiopian side. On the Somaliland side, the standard currency is the US dollar; however, the Ethiopian *birr* and the inflation-prone Somaliland shilling can also be used, to a limited extent.

Cross-border migration has become less complicated because of cross-border trade at Togochale. This border has become an important transit route for Ethiopians of all ethnic groups who are seeking legal and illegal means of going overseas. In addition to the daily cross-border trade activities of the locals, neighbouring Somaliland has also become a destination for Ethiopian economic migrants.[89] This lively cross-border movement has shaped the character of this borderland region beyond the border, also reaching Jijiga and Harar. Refugee movement, on the other hand, has been minimal since the mid-1990s, and has mostly been related to the repatriation of refugees back to Somaliland.

5.5.2 Localising state-sanctioned permeability

Observations in this border area and surrounding borderlands suggest that in its tentative relationship with Somaliland, the Ethiopian state has sought to relax immigration procedures. It is in Ethiopia's interests to maintain amicable relations with Somaliland for economic reasons. However, there are other reasons that account for the ease of cross-

[89] There are many Ethiopians of all ethnicities who work in the Somaliland capital Hargeisa, mostly in the service industry – as hotel staff, house help, etc.

border movement at Togochale. These have to do with Togochale cutting across a particular "culture area."[90] This is common in African borderlands as "every international boundary in Africa cuts across at least one culture area."[91] It is believed that borderlands in which the border does not correspond with natural cultural divides are potentially more complex.[92] We are told that in such cases the respective states often make grand displays of statehood or symbols of national unity.[93]

However, this does not appear to be the case at Togochale. The Ethiopian state does not seem particularly concerned with displaying its flags or other means of asserting exclusive control of its side of the border. Officials are casual in both their dress and practice.[94] The nature of daily cross-border movement by locals is also casual and does not require documentation. As indicated earlier, people from both sides cross the border frequently, to purchase a variety of goods for their domestic needs.

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[90] Anthony I. Asiwaju, "The Conceptual Framework," in *Partitioned Africans, Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries 1884-1984*, ed. Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1985), 2.
[91] Griffiths, "Permeable Boundaries," 74.
[92] Baud and van Schendel, "History of Borderlands,"233.
[93] Ibid, 226, 233.
[94] See Figure 5

Figure 5: Border crossing at Togochale
Source: Author, November 2011

It should also be noted that there are no passenger vehicles that cross the border. On the Ethiopian side public transport is confined to a car park quite a distance away from the border crossing area. Travellers have to walk the length of the main road to reach the border crossing. This applies to both locals and other travellers. This contributes to the overall calm that prevails around the border crossing area.

Visitors from Somaliland are required to produce documentation when entering Ethiopia and travelling beyond Togochale. This was evident when this author was travelling on a minibus from Togochale to Jijiga. The bus was stopped at a checkpoint about two kilometres from the border. Our luggage was unloaded and checked, identification and travel documents were also checked. A mother of three who was travelling from Somaliland encountered difficulties. All her children except one daughter had the required documentation and the Ethiopian officials would not let her proceed to Jijiga. After about fifteen minutes of negotiation they all had to disembark the minibus and return to Togochale. The more interesting question that arises from this incident is how the family

managed to clear immigration at the Ethiopian border post in the first place. The reality is that it is difficult to clearly identify who belongs where due to the 'unnatural' nature of the border. There is also no shortage of creative means that are used to evade official processes at the border. Nonetheless, with regards to Ethiopian state practices at the border, this suggests a notable differentiation between local crossings and crossings that involve travel beyond the border area – there is logic to the permeability.

Some Somalilanders, particularly women, are regulars on this border. Their main reason for travel to Ethiopia beyond Togochale is medical reasons.[95] In Harar, approximately one hundred and twenty kilometres from the border this author visited a hotel that almost exclusively hosts visitors from Somaliland. In this hotel there were women from Somaliland who explained that they come to Ethiopia mainly for medical and not commercial reasons.[96] The women mentioned that they are required to have a valid passport to come to Harar and that it is stamped at the border.

Whereas there is some consistency in the rules that apply to Somalilanders that come to Ethiopia, there appears to be no set rules of immigration rules for Ethiopians going to Somaliland. Some Ethiopians can travel up to Hargeisa the Somaliland capital without documentation.[97] This may have to do with the status of Somaliland as an unrecognised political entity or with the border cutting across a culture area. However, Ethiopian immigration officials think quite poorly of some Somalilanders, and called them "wild people," for their lack of appreciation of rules.[98] These officials were referring to Somaliland pastoralists who frequently cross-the border into Ethiopia without documentation. It appears that one of the main challenges

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[95] Ethiopian immigration official, interview with author, Togochale border post, November 29, 2011.

[96] Observations of the author and conversations, Harar, November 2011.

[97] This appears to apply mostly to Isaq Somali as observed from this author's companion and other Isaq from Ethiopia.

[98] This was said by a group of Ethiopian immigration officials of Somali ethnicity, in an interview with the author, Togochale, November 29, 2011.

these officials face at this border is the nomads whose status has been consistently ambiguous at least since 1897. The officials noted that they often enlist the help of clan elders to try and regulate the movement of the nomads. This indicates that rules and practices at the border tend to great variation and suggest the existence of tacit codes and practical norms[99] that characterise the border area. In this case, the 'generalized informal functioning of the state'[100] together with cultural contiguity, work together to transform the cross-border movement of local people.

We should not be overly surprised by the generally *laissez-faire* approach of the Ethiopian state at this border. The historical background of the border, as outlined earlier, contextualises the changes in the approach of the state towards cross-border movement. Whereas previously the state was motivated by perceived threats from across the border and its pursuit of centralised bureaucracy, today there is no longer a threat from across the border and the state is decentralised – suggesting that the Somali region is largely in charge of the border. However, does this then suggest that the Ethiopian state no longer wishes to control territory and assert its authority at this border? Quite the contrary, as a later section on cross-border trade demonstrates.

Since the start of ethnic federalism, cultural factors have become more salient in the administration of this border. The immigration and customs posts are largely manned by Ethiopian state agents of Somali ethnic background since this is the Somali region of the federal state. However, the border is still perceived as a regulator of goods and people, as demonstrated by the assertions of the immigration officials.

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[99] Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, "Why should we study everyday corruption and how should we go about it?" in *Everyday corruption and the state*, eds. Giorgio Blundo and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, trans. Susan Cox (London and New York: Zed Books, 2006), 5.
[100] Ibid.

5.5.3 In search of place and home

Nine refugee camps operated in eastern Ethiopia beginning in the early 1980s up to the late 1990s.[101] Most of them exclusively hosted Somali refugees who were fleeing the civil war that devastated northern Somalia. The camps also hosted Somalis from Ethiopia who had left for Somalia as refugees in the aftermath of the war in 1978. In 1991, the latter group of refugees was trying to make its way 'home' to Ethiopia. On the other hand, the repatriation of refugees back to what is now Somaliland took place from 1997 to 2005, and now only one camp remains of the original nine.[102] According to arguments made by refugee scholars, in reality, neither set of refugees had a home to return to. These scholars argue that by focusing on the notion of the 'home,' the repatriation discourse de-politicises the refugee experience and reinforces national-state based political order.[103] If this is the case, then we can argue that by repatriating Somali refugees back to Somaliland, the Ethiopian state was making a territorial distinction between those who belonged to Ethiopia and those who did not.

Camp coordinators often faced challenges when organising the refugees because it was not always easy to determine who was from Ethiopia or Somalia. This ambiguity can be traced back to the period of the BMA when Ethiopian and British authorities attempted to classify Somalis but failed because of the manner in which the Somali society is traditionally organised. Host populations often passed themselves off as refugees in order to receive services.[104] This is not

[101] Bekele Mugoro, eastern Refugee camps coordinator, Administration for Refugee Returnee Affairs, interview with author, Jijiga, December 1, 2011.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Katy Long, *The Point of No Return: Refugees, Rights and Repatriation* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013) under http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199673315.001.0001/acprof-9780199673315-chapter-10 (accessed October 16, 2013).
[104] Mugoro, interview with author.

uncommon in refugee camps,[105] however, the level of integration between the host communities and the refugees made camp organisation particularly challenging. Officially, integration is not allowed, nor has it ever been allowed between the host populations and refugees in Ethiopia. However, the policy of non-integration was often contradicted and undermined by the fact that refugee camps were often strategically located in areas where refugees and the hosts belonged to the same clan.[106] This further strengthened the binding ties of patrilineal kinship that organise Somali life. Consequently, host populations and refugees intermarried, making it further difficult to separate them.

In the early 1990s, the Ethiopian federal government demonstrated more involvement in the coordination of refugee camps, with federal authorities becoming actively involved in these activities.[107] There is a strong likelihood that the involvement of federal authorities was motivated by the internal boundary-making process of creating federal regions in Ethiopia. It became more urgent to determine who belongs where, especially upon the closure of the many refugee camps.

The repatriation process of the Isaq and others to Somaliland and the Ogadeen to Ethiopia proved that repatriation is far from straightforward, and that it is laden with political undercurrents.[108] For those returning to Somaliland, the return was underlined by membership of a state occupying a given territory with the right to exclude others from that territory.[109] By the mid-1990s it was clear that Somaliland secession was a relative success, and that those who wanted to return would be in a good position to do so, and could

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[105] Gaim Kibreab, "Pulling the Wool over the Eyes of the Strangers: Refugee Deceit and Trickery in Institutionalized Settings," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17, no.1 (March 2004): 2.
[106] Mugoro, interview with author.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Long, *Point of No Return.*
[109] Kibreab, "Revisiting the Debate," 408.

successfully make claims of "rights of access"[110] on their return. This was a strong motivating factor for those who had fled northern Somalia, especially in light of the chaos that characterised southern Somalia in the 1990s. When Somaliland became an independent entity and proved the "power of home-made democracy"[111] and the Ethiopian Somali region became a semi-autonomous region, the idea of home turned into a language of rights for those who were previously refugees. Yet, these same people appeared reluctant to view the border as a marker of exclusion, since it has always been a common 'place' for them. The notion of a common place in the border area is aptly demonstrated by the nature and extent of cross-border trade at Togochale since 1991.

5.6 The economic revival of the Togochale border

The centuries-old objective of gaining access to the coast by successive Ethiopian rulers has once again taken centre stage since 1991. The coming to power of the EPRDF ushered in an era of economic renewal in Ethiopia, one not seen since the post-war period in the 1950s. Changes in the domestic and regional political landscape called for a pragmatic approach on the part of the Ethiopian state vis-à-vis its new neighbour – Somaliland. The erstwhile nemesis – the Republic of Somalia, no longer posed an immediate threat to Ethiopian statehood. Therefore, the establishment of Somaliland presented more opportunities than threats.

In 1993 Ethiopia became a landlocked country following Eritrean independence, making it the most populous landlocked country in Africa. Ethiopia needed additional coastal outlets, which, according to Clapham, can in principle be attained through any of its

[110] Ibid.
[111] Lewis, *Understanding Somalia*, 93.

neighbours.[112] However, political exigencies are an ever-present reality in inter-state relations in this region. In reality, therefore, Ethiopia did not have many coastal options. In addition to the Djibouti port (closest and overused) and Mombasa (much further away), Addis Ababa was compelled to consider the opportunities presented by its new neighbour. However, by the Somaliland authorities' own admission, the Berbera port lacks the adequate infrastructure to be a serious competitor to the Djibouti and Mombasa ports.[113]

With very little to lose, Somaliland has made several economic bilateral arrangements with Ethiopia. However, its lack of international recognition makes formal arrangements with neighbouring countries a challenge. Yet, Ethiopia and Somaliland have developed amicable relations, the political challenges notwithstanding. Ethiopia was the first country to have permanent diplomatic representation in Hargeisa, with Ethiopian Airlines one of the first to fly into the capital. Yet, to the frustration of officials in Hargeisa, Ethiopia has not issued formal recognition. Ethiopia's reluctance to recognise Somaliland is related to the unwillingness of authorities in Addis to be seen to encourage secessionist states but it also has to do with the fact that "Ethiopia rides several horses in the Somali regional calculus"…[114] Indeed, while Ethiopia has enjoyed amicable relations with Somaliland, the country remains involved and interested in developments in Mogadishu.

The extent of the cordial relations between Ethiopia and Somaliland is reflected at their mutual border at Togochale and the surrounding Ethiopian borderlands.

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[112] Christopher Clapham, "Ethiopia" in *Big African States*, eds. Christopher Clapham, Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2006), 2.

[113] Director of Commercial Branch, Ministry of Commerce, interview with author, Hargeisa, January 10, 2012.

[114] Iqbal Jazhbay, "Somaliland: Post-War Nation-Building and International Relations, 1991-2006" (PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2007), 259.

5.6.1 The border as a resource for borderland livelihoods

The regulation of cross-border trade flows appears to be one of the main reasons for the presence of the Ethiopian state at this border – to collect customs revenue. For our purposes, we will distinguish between official and unofficial trade.[115] Within these two categories we will further differentiate between large scale and small scale trade. In their 2002 cross-border trade study, Tekan and Azeze noted that, unofficial imports and exports abound in the border areas between eastern Ethiopia and the neighbouring Somali territories,[116] and that the Ethiopian government calls this trade 'contraband.'[117] The present discussion focuses on unofficial, though not necessarily illegal, large-scale and small-scale cross-border trade. This is apt since this section examines how borderland populations experience and utilise the border in relation to state discourses and practices. Borderland populations are at the centre of unofficial cross-border trade. Besides, there is not much official trade to speak of between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

Small and large-scale unofficial cross-border trade is present at Togochale. This trade involves livestock, *khat*, some grains and cereals, coffee and second hand clothes. The unofficial trade of these goods is sometimes also referred to as informal cross-border trade, but is not always illegal. According to a United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report, informal cross-border trade occurs when business activities cross borders based on supply and demand imperatives.[118] Informal or unofficial trade at Togochale is

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[115] Official refers to government regulated, whereas unofficial refers to trade occurring outside of government structures, see Tegegne Tekan and Alemayehu Azeze, *Cross-Border Livestock Trade and Food Security in the Ethiopia-Djibouti and Ethiopia-Somalia Borderlands* (Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2002), 11; 20.
[116] These are Somalia, Somaliland and Djibouti.
[117] Tekan and Azeze, *Cross-Border*, 2.
[118] "Informal Trade in Africa", *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa*-UNECA, available at www.uneca.org/aria4/chap5.pdf (accessed December 10, 2012), 145.

regulated by government import/export licenses, which are issued for fixed commodities to individual traders.[119] Some of these licences were, at the time of field research, capped at two thousand dollars a month for people who live in Togochale and surrounding areas.[120] The stimulant *khat* is dominant in both the official and unofficial cross border trade at Togochale. The demand for *khat* is overwhelming on the Somali side of the border and the supply appears endless on the Ethiopian side. In January 2012, cross-border trade in *khat* was estimated at one million Ethiopian *birr* a day, an amount approximately the equivalent of fifty thousand US dollars at the time.[121] This was an official estimate, based on the trade that was accounted for. The illegal trade is apparently equally profitable.

The economy of the Harar-Jijiga- Togochale area is dominated by *khat*. Both large and small-scale informal trade in *khat* is present in the border area, as well as in the nearby towns of Jijiga and Harar. Large-scale trade can be observed through the identical mini-trucks called 'al-Qaeda,'[122] which crowd the main road that connects Harar to the border. The *khat* has a short shelf life and it is best consumed fresh. By all means, *khat* must reach its destinations, which include countries as far afield as southern Arabia[123] and the United Kingdom – before the government of the UK threatened to ban it in 2013. The further away one moves from Harar towards the border, the more expensive a single bundle of *khat* becomes. This is because of the speed with which it must reach its destinations while it is still fresh. The need for the product to reach its markets while fresh has led to the frequency of trucks and camels moving under the cover of darkness

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[119] Ethiopian immigration officials, interview with author, Togochale, November 29, 2011.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ethiopian customs official, interview with author, Togochale border, January 6, 2012.
[122] These trucks are called al-Qaeda because they are a nuisance and a nightmare to other road users and they are often driven recklessly and fast, causing a number of road accidents.
[123] Tekan and Azeze, *Cross-Border*, 12.

away from the main roads and customs check points, towards the border.[124]

Khat is a source of livelihood for many of the borderland populations on both sides of the border. However, observations for this research were made mainly on the Ethiopian side. *Khat* traders frequently cross the border from Somaliland to buy *khat* on the Ethiopian side. These exchanges are regulated by Ethiopian intermediaries who live in the Togochale area. In Hargeisa, *khat* is then re-sold at exorbitant prices, because it has been imported from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian intermediaries on the other hand have their people who bring the *khat* from the plantations in Harar. *Khat* is also easily smuggled on public buses between Harar and Jijiga and on the Harar-Dire Dawa road. On these routes women smuggle bundles of *khat* on a daily basis and successfully evade the inattentive eyes of the customs officials. On the several times that this author has travelled the distances on the Harar-Jijiga-Togochale road, the smuggling of *khat* appeared to be a common activity. Women enter mini- buses and immediately begin to distribute bundles of *khat* to other passengers; with the clear expectation that the latter will pretend that the *khat* is theirs.

Next to *khat*, livestock trade features prominently in informal cross-border trade at Togochale. Sheep, cattle, goats and camels are the main types of livestock that are exported across the border. Central to this trade are the extensive Somali networks that control the trade. The trade is regulated by intricate systems that have been developed by various Somali clans. Indeed, large-scale livestock trade is not only dominant in the eastern Ethiopian borderlands but in the entire Horn of Africa sub-region. In a study that explores cross-border livestock trade on the Kenya-Somalia borderlands, Peter Little concludes that “the war has clearly been good for the trans-border cattle trade and the

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[124] Ethiopian customs officials, interview with author, on the Togochale-Jijiga road, November 28, 2011.

merchants associated with it."[125] It appears that many of the Somali trading networks find few restrictions. This is not surprising when we consider the affordances of the role played by descent in the male line in Somali social organisation. As noted in Somali genealogies, descent presents the individual with a wide range of kinsmen amongst whom he can select friends and foes.[126]

The best way to witness the intricate Somali-dominated trans-border trade in eastern Ethiopia, one needs only to visit the Babile camel and cattle market.[127] Babile is located on what Majid calls the "Harar-Jijiga-Hargeisa-Berbera corridor."[128] This village town is located on the main road between Harar and Jijiga, where the Harar highlands give way to the Jijiga plains. Babile has the dubious distinction of dual administration under both the Oromia and Somali regions – a casualty of internal federal boundary demarcation.[129] Nonetheless, the Babile market is the biggest in the eastern part of Ethiopia and is strategically located on a major trade route.

At the market one obtains a clear sense of the central role of livestock breeding and trade for people's livelihoods in these borderlands. In informal conversations at the market, this author was told that the livestock originates from all across the Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia, particularly the latter, in places as far as Gode. Babile has become a popular choice for these faraway places because it offers better market opportunities than the closer regions of southern Somalia. Babile is a better choice in terms of general political stability and security. The livestock is often transported across long distances to get to the markets and eventually it crosses the border to

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[125] Peter Little, *Somalia, Economy Without State* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 91.
[126] Lewis, *Modern History*, 1980, 11.
[127] See Figure 6
[128] Nasir Majid, "Livestock Trade in the Djibouti, Somali and Ethiopian Borderlands", *Chatham House Report* (September 2010) http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/179951 (accessed May 20, 2012).
[129] Asnake Kefale, "Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo-Somali Ethnic Frontiers," *Development and Change* 41, no.4 (December 2010): 615-635.

Somaliland, and makes its way to Berbera port. Indeed, this security is also largely dependent on agreements and treaties between the various Somali clan networks that control the trade routes.[130]

Figure 6: Babile cattle and camel market
Source: Author, October 2011

It is not only livestock and *khat* that traverse this border area; manufactured imports also find their way to Ethiopia across the Togochale border. As a consequence, the border towns are flooded with manufactured goods from Asia and the Middle East. These products are wide ranging – from beauty products to electronic goods. From observations in Togochale, Jijiga and Harar imported second hand clothing also appears to be a ubiquitous import. In Togochale and Jijiga, even in Harar, imported second hand clothing could be found displayed in heaps on road sides. In general, people find these clothes to be the most affordable. Although they are often looked down upon, the second hand clothes tend to be of a much better quality. Most of

[130] Majid, "Livestock Trade," 6.

the electronic goods that are found in shops in the border towns have been imported through official channels. Illegal electronic goods are unlikely to make their way to the supermarkets and shops because they are highly regulated. Official traders have to adhere to certain import regulations that include meeting certain import quotas.[131]

The high volumes of cross-border trade at Togochale are evident in the nearby borderland towns. These towns are characterised by an energetic atmosphere that is not found in the more central regions of Ethiopia. This energy is most evident in the large markets that display an array of foreign products. This is most notable in Jijiga where there are sprawling and bustling markets. In October 2012 this author discovered that a massive market had moved from where it was located ten months earlier in the city centre. The market was relocated to an open field on the outskirts of town. The new location is more spacious and better organised. Traders are accommodated in individual stalls where one finds products ranging from foodstuffs to electronic goods. At this market it is possible to find products that are not available even in the capital Addis Ababa. The proximity of these towns to the border has contributed to the creation of a highly dynamic local economy that benefits the local populations.

Even in Harar there is a strong sense of the town being on the borderlands. However, Baud and van Schendel raised the pertinent question of "how far does the borderland extend inland from the border?"[132] The authors conclude that, such a question can only be answered by considering the nature of social networks in the borderlands and their role in the historical development of the region. Indeed, as previous chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, as centres in the periphery, Harar and Jijiga are historically connected and have historical connections to the Togochale border. Therefore, it

[131] Ethiopian customs officials, interview with author, Togochale border, November 29, 2011.
[132] Baud and van Schendel, "History of Borderlands," 221.

is not entirely surprising that, although over one hundred kilometres from the border, Harar exhibits borderland dynamics.

The border at Togochale confirms the ability to extract economic resources from state borders and borderlands.[133] The role of cross-border economic activities in people's livelihoods proves the opportunities that are presented by the border. And unlike other borders, it can be argued that the constraints have become increasingly minimal at Togochale due to a confluence of factors – history, cultural linkages and state practices, which have coalesced to create a permeable boundary. Cross-border livestock trade in particular demonstrates that these borderlands exist at an intersection of pre-existing networks of kinship, friendship, and entrepreneurial partnership that span both sides of the border.[134] The persistence of the Somali economy without a state,[135] as demonstrated by Little, lends credence to the role of local agency in transforming limiting circumstances. This demonstrates that borderland populations are seldom constrained by the politics and policies of the central state. To be sure, the tendency of borderland populations to "use the affordances of the border to full effect,"[136] has always existed at this border.

The political and historical trajectory of this border and surrounding borderlands symbolizes the nature of political development in the Horn. The border has been central to the evolution of Ethiopia-Somalia relations, especially since the establishment of the Republic in 1960. However, the nature of this border has not only been determined from above. From the 1960s to the present, the people who live in the Ethiopian borderlands of this border have engendered a local understanding of what the border means.

[133] Feyissa and Hoehne, "State Borders," 13.
[134] Baud and van Schendel, "History of Borderlands," 229.
[135] Little, *Economy Without State*.
[136] Barnes, "Ethiopian-British Somaliland,"130.

5.7 Conclusion

This penultimate chapter has endeavoured to integrate one of the key themes of this thesis. The chapter investigated the negotiation of territorial control at its most basic level – at the national territorial boundary. The chapter examined how state territorialisation has been experienced by a multiplicity of local actors in the border area. This was done by exploring cross-border movement at the Togochale border by examining how an array of local actors have influenced and experienced Ethiopian state border controls and regulations.

Previous chapters have demonstrated that territoriality has been a central feature of conceptualising statehood in Ethiopia, and that it continues to occupy a defining role in the evolution of statehood in Ethiopia. Employing a variety of strategies, successive Ethiopian states have demonstrated that the control of a clearly defined territory is a defining characteristic of statehood. The means in which this has been exercised and practiced have varied over time, but they have all had similar objectives – to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state.

This chapter has demonstrated that similar to the formation of their identities, non-state actors who inhabit Ethiopia's eastern borderlands have been negotiating cross border movement within the context of varied administrative authorities. At the level of the state, the border reflects change and continuity. State actors have deployed a variety of approaches to regulate cross-border movement. Yet, these have not been static but quite dynamic due to the negotiation that has been taking place within the periphery. Thus the historical trajectory of the border suggests an ongoing process of state formation at the margins. Indeed, the discourses from below also suggest the existence of localised understandings of territoriality. However, as demonstrated in the chapter, this does not necessarily indicate the

complete eschewal of the border as a form of "classification, a boundary marker and a determinant of access."[137]

The chapter also noted a connection between local processes of state-formation and developments at the regional level. The changes that have taken place in the neighbouring Somali territory and the influence these have had in the Ethiopian periphery are undeniable. Cross-border exchanges have been ongoing and have to a large extent existed independently of state authorities, although often influenced by them – as they did during the BMA. However, it is also clear that this influence has never been passively appropriated by the local populations. This does not suggest a people that have been fully integrated nor does it suggest people that have been completely detached from the Ethiopian state.

The next chapter is the conclusion of the thesis. The chapter brings together the main concerns of the thesis. The chapter summarises the main argument and findings as presented in the preceding chapters. The chapter demonstrates how the selected approaches and methodological choices have assisted the investigation – leading to the main findings. The conclusion also reflects on the present and future implications of the findings of the thesis for political development in Ethiopia and the wider region, and most importantly for our understandings of statehood in this region. Thus the chapter also returns to the research problematic of the thesis by considering what the findings of the thesis suggest for the manner in which we study political organisation and authority in the Horn of Africa and Africa in general.

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[137] Sack, *Human Territoriality*, 22.

Chapter Six. Conclusions

In *Ethiopia: The Last Two Frontiers*, in what is possibly the most historically grounded and forceful account of the political history of Ethiopian peripheries – John Markakis offers a convincing prognosis of the possible future of the current federal state. Markakis highlights two significant points about the political history of Ethiopia – the critical role of the peripheries in Ethiopian statehood and their long-term relationship with the central state. Markakis also pays homage to the importance of the *longue durée* for a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Ethiopian statehood. In this case, la *longue durée* highlights the structures in which the power of successive states have been anchored and the subsequent relationship between the centre and the peripheries. Markakis' main conclusions are instructive:

> The main one [conclusion] is that the project [state-building] is far from completion and its end cannot be predicted. The analysis of succeeding crises along the route highlights the structural faults in its design, which is the centre's monopoly of power.[1]

Some have stated that Markakis has been 'scathing' in his analysis of the EPRDF government and its authoritarian tendencies, and that he offers a rather 'depressing reading' of the future of the peripheries in Ethiopia.[2] However, Markakis' reading of the present confirms that the integration of the eastern periphery into the state is ongoing, and based on the findings of this thesis – its complete integration requires compromise and finding common ground between multiple and complex actors who inhabit the peripheries, an eventuality that Markakis does not foresee without the occurrence of another political 'rupture' in the centre.

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[1] John Markakis, *Ethiopia, The Last Two Frontiers* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 355.

[2] Gaim Kibreab "Book Review, Ethiopia: the last two frontiers," *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 133 (September 2012): 545-46.

This thesis began as an investigation into what has been a protracted and challenging process of integrating Ethiopia's eastern periphery into the state, and the regional implications of this process. This investigation is motivated by ongoing shifts in the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopia and the complex relationship between the Ethiopian state and neighbouring countries. The adoption of ethnic federalism in Ethiopia has transformed the centre-periphery relationship. However, we do not yet have a complete understanding of the nature of this transformation. Furthermore, the Ethiopian state has, historically, enjoyed difficult relationships with neighbouring countries, which usually manifest themselves in Ethiopian peripheries. The thesis, therefore, has sought to offer an alternative interpretation of these relationships by arguing that there is more than conflict and resistance to the narrative of the relationship between the Ethiopian state and the eastern periphery and the latter's regional connection. This difference becomes apparent when, rather than homogenising the eastern periphery as a monolithic socio-political mass, we examine its historicity during processes of incorporation into the Ethiopian state.

The thesis has contributed a nuanced historical reading of the relationship between Ethiopia's eastern periphery and the state, and the wider regional implications of this relationship. It did this by examining the interplay between the state projects of controlling territory and asserting authority and the experiences and responses of local actors to these attempts in the Harar and Jijiga locales of the eastern periphery since 1942. The investigation took into account key events and periods that influenced the evolution of the relationship between the state and this periphery, and the latter's connection to the wider region. A key historical period that was highlighted in the thesis is that of the British Military Administration and the changes this made to the territorial border with the British Somaliland Protectorate. The establishment of the Republic of Somalia in 1960 was also

highlighted as a major historical moment that has contributed to processes of state formation in eastern Ethiopia.

The thesis problematized two sets of literature. First, the thesis raised questions about the ability of the literature on African statehood to make sense of political reality in the Horn of Africa. This literature has been dominated by statist and ahistorical approaches that have been unable to explain non-linear trajectories of state formation that have emerged in the Horn of Africa since the early 1990s. This is problematic because regardless of these changes, the state appears to remain central to political development in the Horn and, indeed, in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the thesis problematized Ethiopian historiography and its marginalisation of the peripheries, particularly the eastern lowlands. The thesis traced the large corpus of Ethiopian historiography since the early 1940s and found that it consistently marginalised and silenced the eastern periphery, because of the religion and identities of the people of this region. This historiography is thus problematic and inadequate in our attempts to make sense of present political realities in Ethiopia. It is even more problematic when there has always been evident tension in the way that Ethiopian rulers and populations in the peripheries interpreted territoriality.[3]

Although with similar interests and concerns as Markakis – particularly the historical hegemonic exercise of power by the centre over the peripheries – this thesis opted to shift the focus to the margins. Rather than explore in detail the inner workings of the centre – this has been done sufficiently by Markakis and others,[4] the thesis sought to centre the peripheries in their interactions with the state. While Markakis and some of this other literature have aimed to demonstrate how the centre and the peripheries mutually shaped one another, this thesis has made a more modest contribution – by

[3] See the opening epigraphs in the introduction chapter of the thesis.
[4] Markakis, *Last Two Frontiers*; Teshale Tibebu, *The Making of Modern Ethiopia 1896-1974* (New Jersey: The Red Sea Press Inc., 1995); Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia 1855-1974* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991); John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of A Traditional Polity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

demonstrating how the periphery has experienced the centre – from the perspective of the periphery. The thesis refrains from making claims of peripheral agency devoid of the influence of the state and wider regional influences. Indeed, the argument of this thesis demonstrates a constant exchange between the state and a variety of state and non-state actors in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries. It highlights multiple forms of peripheral agency and rejects claims of a passive and homogenous periphery. In the main, the thesis demonstrates the negotiation of statehood in the periphery within the context of a powerful and hegemonic authority of the Ethiopian state.

The investigation focused on the interplay between the experiences and responses of state and non-state actors to the attempts of the state to apply territorial control and assert its authority in the periphery. The thesis began its investigation in the period following Ethiopia's liberation from Italian occupation and the start of the BMA in 1942. This period is critical for understanding the evolution of a territorial conception of statehood in Ethiopia's eastern periphery. More importantly, this period demonstrates how competing British interests influenced the process of conceptualising statehood in this periphery.

Because of the significant influence exercised by British colonial authorities among the Somali, the Ethiopian state began its most determined attempts to consolidate its territory and political authority during the period of the BMA in eastern Ethiopia. Prior to the Italian occupation, the territorial boundaries of the state were vaguely defined and the authority of the state was largely negligible, with the exception of the more urban centres such as Harar and Jijiga. However, due to the presence of the BMA from 1942, the state felt pressure to become more visible. Yet, we do not have enough knowledge, beyond the narratives of resistance, on the ensuing exchange between the Ethiopian state and local actors in the periphery during this period.

Therefore, this thesis has elected to employ an interpretive approach that uses a qualitative methodology in order to examine these relationships in historical context. The methodology used in this thesis combines two types of research methods – historical and ethnographic. The thesis has thus provided a nuanced historical reading of the relationship between Ethiopia's eastern periphery and the state and the wider regional implications of this relationship.

With the combined interpretive approach, qualitative methodology and research methods, the thesis argues that the narrative on the integration of the Harar and Jijiga peripheries into the state is shaped by a history of negotiation between the state and multiple local actors. However, this negotiation is ongoing and is far from being settled because there is no consensus on the nature of, and meanings associated with territoriality and identification when conceptualising statehood in Ethiopia. The condition of partial integration has afforded local actors in the peripheries the liberty to occasionally engage in discourses on territoriality and identification with neighbouring countries regardless of attempts by the Ethiopian state to enforce its ideas of these aspects of statehood.

The thesis employed the analytical framework of negotiating statehood[5] in order to discover and make sense of circuitous processes that do not follow a pre-determined trajectory of state formation. First and foremost, the framework reserves judgement on the nature of statehood, and instead focuses on its empirical manifestations. The framework has been a good fit for the operationalization of the main research question of this investigation. However, as noted in the introduction of the thesis, this framework has limited explanatory power. This thesis has to a large extent been able to overcome this shortcoming by using a methodological approach that foregrounds history and context.

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[5] Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard, *Negotiating Statehood*: *Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 5-15.

Indeed, if this investigation had begun in 1991, similar to much of the contemporary literature, the greater part of the centre-periphery relationship and its nuances would have gone unobserved. However, by beginning the investigation in 1942 the thesis has sought to highlight a critical and often overlooked historical experience. In foregrounding the period of the BMA the thesis observed in historical perspective the arena (s) in which this negotiation has taken place, the various actors involved in the negotiation, the resources at their disposal and the competing repertoires they mobilised in the negotiation, and the objectives of the negotiation.

6.1 The arena, actors and resources of negotiating statehood in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries

The thesis identified Harar and Jijiga as the arenas to investigate the historical process of integrating the eastern periphery into the Ethiopian state. The two towns have a historical connection dating back to their absorption into the Ethiopian empire in the late nineteenth century. Chapter three of the thesis demonstrated that the capture of Harar in 1887 enabled *Ras* Makonnen – Emperor Menelik's emissary – to make inroads into the Somali-inhabited plains east of Harar. Thus both areas played a key role in the subsequent delimitation of the boundary with the neighbouring British Somaliland Protectorate. Furthermore, Jijiga occupied a strategic position in the political economy of the empire – located approximately sixty five kilometres from the boundary – Jijiga was a significant customs revenue collection point that was located on an important trade route.

Harar and Jijiga were both identified as important centres for the development of a centralised bureaucracy and the 'modernisation' of imperial administration. This is how they became centres in the periphery. However, their development was interrupted by the Italian occupation in 1936. Hence, this thesis argued that, following liberation

and the start of the BMA, the determination of the central state to (re) gain control over its territory and to assert its authority can be traced from these two centres in the periphery. The provincial headquarters of Hararge province were located in Harar, and it is from the capital that the state attempted to manifest itself in the vast and largely pastoralist province. Jijiga was also district headquarters within the large province. As demonstrated in the thesis, particularly in chapter three, Jijiga remained an important centre during the period of the *Dergue*, and is currently the capital of the SNRS. However, the research of this thesis demonstrates that the two centres of Jijiga and Harar have experienced, and responded to the state in somewhat different ways.

Compared to Jijiga, Harar has experienced a higher level of integration into the state. This is because of Harar's historic position under imperial rule. As noted in chapter three, Emperor Haile Selassie was born in Harar, where his father *Ras* Makonnen served as governor since its incorporation into the empire. Subsequently, Harar became a fief of the imperial family. Jijiga on the other hand was more peripheral than Harar in a number of ways. This differential experience of incorporation can be observed in the lower number of northern settlement in Jijiga as opposed to Harar. In the latter, northern settlement is most notable in the higher number of Orthodox churches, among other things. In relation to Jijiga, Harar has also experienced more infrastructure development, with one of the country's foremost military schools located there. However, regardless of these differential patterns of integration, local actors in both Harar and Jijiga have been negotiating with Ethiopian state power. And unlike in the Ogaden 'proper,' both Harar and Jijiga have had a longer presence and experience of permanent state authority.

This brings us to the configuration of actors in the periphery. The thesis has identified a multiplicity of local actors that comprise diverse state and non-state actors. These actors are multi-vocalic and do not always speak in one voice. What is common among them is

their presence in the periphery. The different actors that were discussed in the thesis demonstrate an ongoing negotiation with the state, which has resulted in the partial integration of the Harar and Jijiga peripheries. Most of the actors that were surveyed for this research comprise individuals and families that largely exist outside the structures and institutions of state power but find themselves drawn into them. The actors also comprise authorities such as BMA officials and Ethiopian state officials who have also played a role in the narrative of negotiation in this periphery.

The thesis discovered that the local communities mostly experience the state in relation to their ethnic identities. This is most pronounced among the Somali whose identity was previously perceived as a threat to the Ethiopian state – particularly by the imperial state. The Somali ethnic identity has carried many misconceptions amongst Ethiopian structures of power and authority, indeed, even in wider Ethiopian society. One reason for this is that the Somali identity has a notable cross-border element whose affordances are often used fully by local populations therefore leaving their loyalties open to speculation.

The thesis revealed that the various actors' responses and experiences towards the state have lacked consistency. Their responses have varied depending on a number of factors, most notably their relationship with central authority. For the Somalis in particular, many were caught in a web of competing British interests during the period of the BMA. This was most evident in the BMA - administered Haud and Reserved Areas. The Colonial and Foreign Offices held opposing views on the nature of Ethiopian sovereignty in these areas. However, borderland populations took advantage of the indeterminate border with the British Somaliland Protectorate by crossing backwards and forth, not only for seasonal grazing, but for work and other purposes.

The relations of local communities with central authority remained an important factor in the post-BMA period. Some Somali

groups such as the Ogadeen sought the intervention of the Ethiopian state in their resource competition with the Isaq over the Haud grazing areas – they requested the emperor to intervene on their behalf. Yet, the same Ogadeen later initiated a series of rebellions against the imposition of state taxation in the early 1960s. The same inconsistency applies with regard to the Isaq whose experience of the state also varied according to time and context. This inconsistency, the thesis argues, is indicative of negotiation. This is discussed in detail in a later section. However, the resources that the different actors have had at their disposal demonstrate some consistency.

Similar to studies that have focused on investigating peripheral or borderland spaces, this study has demonstrated that local actors in this section of Ethiopia's eastern periphery have used the border as a political and identity resource.[6] Chapters four and five demonstrated that approaches to identity formation in this periphery, particularly among the Somali populations, have been intimately tied to the border and the neighbouring territory – first with the British Somaliland Protectorate, then the Republic of Somalia, and presently with the breakaway Somaliland Republic. The prominence of the border in political development in these peripheries is not surprising, especially taking into consideration the cross-border settlement of some of the local populations.

In attempts to demonstrate clearly the value of the framework of negotiating statehood we should also identify a number of repertoires that actors in these localities have utilised in conjunction with the resources mentioned above. Symbolic repertoires are what the actors mobilise to further their interests and mobilise support in their quest for political authority.[7] These include ethno-politically defined types of citizenship, religious and cultural identities. These

[6] Dereje Feyissa and Markus V. Hoehne, "State Borders & Borderlands as Resources," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, eds. Dereje Feyissa and Markus V. Hoehne (Suffolk: James Currey, 2011), 3-5.
[7] Hagmann and Péclard, *Negotiating Statehood*, 8-9.

repertoires can take on powerful manifestations in instances where people are responding to strongly articulated attempts of the state to produce symbolic gestures.[8] Bourdieu et al. argue that it is at the realm of symbolic production that the grip of the state is felt most powerfully. The authors cite the capacity of state bureaucracies and their representatives to act as great producers of "social problems."[9] Chapter four of the thesis demonstrated how the imperial state historically deployed certain religious and cultural repertoires which often found opposition and rejection in their encounters with local repertoires in the peripheries. Consequently, these encounters influenced the construction of identities in the peripheries and contributed to processes of negotiating identification. These repertoires have since shifted – now they reflect the nature of the present state – ethnic federalism.

6.2 Non-linear state formation, contested statehood and intractable power relations

The shifting nature of people's involvements with the state reveals the nature of the political space in which their experiences have evolved over time. One of the key findings of this thesis is that the process of state formation in Ethiopia's eastern periphery has been dynamic and contradictory in relation to the processes that have been advocated by the central state. This is because the "relations of control, consent, power and authority"[10] have been characterised by unchanging political and social structures in the centre. The process of integrating this periphery into the state has not been complete because of contrary responses in the peripheries to some of the practices through which the

[8] Pierre Bourdieu et al, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 1 (March 1994): 2.
[9] Ibid.
[10] William A. Munro, "Power, Peasants and Political Development: Reconsidering State Construction in Africa," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no.1 (January 1996): 148.

state has sought to manifest itself. The nature of the imperial, military and federal states as observed in historical perspective highlight the continuity of state approaches to territorial control and authority, but also difference in modes of enforcing these state practices. This has been one of the reasons for the inconsistent responses of peripheral actors.

The thesis demonstrated that the determined attempts of the imperial state to manifest itself in the peripheries after its restoration following the Italian occupation in 1941 unfolded within the context of the BMA. The thesis argued that this period is crucial for providing the initial context in which the state sought to fashion itself in its vast territories on the margins. Chapter two provided the historical background to the evolution of territoriality in Ethiopia in order to contextualise the determination of the imperial state to reclaim control and authority in the eastern periphery during the BMA. The chapter made references to the territorial expansions of imperial Ethiopia in the late nineteenth century and the determination of its territorial boundaries through boundary agreements with neighbouring European colonial powers. The chapter's key claim was that the imperial state struggled to consolidate its territorial gains and that this formed the basis for what later became a highly territorial articulation of state sovereignty. Unlike in other parts in sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopian rulers had a direct influence in the determination of their territorial limits – hence the determination to safeguard them. Chapters three and four demonstrated the power-plays between the imperial state and the BMA from 1942 up to 1954 – most of which involved struggles over territorial control and authority.

Based on their experiences with the state before the Italian occupation, some sections of the populations in Harar and Jijiga were anxious of increasing state centralisation in Ethiopia. Yet, the same people also saw an advantage in the situation of ambiguous and competing authorities. In chapters four and five it was noted that the

condition of an 'invisible' boundary during the BMA facilitated the emergence of an important political economy among the Somalis. It is thus not surprising that ideas of Somali nationalism emerged during this period. However, as noted in the same chapters, Somali nationalism was influenced by a much older traditional form of social organisation – patrilineal kinship. Hence it was possible for Jijiga, Hargeisa and Mogadishu – all under the BMA, to represent the centres of a thriving Somali political economy. The suspension of boundary regulations led to the free movement of goods and people – a phenomenon whose basic tenets have remained intact even though they often contradict Ethiopian state practices.

The desire for more definitive control and authority in the eastern regions by the Ethiopian state was given impetus by changes that were taking place in the centre – the centralisation of bureaucracy, but also changes that were taking place in the region – the establishment of the Republic of Somalia in 1960. Somali independence and the emergence of the African consensus on territorial boundaries affected the conception of Ethiopian statehood and lent a sense of urgency to the need to consolidate territorial control and authority in the areas adjacent to Somalia. Thus, the deluge of state practices, rules and regulations aimed toward this periphery underlined the motives and contradictions that appeared inherent to the exercise of state power – traditional and highland notions. These practices continued during the military state, although in radically different ways.

The populations in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries neither embraced nor rejected the revolution in 1974. This is mainly because they were largely ignorant of its origins, the shape it took and its objectives. It is for this reason that we can attribute a reasonable degree of continuity to the manner in which these peripheries experienced the imperial and military states. However, there were changes that cannot be overlooked in how the state sought to control

its territory and assert its authority. To be sure, the control of territory became even more pronounced under the socialist *Dergue*, as demonstrated in the war with Somalia in 1977. The border at Togochale became highly regulated as chapters four and five highlighted. The change was more salient among those who lived on the margins of the state. Yet, even they were still able to overcome these limitations, and never fully saw the border as a major hindrance to their movement.

The most notable consequence of the 1977-78 Ethiopia-Somalia war was the flight of the Harari and Ogadeen Somali. Large members of these groups left for places near and far – in the region and further afield. However, this flight had other effects, such as shifting loyalties in some sections of the populations. The most notable shift was when the Isaq Somali threw their weight firmly behind the *Dergue* following the precarious status of the Ogadeen at the end of the war in 1978. At that time the Ogadeen were readily associated with the Somali aggressors and they had acquired the identity of secessionists who sought to dismember the Ethiopian state.

Indeed, since the advent of ethnic federalism, it has become more apparent that state formation is dynamic and contradictory in these peripheries. The granting of ethnic regions to peripheral populations that have always existed outside the national identity meant that recourse to ethnic and cultural resources would become a legitimate option. This was demonstrated in chapters four and five of the thesis. Chapter four examined identity formation in Harar and Jijiga, and discovered the shifting nature of strategies of identity formation among the Harari, Isaq and Ogadeen Somali, and the reality of shifting loyalties. However, the most remarkable processes of identity formation have taken place more recently since 1991.

The Harari are attempting to assert their authority in the HNRS within a context of hostile competition for regional state power with the numerically dominant Oromo. The Harari have decidedly sought

recourse in their unique cultural identity by pursuing an exclusive form of self-identification. In the Somali region, ethnic federalism has resurrected and intensified the age-old clan rivalry between the Ogadeen and Isaq Somali. Competition for regional state power dominates politics in the region. The contestation, however, is essentially between the Ogadeen and the rest. Many Ogadeen migrants and refugees have returned– and appear determined to 'Ogadenise' the SNRS. What this tells us is that the stakes of negotiation have increased.

Ethnic identification features prominently in the findings of this thesis – as a key aspect of negotiation. The emergence of ethnic identity as a significant factor should not be surprising, particularly in the context of ethnic federalism. Identification – external identification, categorisation and self-identification, is a feature of Ethiopian statehood that has been historically contested. Its manifestation and significance is most evident when it is examined in historical perspective. The thesis demonstrated the historical contexts in which particular ethnic identities evolved and how they were utilised by the various groups. The populations of Harar and Jijiga constructed their identities in encounters with the dominant Amhara national identity – particularly during the imperial and military *Dergue*, as well as in interactions with one another. Indeed, the Harari and Somali ethnic identities, particularly the Somali identity, have demonstrated a high level of resilience in resisting the hegemonic Amhara identity.

The main ethnic identities discussed in the thesis – Harari, Isaq and Ogadeen Somali, demonstrate divergent ways of negotiating state power and authority in their respective peripheries. This differentiation is partly a consequence of the extent and nature of their encounters with central state authority, but it is also a consequence of the ways in which they have positioned themselves in certain contexts across time in their encounters with others. Although these groups appear to be

marginal, their marginality has been relative. As chapter four suggested, these groups have never presented a united front in their struggles as 'marginal' communities – instances of unity have been transient. For instance, the Somali groups have been more overt in contesting state territoriality – at the Togochale border and elsewhere in this region, than their Harari counterparts. The latter have been more concerned with state authority. Overall, these groups cannot be said to exhibit either primordial or instrumentalist approaches to self-identification. Rather, they have been constructing and re-constructing their identities in ways that have been contingent on a number of internal and external factors.

Since ethnic identification features prominently in the political and social narratives of these groups, it then follows that their experiences with the state have continued to highlight the ethnic element in the post-1991 period. This is because currently under ethnic federalism, state power confronts and interacts with them as clearly defined ethnic groups – they experience and respond to state actions and proclamations as members of these ethnic groups. Indeed, the ethnic category has become most salient as people are now compelled to identify with specific ethnic groups in order to make legitimate claims of citizenship.

The historical progression of power relations between the centre and the eastern periphery is important for understanding the present context of negotiating statehood. This is important for comparative purposes because the federal system seemingly presents a fundamental shift in the "relations of control, consent, power and authority."[11] However, looked at in historical perspective, an analysis of the current federal state reveals new approaches as well as a degree of continuity in how local communities in these peripheries have experienced and responded to the state.

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[11] Munro, "Power," 148.

Ironically, ethnic federalism highlights the extent of the hegemonic power of the central state over the peripheries. This thesis has made no attempt to reveal this power dynamic – it is evident and has been documented before. Of interest and importance for this thesis are the various ways in which actors in the Harar and Jijiga sections of the eastern periphery have responded to, and negotiated with this power over time. In the two federal regions considered in this thesis – the SNRS and HNRS, it appears that the supposed deconstruction of power relations is proving to be an arduous task. The inability of the central state to allow for a comprehensive transformation of power relations has led to a further complication of this relationship. This is not only in the eastern periphery. In the Gambella region of western Ethiopia competition for political power has led to the emergence of what Feyissa calls "ethnic conflict."[12]

Based on the findings of this thesis, identification among the different ethnic groups in eastern Ethiopia appears to emerge within a context that combines processes of ethnic identity formation with competition for political power. Ethnic identities are currently being (re)constructed to fit the present context where they are legitimised as political instruments. The reconstruction of ethnic identifies is not a new strategy, as demonstrated in chapter four – what is new is its legitimation by the central state. As noted earlier, the Harari appear set to assert their identity in the HNRS as they seek to achieve eminence by promoting their unique cultural heritage. They are doing this to highlight their claims to the region and to counter the aspirations of their political rivals – the numerically dominant Oromo. Indeed, Harari dominance and authority in the region is not guaranteed by the name of the region. This precarious situation is exacerbated by the unusually small size of the region, which is completely enclosed by the Oromo National Regional State.

[12] Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games, The Paradox of Anywaa and Nuer Identification Strategies in the Gambella Region, Ethiopia* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 1.

The Somalis can also attest to the fact that the name of the region does not guarantee political power. In the SNRS clan dynamics are exacerbated by a meddling federal state that often exploits clan rivalries.[13] Precisely because of the dynamic nature of the clan system, clannishness should always be invoked with caution since it can conceal other processes that may expand our understanding of the Somali experience in Ethiopia's eastern periphery.

The current reconstruction of Isaq and Ogadeen clan identities is best examined within the context of ethnic federalism where their apparent differences have surfaced precisely because they are obligated to unite under the broad Somali identity. In chapter four of the thesis it was noted that current approaches to identity formation have a material basis among the Ogadeen. Some members of the Ogadeen have demonstrated that their extensive engagement in large scale business ventures has been facilitated by their ascendancy to political power in the SNRS. Although this thesis does not seek to advance an exclusive class analysis of Somali clanship, current developments in Jijiga are well-captured by Adam who argues that:

> …under conditions of dependent capitalism and class formation, clans tend to assume trade union type functions…the clan-as-trade-union aspects provides dialectical linkages between class formation and clan consciousness.[14]

This is the challenge that confronts the Somali region of Ethiopia – balancing the inevitable process of class formation with establishing acceptable political conditions for regional autonomy within the federal state.

The Isaq appear to be on the receiving end of the struggle to balance class-formation, clan consciousness and political freedom. In chapter four it was noted that the Isaq have always displayed a genial

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[13] Tobias Hagmann, "Beyond Clannishness and colonialism: understanding political disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991-2004," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no.4 (December 2005).
[14] Hussein M. Adam, "Somalia: Militarism, Warlordism or Democracy?" *Review of African Political Economy* 54 (July 1992):14.

disposition vis-à-vis the central state – particularly the sedentary-agro-pastoralist sections of this group. This was the case during the imperial and military states – with relations even more affable with the latter following the outbreak of the civil war between north and south Somalia. The Ethiopian *Dergue* opened its borders with northern Somalia at Togochale and elsewhere to the SNM, which was an Isaq-dominated armed movement.

However, the position of the Isaq of Ethiopia has changed significantly since 1991, partly because of the emergence of the breakaway northern region of Somalia – Somaliland, and due to developments within the SNRS. At least for the Isaq of Jijiga and Harar, Somaliland appears to represent a home away from home. This is evident in the extent to which Ethiopian Isaq migrations to Somaliland have increased since the 1990s. Many have relocated to Somaliland, or are planning to – in search of better economic opportunities. Also, the manner in which the Isaq view Somaliland – as a symbolic representation of Isaq collective identity – suggests a mental shift. Yet, we cannot say for sure whether this suggests the emergence of a diasporic narrative for the Isaq of Ethiopia. Whether we can see the Isaq as a diasporic population depends on how Somaliland continues to evolve as a 'state-in-waiting.' It is doubtful, however, whether Somaliland will fashion itself as a diasporic state in the future by eschewing its democratic credentials to ensure survival, as Iyob has analysed the Eritrean case.[15] For now, Somaliland is content with amicable relations with Ethiopia as illustrated by the nature of daily cross-border movement at their mutual border at Togochale.

Political and social dynamics in these peripheries have also revealed that some sections of the populations are developing nascent claims of belonging in their respective regions. On the surface, the

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[15] Ruth Iyob, "The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 4 (December 2000): 661.

regions are satisfied with the autonomy that is granted by the federal state. However, this autonomy is precarious since it is still underlined by the hegemonic power of the centre. In addition, the boundaries of the federal regions do not always coincide with ethnic groups, thus encouraging the emergence of "local tyranny."[16] This has led to an unwelcome development where strong claims of belonging can be observed, particularly in the Somali region, and in the Gambella region as Feyissa has demonstrated.[17] However, it is unlikely that people in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries could successfully claim "'pure' national identities as a political tool,"[18] where democratisation leads to the polarisation of the citizenry. Instead, democratisation is more likely to be determined by the extent and nature of linkages between local and central state elites. Autochthonous claims would appear difficult to establish, let alone implement, in a context where the regions are ostensibly organised according to 'ethnic belonging.' This would also be made difficult by the fact that regional elites and state actors also belong to the broader ethnic identity of the region.

In further addressing the initial research question of this investigation, it has emerged that the role of the border and the neighbouring Somali territory plays a role in the conceptualisation of statehood in this section of the eastern periphery of Ethiopia.

6.3 The liberty to engage in extraterritorial imaginations of statehood

The findings of this thesis raise a number of issues pertaining to the current federal state and its twin projects of nation and state building.

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[16] Assefa Fiseha, "Theory versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism," in *Ethnic Federalism, The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*, ed. David Turton (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 136.
[17] Feyissa, *Different Games*.
[18] Sara Dorman et al, "Introduction: Citizenship and its Casualties in Africa," in *Making Nations, Creating Strangers. States and Citizenship in Africa*, eds. Sara Dorman et al (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 10.

Similar to the post-colonial state elsewhere in Africa, the state in Ethiopia is proving that the institutional and structural dimensions of the state exercise considerable political currency, while its sociological and ideological roots are shallow.[19] This is evident in the high level of continuity in state approaches to territorial and political consolidation. The military-socialist regime that purported to reconfigure the state in 1974 merely transformed the modes of existing structures of power and control. The same argument is likely to apply in the practices of the current EPRDF government that has ostensibly transformed Ethiopian statehood since 1991. We can thus argue that, nation and state building in Ethiopia have essentially followed an unchanging blueprint, at least since the late nineteenth century.

This thesis has offered an alternative interpretation of the centre-periphery relationship in Ethiopia, thus contributing an alternative way of interpreting ideas of statehood in Africa as they manifest themselves in diverse historical, social and political contexts. In addition to what we already knew about the unique processes of state formation and contested statehood in Ethiopia and in the Horn, now we also know some of the enabling factors, how they emerge and why they emerge.

It is not surprising that local actors in the Harar and Jijiga peripheries have been negotiating key aspects of statehood – this is a common phenomenon in relations between centres and peripheries, but often it is not contextualised in historical perspective. This thesis identified the main features of this negotiation as occasional displays of contrary conceptualisations of territoriality and identification. These contrary displays are occasional because the peripheries are dynamic spaces – constantly changing, depending on a number of internal and external factors.

The findings of this thesis reveal that the territorial boundary is an important factor in the evolution of the negotiation that

[19] Munro, "Power," 129.

characterises this section of the eastern periphery. This provides the clearest evidence of the interconnectedness that characterises the region. The examination of the border at Togochale revealed that the populations that move backwards and forth across the boundary are at the "heart of transformations in sovereignty, national identity and citizenship,"[20] in this African sub-region. Consequently the border has emerged as an important economic, political and identity resource for the people who live in and around the border area. The people who occupy this space appear to have some of their needs catered for by the border – seemingly further distancing them from the central state. Yet, they occasionally find recourse in state practices and discourses. Based on evidence from the past twenty years, the nature of the border at Togochale is "grounded in everyday local practices."[21] The findings of the thesis thus confirm what has already been established – that the border is socially constructed.[22] However, the thesis has avoided isolating the periphery from the centre because of the historically binding encounter through administration, tribute, direct and indirect rule, which cannot be overlooked, particularly in the Harar and Jijiga centres that have a longer experience with permanent state authority.

The border and the existence of Somaliland have aided the development of local ideas of identification – self-identification, which are often associated with extraterritorial practices. At present, the Isaq view Somaliland as a potential homeland, whereas other non-Isaq Somali view it with a degree of suspicion because they see it as a specifically Isaq entity – therefore somehow threatening to their own conceptions of identification. The Harari perceive the border as a bridge to an ancient connection to the Somali Red Sea coast, however,

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[20] Alexander Horstmann and Reed L.Wadley, "Introduction: Centering the Margin in Southeast Asia," in *Centering the Margin, Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands*, eds. Alexander Horstmann and Reed L.Wadley (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006), 6.
[21] Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* (London: James Currey, 2002), 7.
[22] Michiel Baud and WillemVan Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 212.

this is an abstract and symbolic imagination that is not supported by a meaningful discourse.

Regardless of the changes that have taken place since 1991, the people who inhabit these peripheries remain more concerned with their immediate needs, most of which are pursued and achieved by means of local conceptions of identification. However, many of the people that were observed and interviewed for this research hardly display doubts about their belonging to Ethiopia – yet, they still struggle to fully claim the Ethiopian national identity. This is because of the legitimacy and power that local/ethnic identities have been granted under ethnic federalism. Thus within the context of contested political power at the local (regional state) level, local identities are bound to assume primacy, perhaps more than before. This suggests that the liberty with which people in these localities have been accustomed to in formulating or imagining ideas of territoriality and identification is likely to continue.

6.4 Finally

Markakis has suggested that no country has ever been able to control its borders in the Horn of Africa.[23] This assertion is influenced by Markakis' assessment of what he calls the 'consequences' and not the 'causes' of conflict in the Horn. Markakis has further noted that, political development in the Horn is a consequence of 'historical process' and 'human agency.'[24] Indeed, this is what Markakis and his colleagues have pondered in the decades of their dedicated study of this region. This thesis has identified key aspects of these 'historical processes' and 'human agency.' With regard to the historical processes, regardless of the clear efforts of the state to control it, the border suggests that wider regional linkages are likely to continue.

[23] John Markakis, "Ethiopia," (seminar, Centre of African Studies, The University of Edinburgh, November 4, 2013).
[24] Ibid.

And on human agency, the thesis has been clear about locally-derived conceptions of territoriality and identification.

The contested nature of statehood in the Horn of Africa, as demonstrated in the relationship between Ethiopia and the neighbouring Somali territory, can be explained by the competing imaginations and conceptualisations of territoriality and identification that are found in Ethiopia's eastern periphery. The findings of this thesis have not uncovered a single instance of the cessation of political, social and economic life in these peripheries due to the 'weakness,' 'failure' or 'collapse' of the central state in Ethiopia. What is evident, however, is that the state has yet to successfully claim the complete integration of this region. This is evident in the divergent notions of statehood that are demonstrated by the state and the peripheries. The thesis' findings also demonstrate that the 'spill-over' effect of political and other developments in the Horn is not only conditioned by the actions of central states, but by the peripheries as well. Indeed, as the military state discovered – many of the regional conflicts it was involved in contained an element whose origins could be traced to the peripheries. This we already knew, however, this thesis has demonstrated *how* some of these linkages take shape and the nuances that characterise them. More often than not, peripheral populations do not have precise objectives for opposing the central state or for aligning with neighbouring countries – these decisions are contingent and dependent on multiple factors, which can only be recognised through historical and contextual analyses, as highlighted by this thesis' examination of the period of the BMA.

There is a wide scope for future research on this topic and research question. This thesis is not been exhaustive in its investigations, analyses and findings. Future research can be particularly useful in exploring in detail how the eastern periphery has experienced state practices other than those related to territorial control and proclamations of authority. Such a research agenda could even be

expanded to other localities in the eastern periphery, since there well may be different understandings of statehood in other localities of this vast eastern periphery, particularly those areas with a history of limited experience of state authority, such as in the Ogaden 'proper.' Indeed, it remains unclear why some members of the Ogadeen Somali clan remain in the Ogaden desert where they are waging an insurgency against the Ethiopian state, whereas others are taking full advantage of the affordances of the federal system in the Jijiga zone of the SNRS.

Research in other Ethiopian peripheries, such as the north could also be revealing in determining the extent and contexts in which statehood is negotiated in the margins of the state. Furthermore, a comparable research agenda in the neighbouring Somali territory (Somaliland) could also go a long way in helping to develop a more solid foundation for the development of a broader theory of the interconnected nature of the Horn sub-region. An even more sharply focused analytical approach could be employed in relation to the border and borderlands in order to reveal the extent of local agency in processes of state formation. Indeed, a wider approach is likely to expand our understandings of the nature of power and authority of the Ethiopian state in its eastern frontier and the nature of local understandings of this power. This thesis has, however, confirmed that there is a need for more empirical evidence – to help develop a clearer understanding of political reality in this region.

Yet, rather than attempting to resolve questions on the nature of statehood in Ethiopia, in the Horn of Africa or in sub-Saharan Africa, this thesis has sought to draw attention to different ways of thinking about notions of statehood as they manifest themselves in various contexts. This is necessary when we recall the research problem of the thesis – the failure of the literature to recognise the role and nature of empirical manifestations of statehood that occur outside state capitals; as well as expanding the research agenda in Ethiopian

studies to include the peripheries as constitutive elements of Ethiopian statehood.

The examination of this section of Ethiopia's eastern periphery did not reveal much, if anything, about the past, present or future weaknesses and failures of the central state – this was not the aim of the thesis. Instead, the thesis revealed an ongoing negotiation between the state and multiple local actors in the peripheries within a context of the hegemonic power of the central state. Whether a genuine transformation of state power will change the nature of this relationship is uncertain since the negotiation that was highlighted in this thesis has been ongoing, since 1942, if not earlier.

It was always going to be difficult to proffer immutable arguments on the manifestations of statehood in Ethiopia because of the competing positions and extensive historical processes that render Ethiopia different. The complexity of Ethiopian state formation, the evident similarities with other sub-Saharan African countries notwithstanding, suggests that the more we focus our attention on the peripheries, the more we learn about the centre.

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Appendix A

List of Interviews*

Bekele Mugoro, Coordinator, Eastern Refugee camps coordination office, Jijiga 01/12/2011.
Mohammed Abdella, Director in Regional President's office, Harar, 11/10/2011.
Abdulsemed Idriss, Social Sector Adviser of the Harari Regional Council, 13/10/2011.
Abdellah Sheriff, museum curator and local historian, Harar, 14/10/2011.
Abdulmuheiman Abdulnassir, local historian, Harar, 16/10/2011; November 2011; October 2012.
Two Ethiopian customs officials, on the road between Jijiga and Togochale, 28/11/2011.
Groups of Ethiopian immigration and customs officials, Togochale border, 29-30/11/2011.
Researchers, Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention, Hargeisa University, Hargeisa, 9/01/2012.
Bobe Yusuf Duale, Academy for Peace and Development Deputy Director and former SNM fighter, Hargeisa, 9/01/2012.
Aadam Cilmi Ahmed, Director of Commercial Branch, Commerce Ministry, Hargeisa, 10/01/2012.
Mohammed Rashid Sheikh Hassan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hargeisa,
11/01/2012.
Hussein Jama Guleid, Hargeisa, 11/01/2012.
Bahru Zewde, Professor, History Department, Addis Ababa University, 18/01/2012.
Elder Bekele, Jijiga, 19/10/2012.
Elder Hawa, Jijiga, 19/10/2012.
Elder Ahmed, Jijiga, 20/10/2012.
Elder Diriye, Jijiga, 26/10/2012.
Elder Mohammed, Jijiga, 27/10/2012.
Mohammed Dolal, Jijga, 6/01/2012 and 20/10/2012.
Yasin Mohammed, Jijiga, 7/01/2012 and 20/10/2012.

**This list does not include the people whose lives I observed or those that I had informal conversations with.*