

**LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL  
SCIENCE**

**An Inter-state War in the Post-Cold War Era:  
Eritrea-Ethiopia (1998-2000)**

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**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International  
Relations**

**2008**

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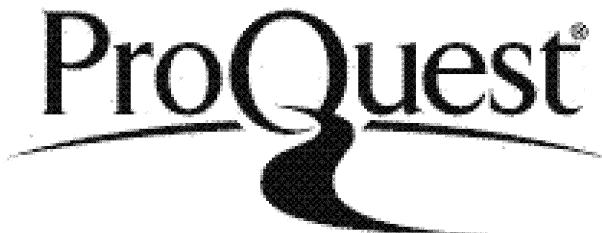
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## Abstract

Inter-state wars are not one of the most salient features of current world politics. Indeed, the prevailing patterns of contemporary armed conflict show an increasing trend in intra-state wars that spill over borders.

Beyond the continuities with the thirty-year civil war in Ethiopia, namely in the relations between the two former insurgent movements, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the 1998-2000 war was waged between the armed forces of two sovereign states: Eritrea and Ethiopia. This is one of the few cases of inter-state war in Africa.

The case-study provides evidence to contradict the strand of the literature which claims that we are witnessing a decisive transformation of warfare (Van Creveld, 1991); (Kaldor, 1999).

The central claim of the thesis is that neighbouring states do fight over territory. Indeed, territory is central to understanding the causes, the conduct, and the outcomes of the 1998-2000 inter-state war.

The case-study provides a contribution to the development of a comparative perspective on the relationship between territory and the causation, conduct and outcomes of intra-state and inter-state wars in Africa and in other regions. My contribution is to the reflection on the challenges of globalization to the territorial state and particularly to understanding the significance of territory for the survival of the modern sovereign state in Africa. The adherence to *uti possidetis* and the non-interference norms coupled with de facto porous borders is one of the most challenging questions facing African states.

The findings of the research highlight the value-added of the case- study to the debates on the general transformation and on the more specific patterns of warfare in Africa, the dynamics of state formation in Africa and the region's security dynamics.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Dominique Jacquin-Berdal (1966-2006). The most rewarding experience of the PhD was the unique privilege to work under her supervision. My greatest debt of gratitude goes to Professor James Mayall; his patience, generosity and deep knowledge of the region prevented me from failing to complete the PhD after the tragic loss of my supervisor.

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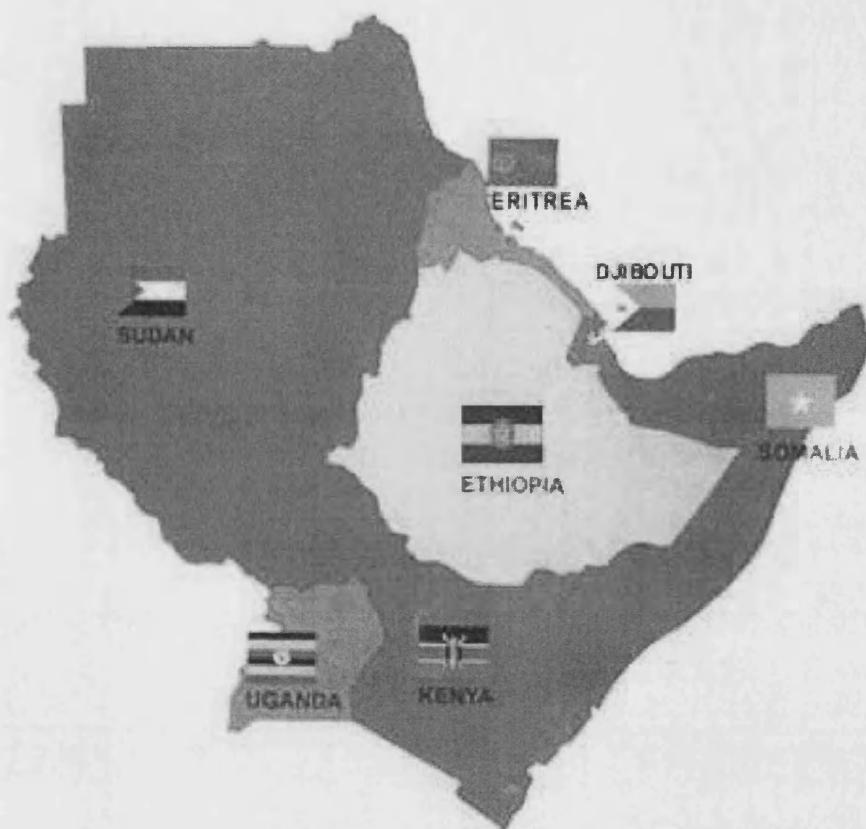
## **Acronyms**

AAAI	Al Itihad Al Islamiya - Islamic Union (Somalia)
AAPO	All Ahmara People's Organisation
AENF	Alliance of Eritrean National Forces
AL	Arab League
ALF	Afar Liberation Front
ANDM	Amhara National Democratic Movement/ EPRDF
APDO	Afar People's Democratic Organisation/ EPRDF
ARSDF	Afar Red Sea Democratic Front
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front
AU	African Union
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
CUD	Coalition for Unity and Democracy (Ethiopia)
EACTI	East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative
EASBRIG	Eastern Africa Standby Brigade
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EDA	Eritrean Democratic Alliance
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EDP	Eritrean Democratic Party
EECC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission
EEBC	Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission
EFFORT	Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray
EIJM	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
EKDM	Eritrean Kunama Democratic Movement
ENA	Eritrean National Alliance
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPLF- DP-	Democratic Party
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Eritrean People's Revolutionary Party

EPPF	Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front
ERN	Eritrean Nakfa
ERRA	Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Agency
ERIC	Ethiopia Revolutionary Information Centre
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EU	European Union
FRUD	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (Djibouti)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (Somalia)
IFEN	Institute for Ethiopian Nationalities
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority on Development
IPF- IGAD	IGAD Partner Forum
NDA	National Democratic Alliance (Sudan)
NDRP	National Democratic Revolution Programme
NIF	National Islamic Front (Sudan)
OLF	Oromo's Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (EPRDF)
PFDJ	People's Front for Democracy and Justice (Eritrea)
PGE	Provisional Government of Eritrea
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
POMOA	Political Office for Mass Organization Affairs
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SRRA	Somali Rahanwein Resistance Army
SAF	Sudan Alliance Forces
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TFI	Transitional Federal Institutions (Somalia)
TNG	Transitional National Government (Somalia)
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front (EPRDF)

TSZ	Temporary Security Zone
UEDF	Union of Ethiopian Democratic Forces
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

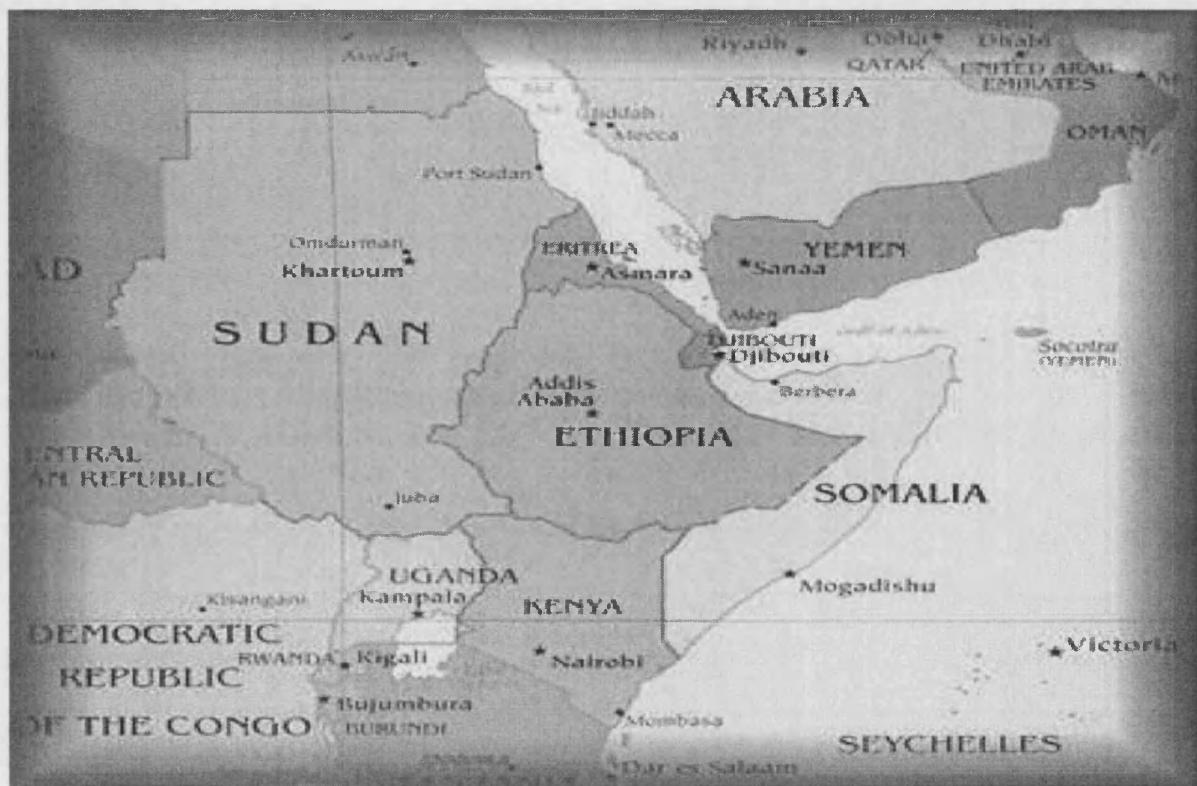
Map 1: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)



Source: <http://www.igad.org/>

Map 2: Combined Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa/ CJTF-HOA (2002)

Camp Lemonier Djibouti (May 13, 2003)/ US-CENTCOM (unit)

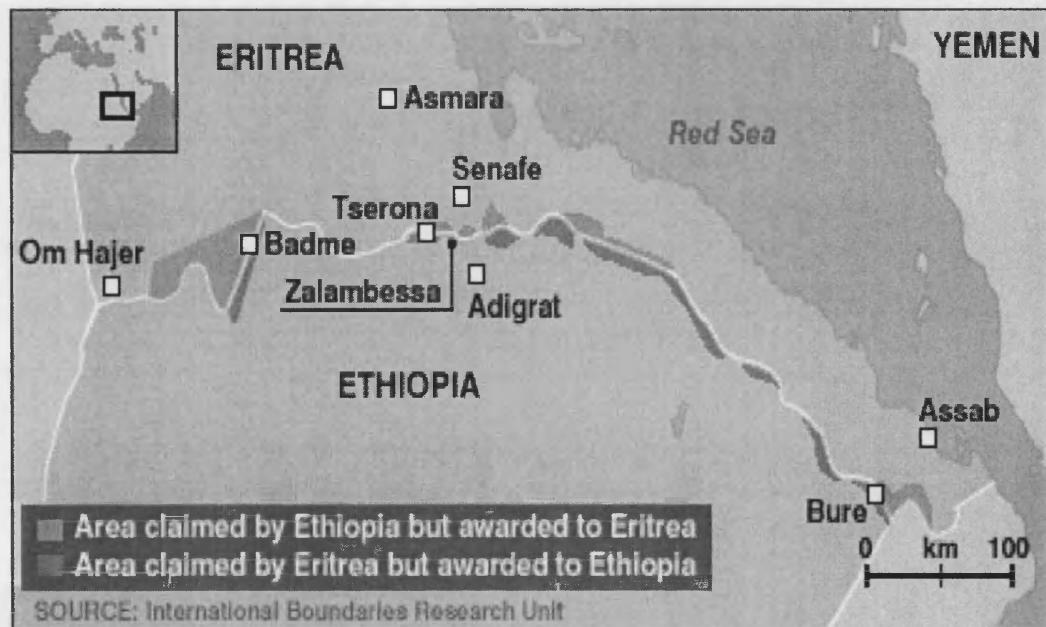


**CJTF-HOA: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen**

**US: 1,500 troops**

Source: <http://www.reliefweb.int/>

Map 3: The contested border and places mentioned in the thesis



Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Wars of outright territorial aggrandizement have been rare since 1945, while wars involving legally disputed territory have been a common occurrence.

(Kocs<sup>1</sup> 1995:159)

My knowledge about the technical aspects of the border area is not satisfactory. What I really know is that the areas claimed and recently occupied by the Eritrean government have been under Ethiopian administration since at least the creation of the modern Ethiopian empire state. But if the historical fact that they remained under Ethiopian control was/is claimed to be wrong, then it can only be hoped that a sober reading of the past might solve the problem. But it should not be tied up with the real causes of the present predicament. The real causes of the Eritrean- Ethiopian conflict i.e. the regional, economic, political and socio- psychological factors are well-positioned in their proper place [sic]. (...) Thus, the tendency to label the conflict as a mere border dispute will only do more harm than good to all interested on what should be next. This is so because it does not help to properly understand the nature of the problem as well as the possible solutions.

(Medhane Tadesse<sup>2</sup> 1999: 161)

It would be a mistake and a gross understatement of the problem between the two governments to attribute the recent Eritrean- Ethiopian war solely to a disagreement of where the border separating the two countries lies.

There certainly were plenty of reasons and incidents in the border areas to give the two governments enough tools to wage negative propaganda against each other, to fan the flames of chauvinism and flex their military muscles. But that could never be sufficient to bring the two countries to full fledged war that consumed the lives of tens-of-thousands of their citizens and caused the setback of their development efforts.

(Paulos Tesfagiorgis<sup>3</sup> 2004: 37)

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<sup>1</sup> Kocs, S. A. 1995. 'Territorial Disputes and Interstate War, 1945- 1987'. *The Journal of Politics* 57: 159- 175.

<sup>2</sup> Medhane Tadesse 1999. *The Eritrean- Ethiopian War: Retrospect and Prospects: Reflections on the Making of Conflicts in the Horn of Africa 1991- 1998*. Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Enterprise. The author is an Ethiopian historian.

<sup>3</sup> Paulos Tesfagiorgis 2004. 'Ethiopia- Eritrea relations: factors militating against normalisation' in Sørbø, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget. The author is Eritrean and was awarded the Rafto Prize for Human Rights in 2003.

The 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia took the protagonists and regional scholars and analysts by surprise. Indeed, for those living along the frontier in Southern Eritrea and in Northern Ethiopia the seven-year period of peace since the overthrow of the *Derg* appeared just as a lull between the first and second wars. The first war refers to the Eritrean war for independence and to the Ethiopian civil war; the second refers to the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. As war has been such a common currency in the everyday lives of citizens in this region, whenever asked about war, those who live in the area immediately ask: ‘to which war are you referring to, to the recent one?’<sup>4</sup> However, the latter war was significantly different. The 1998- 2000 war was waged between the armed forces of two sovereign states.

The author of this thesis was present at a public lecture on the inter-state war between Eritrea and Ethiopia organised by the East Africa Society at the School of Oriental and African Studies in December 1998.<sup>5</sup> Once the floor was open for questions the Eritrean and Ethiopian diaspora members embarked upon a wave of intense mutual accusations. For students of nationalism the powerful emotions which accompanied the debate should come as no surprise. Yet, paraphrasing Stevenson’s remark on the First World War, Eritreans and Ethiopians in London, removed from the trench lines on the battlefield, seemed: ‘embroiled in a tragedy in the classical sense of a conflict between right and right’.<sup>6</sup> With hindsight, this coincided with the lull between the first and the second rounds of fighting, which had started on 12 May 1998, and the second one which would start in February 1999 and would lead to the most intense episodes of carnage during the war. The author of this thesis became interested in the 1998-2000 war not because of the international media coverage or the tragedy unfolding on the battlefield. It was quintessentially Eritrean and Ethiopian diasporas’ passionate defence of their homeland governments’ righteousness during the debate that engaged us. Paradoxically, more than any other means of coverage, the diaspora members’ passionate debate brought the intensity of the fighting and the

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<sup>4</sup> Various interviews in Addis Ababa, Asmara, Tigray Region, June- August 2003, July-August 2004, July-August 2005.

<sup>5</sup>School of Oriental and African Studies, Public Lecture organized by the East African Society, 10.12.1998, London. Speakers: Mr. Mulugeta Asrat; Mr. Ephrem Mehreteab; Dr. Gaim Kibreab; Ms T. Hagos; Chair: Mr. Carlos Oya.

<sup>6</sup> Stevenson, D. 2004. *1914-1918 The History of the First World War*. London: Allen Lane/ Penguin Books, p. xix.

unfolding tragedy in the, until then, distant countries to our attention. In this sense the diaspora's role in linking the unfolding of events in the homeland government to their everyday lives in the host countries should not be overlooked.

Despite the importance of understanding this particular war on its own merits, only a partial understanding can be achieved without considering the broader patterns of warfare. This chapter will start with an appraisal of the causes associated with contemporary armed conflicts in the post-Cold War era and their applicability in understanding the war with which this thesis is concerned: the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The first section examines the resurgence of nationalist conflicts in the aftermath of the Cold War and analyses the relationship between nationalism and one of the manifestations of territory: boundaries. The following section defines the central research questions of the thesis. The third section analyses three strands of the literature, namely the literature of contemporary armed conflicts, the literature of globalization in relation to the territorial sovereign state and to civil wars and, finally, it engages with the historical sociological approach to the role of war in the process of state formation. This part identifies the major debates that have shaped our understanding of contemporary armed conflict and discusses their contribution to opening up new lines of enquiry, as well as their limitations. This section is critical to the development of this thesis because it clarifies the theoretical assumptions underlining the collection, production and the treatment of the empirical evidence in relation to the thesis' framework of analysis. The fourth section exposes the methodological approach and discusses the strengths and the constraints posed by qualitative methodology in post-insurgent states. The closing section will clarify the structure of the thesis with a brief synopsis of each of its chapters.

### **1.1 Boundaries, War and Nationalism**

In the post-Cold War era we have witnessed a resurgence of nationalism, which has challenged existing frontiers and, ultimately, led to redistribution of territory and, as a consequence, to a reconfiguration of existing boundaries. Although this has been the case, the interpretation of self-determination as decolonization has remained unchallenged. The creation of new states in the former Soviet Union and in the Horn of

Africa largely respected the pre-existing internal administrative boundaries. However, the resurgence of nationalist conflict has challenged 'the political and economic arrangements of international society and the security of its members'.<sup>7</sup> This was particularly the case in the Balkans and in the Horn of Africa.

The security threats caused by nationalist conflicts are mostly regional. As Mayall claims 'nationalist conflicts in multi-ethnic states tend to spill-over across borders, as sympathisers in contiguous neighbouring states exert pressure on their governments to intervene.'<sup>8</sup>

This feature is, indeed, consistent with the prevailing patterns of warfare in the post- Cold War era which point to an increasing trend in intra-state wars. As the prevailing patterns of warfare since the Second World War show a declining trend in interstate wars should we accept at face value the generalised assumption that war of the 'classic' kind can be virtually ignored? The prevalence of intra-state wars does not mean that the classic kind of war has simply vanished. As Holsti argues, security between states in the Third World and elsewhere has become increasingly dependent upon security within those states.<sup>9</sup> Following on from this, it is important to consider both the inter-state, as well as the regional, implications of the domestic security architecture within a given state.

The Horn of Africa stands in contrast to other regions in Africa with regard to the patterns of warfare and the frequency of inter-state wars. The region has been the stage for two inter-state wars: the 1977-78 Ethiopia-Somalia and the 1998-2000 Eritrea- Ethiopia wars. Arguably, this gives the region 'a more Westphalian feel than elsewhere in the continent'.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Crawford Young argues that the crucial challenges to the AU lie in the Horn of Africa, and the multiple crises in the region raise fundamental issues for the African state system.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mayall, J. Spring 1992. 'Nationalism and international security after the Cold War'. *Survival: The International Institute for Strategic Studies Quarterly*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Holsti, K. 1996. *The State, War, and the State of War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Buzan, B. 2003. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 242.

<sup>11</sup> Young, C. 1991. 'Self- Determination, Territorial Integrity, and the African State System' in Zartman, W., and Deng, F. (ed.) *Conflict Resolution in Africa*. Washington D.C: Brookings Institution, p. 320.

The involvement of Ethiopia in yet another inter-state war raises the question of whether nationalism, as was the case in the 1977-78 war between Somalia and Ethiopia, played a role in the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

This thesis challenges the abstract separation between territory and nationalism. Rather than understanding boundaries as mere lines on a map, territory needs to be understood in its relationship to the particular trajectories of state and nation building in Africa. The literature on nationalism allows us to understand the relationship between territory and national identity.

In order to understand the multiple conceptions and practices concerning the boundaries and the nation-state it is necessary to incorporate strands of the literature within International Relations, Anthropology and Historical sociology which show the multiple dimensions of territory. As a corollary of the processes associated with globalization and with contemporary armed conflicts, the literature review will interrogate how territory in its multiple dimensions contributes to our understanding of the continuities and transformations of the sovereign state at the current juncture of world politics.<sup>12</sup> Before coming to the literature review, the following section will define the research questions underlying this thesis.

## **1.2 Focus and Scope of the thesis**

In the face of the persistence and of the intensification of civil wars in the aftermath of the Cold War, the study of this inter-state war is of immense value for the ongoing debates on the changing nature of warfare, in understanding patterns of warfare in Africa and the trajectories of state and nation building projects. The central goals of the thesis are to understand the role of territory in this particular war and to assess the relationship between war and state making in Eritrea and in Ethiopia. The thesis aims to contribute to the broader debates on the relationship between territory and the causation, conduct and outcomes of contemporary armed conflicts.

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<sup>12</sup>Donnan, H., and Wilson, Thomas M. 1999. *Borders, Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. Oxford & N.Y: Berg.

The thesis is designed according to a central research question and to two subsidiary questions. The main question of this thesis is to ask whether territory has in fact declined from its central position.

#### Central Research Question:

Clausewitzian interstate wars are about territory. So was the 1998-2000 war an Old war or did it display features of new wars - can a study of the causes, conduct and the outcomes provide an answer?

In addition, the thesis reflects upon the relationship between war and state formation in the post-Cold War era in a region where the legacy of colonialism played a role in the expansion and in the creation of the state, based on the Westphalian model. As a corollary of these aims the thesis addresses two subsidiary questions.

#### Subsidiary question 1:

Is the Eritrea - Ethiopia conflict a relic of the past? That is, an anachronistic oddity in a world where intra-state and new wars prevail?

#### Subsidiary question 2:

Are we witnessing an example of state making wars that according to some<sup>13</sup> are key to the emergence of strong states in Africa?

The research question and the aims of this study raise a set of complementary interrogations in relation to the broader patterns of warfare and to the challenges to the sovereign state. These interrogations will be discussed throughout the thesis and in relation to the particular findings of the case-study. The next section will clarify the thesis' theoretical assumptions in relation to the main debates on the literature of

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<sup>13</sup>Luttwak, E. July-August 1999. 'Give War a Chance'. *Foreign Affairs* 78: 36-44.

Ayoob, M. 1995. *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and The International System*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Herbst, J. 2003. 'State and War in Africa' in Paul, T.V., Ikenberry, G. John, Hall, John A. (ed.) *The Nation- State in question*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

contemporary armed conflicts and of the African Area Studies' understanding of the state and of the patterns of warfare in Africa.

### 1.3 Literature Limitations and Theoretical Assumptions

#### 1.3.1 Contemporary armed conflicts: Civil and New Wars

In the face of the persistence and of the intensification of civil wars in the aftermath of the Cold War one strand of the literature highlights the transformation of the nature of contemporary armed conflicts.<sup>14</sup>

Martin Van Creveld<sup>15</sup> argues that we may be witnessing the end of an era of 'Clausewitzian warfare' based on the distinction between government, army and people. However, as Anthony W. Pereira suggests:

To what extent was the Clausewitzian paradigm ever dominant? Haven't irregular armed forces always been a feature of war-making? (...) Perhaps even at the height of the Clausewitzian era in Europe, the armed forces that could fight wars according to Clausewitzian dictums were the exception rather than the rule and could be effectively challenged by irregular armies. It therefore seems more plausible that 21<sup>st</sup> century war, at least so far, has reconfigured elements of conventional and irregular warfare, rather than moved decisively from one to the other.<sup>16</sup>

The contrasting positions between Van Creveld and Pereira suggest that rather than understanding Clausewitzian war as a stylized type of war; some of the features present in this type of war may still be helpful in understanding contemporary patterns of warfare.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Van Creveld, M. 1991. *The Transformation of War*. N.Y: The Free Press.; Cerny, P. G. 1998. 'Neomedievalism, Civil War and the New Security Dilemma: Globalisation as Durable Disorder'. *Civil Wars* 1: 36-64.

<sup>15</sup> Van Creveld, 1991, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Pereira, A. W. (2003) In *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation* (Ed, Davis, D. E., and, Pereira, Anthony W.) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 393.

<sup>17</sup> Duyvesteyn, I., and Angstrom, J. 2005. 'Rethinking the nature of War'. London and N.Y.: Frank Cass.

Two lines of enquiry deserve closer treatment because of their role in polarising the debate and in influencing the understanding of contemporary armed conflict: the greed vs. grievances and the Old vs. New Wars debates.

The first debate points to the inevitable tension between greed factors and grievances as the key motivations to resort to force in intra-state wars. This debate acquires significance in cases when the duration and the protracted nature of the conflicts are clearly related to the predatory nature of the belligerents' motivations. However, as several authors argue, economic factors need to be taken into account as part of a complex interaction with other grievances related to other sources of cleavages in the social formations.<sup>18</sup> The focus on the economic dimensions of civil wars overlooks the complex interaction between economic and political agendas, and the role played by political, cultural and strategic factors in the unfolding of civil wars.<sup>19</sup>

The second debate culminated with Kaldor's<sup>20</sup> definition of the 'New Wars' thesis. The proponents of this thesis<sup>21</sup> argue that in terms of the methods of warfare, the new wars draw on the experience of both guerrilla and counterinsurgent movements, but are distinctive as being essentially based upon the instillation of fear among civilians, hatred and predation.

In the so-called 'New Wars', the units that fight include different groups not corresponding to the vertically organized hierarchical units of conventional warfare. These units are composed by different types of group ranging from paramilitary units, local warlords, criminal gangs, police forces, and mercenary groups to regular forces.

Although these contributions have stimulated the debate around the understanding of the transformation of warfare, a lack of historical perspective

<sup>18</sup> Keen, D. 2000. 'Incentives and Disincentives for Violence' in Berdal, M., and, David M. Malone, (ed.) *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Colorado & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.; Berdal, M. 2005. 'Beyond Greed and Grievance- and not too soon... A Review Essay'. *Review of International Studies* 31: 687-698.

<sup>19</sup> Berdal, 2005, op.cit., pp. 690-91.

<sup>20</sup> Kaldor, M. 1999. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>21</sup> Duffield, M. 2001. *Global Governance and the New Wars: The merging of development and security*. London: Zed Books. Munkler, H. 2005. *The New Wars*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

overlooked continuities, simplified the complexities of the conflicts and de-emphasised the resilience of the sovereign state in the face of these pressures.

Finally, as Berdal argues, the tendency in the new wars scholarship to identify common patterns in contemporary civil conflicts overlooks important differences among them.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding diaspora's remittances role in conflicts, both the new wars proponents and other authors tend to overlook the diversity of outcomes and instead focus mainly on diaspora formations' role in fuelling the conflicts in the homeland.<sup>23</sup> Diasporas' remittances may fuel and/or sustain insurgency in the homeland, as was the case with the Tamil diaspora from Sri Lanka in sustaining the Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam (LTTE).<sup>24</sup> Other similar cases include Eritreans during the war for independence; and over a much longer period the Kurds, the Palestinians and the Irish.<sup>25</sup> However, diaspora remittances may instead play a role in averting conflict as in the case of Kosovo when remittances were largely channelled to Rogova's Kosovo Republic.<sup>26</sup> The same can be said of the Somali diaspora remittances.<sup>27</sup> These findings again suggest the need to consider different linkages between the diaspora and homeland actors, both national governments and insurgents with diverse aims; most notably in the case of unfulfilled self-determination claims.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the role of diaspora formations in world politics needs to be examined according to: its origins; the nature of the relations with the host countries and the homeland actors (both state and non-state) and the various dimensions of these relations, that is, economic, political and cultural.

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<sup>22</sup> Berdal, M. 2004. 'The 'New Wars' Debate: A Historical Perspective is Needed'. *Security Dialogue* 35: 173-189.

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, B. 2002. 'The New World Disorder' in Vincent, J. (ed.) *The anthropology of politics : a reader in ethnography, theory, and critique*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Anderson, B. Winter 1994. 'Exodus'. *Critical Inquiry* 20: 314-327. Lyons, T. 2006. 'Diasporas and homeland conflict' in Kahler, M., and, Barbara F. Walter, (ed.) *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>24</sup> Berdal, 2005, op. cit., p. 695.

<sup>25</sup> Lyons, 2006, op. cit. Østergaard- Nielsen, E. 2001. 'Diasporas in World Politics' in Josselin , D., & Wallace, William (ed.) *Non-state actors in world politics* Basingstoke: Palgrave, p. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Berdal, 2005, op.cit., p. 695.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 695.

<sup>28</sup> Shain, Y., and Sherman, Martin 1998. 'Dynamics of Disintegration: Diaspora, Secession and the paradox of nation-states'. *Nations and Nationalism* 4, p. 339.

Particularly in the case of weak states the processes associated with globalization have favoured the exploitation of violence for economic purposes.<sup>29</sup> If they succeed in capturing a fungible resource, warlords and insurgent movements can use the global economy to sustain themselves.<sup>30</sup> Following on from this, the conduct of war economy businesses and the mobilization of non-state militias become profitable<sup>31</sup> and the armed factions resist resolution of the conflicts. This trend can be best understood within the interplay of global and regional economic changes and the flourishing of the un-official sector in the 1970s and 1980s in many African countries. This phenomenon, which intensified in the 1990s, had implications with regards to the diminishing centrality of the state as the main venue for securing access to critical resources in Africa. The political economy of war's approach has provided a crucial understanding of these linkages. In Africa, and in other regions, civil wars were shaped by the interplay between local and global forces of the wider international political economy.

Africa's wars have to be seen as phenomena associated with emergent patterns of accumulation. Such patterns thrive on the dislocations of globalization, and benefit, illicit or hidden global networks (sponsoring flows of arms, trade in drugs and minerals, laundered money and other illegal finance (...)).<sup>32</sup>

However, it would be an over-generalization to take at face-value that all contemporary armed conflicts in Africa and elsewhere fit within this pattern. This line of enquiry highlights a part of the complexity of the conflicts. However, as Berdal argues the processes and phenomenon identified within the greed-motivated and new wars' lines of enquiry, such as diaspora's remittances and the opportunities offered by economic globalization to armed factions, are 'dynamic and context-dependent and their role in sustaining conflict is therefore neither given nor self-evidently good or bad'.<sup>33</sup> As a consequence, in depth case-studies based on qualitative methodology

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<sup>29</sup> Munkler, 2005, op.cit., p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Buzan, B. 2005. 'Series Editor Preface' The New International Relations" in Engel, U., and, Gorm Rye Olsen, (ed.) *Africa and the North: between globalization and marginalization*. London & N.Y.: Routledge.

<sup>31</sup> Bujra, J., Lionel Cliffe, Morris Szeftel with Rita Abrahamsen and Tunde Zack- Williams, 2004. 'Agendas, Past and Future.' *Review of African Political Economy* 102, p. 569.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 569.

<sup>33</sup> Berdal, 2005, op.cit., p. 695.

retain value to identify similarities and differences between contemporary armed conflicts across regions.<sup>34</sup>

The empirical evidence from various ongoing armed conflicts in Africa confirms the diversity of current patterns of warfare in Africa. Timothy Shaw highlights three different types of armed conflicts: 1) orthodox inter-state; 2) semi-orthodox, semi-state and 3) non-orthodox, largely non-state.<sup>35</sup> This line of enquiry is more helpful than accounts<sup>36</sup> which offer an understanding of Africa's wars within a single pattern. This latter line of inquiry incurs in germane constraints identified below in relation to the literature of contemporary armed conflicts.

Just as trajectories of state and nation building across Africa share similarities whilst also displaying diverse features, so do ongoing armed conflicts with regard to: the intensity of violence, the types of actors, their causation, conduct and outcomes. The strands of the literature that emerged in the wake of the Cold War, especially the political economy of violence and the 'new wars' thesis, have contributed to the understanding of Africa's armed conflicts within the broader trends in the international system. The key contribution of these lines of inquiry is to show that these patterns are not unique to Africa.<sup>37</sup> However, the central analytical distinctions of these approaches incur in three major problems: 1) the dichotomy between greed and grievance and new and old wars is overemphasised; 2) they overlook continuities and the diversity of forms of warfare and 3) the interrogations they raise need to be examined on a case-by-case basis at the peril of overgeneralization and simplification.

### **1.3.2 Globalization, the Transformation of Warfare and Implications for the Territorial Sovereign State**

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<sup>34</sup> Bennett, A., and George, Alexander L. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

<sup>35</sup> Shaw, T. M. 2003. 'Towards a Political Economy of Regional Conflict and Cooperation in Middle Africa at the Start of the Twenty-First Century' in Hentz, J.J., and, Boas, Morten (ed.) *New and Critical Security and Regionalism: Beyond the Nation State*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 185.

<sup>36</sup> Jackson, R. 2006. 'Africa's Wars: Overview, Causes and the Challenges of Conflict Transformation' in Furley, O., and, May, Roy (ed.) *Ending Africa's Wars*. Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, p. 21. Reno, W. 1998. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.;

<sup>37</sup> de Waal, A. 2000. 'Who Fights? Who Cares? War and Humanitarian Action in Africa' in Africa, J. (ed.). Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, pp. 1-2.

The literatures of globalization and of contemporary armed conflicts in Africa converge upon the assumption that the deterritorializing pressures<sup>38</sup> upon the state corroborate a widespread trend toward a borderless world,<sup>39</sup> which is particularly salient in Africa. According to these interpretations, both the effects of trans-state regionalism<sup>40</sup> and the spill-over effects of civil wars across borders<sup>41</sup> are further transforming Africa's porous international boundaries and are contributing to the deterritorialization of the state.<sup>42</sup> The shrinking of the state's capacity to maintain the monopoly of the means of coercion within its territorial jurisdiction is likely to erode weak states in Africa and will, eventually, lead to a reconfiguration of boundaries along lines other than those inherited at independence.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the increasing breaches to the territorial integrity and to the non-interference norms are a further threat to regional peace and security and suggest these are no longer operational rules for inter-state relations within Africa.<sup>44</sup> The proliferation of non-state actors and their increasing role in spheres traditionally reserved for the state are further contributing to the post-colonial states' crisis.<sup>45</sup> A multitude of non-state actors is displacing the post-colonial state and increasingly challenging its survival.<sup>46</sup> The further weakening of the state under the combined globalizing and localizing pressures is already underway,<sup>47</sup> and will eventually culminate in the proliferation of cases of disintegration.<sup>48</sup> However, rather than accepting these propositions at face value, this thesis takes as its starting point their interrogations and the debate on the role of territory and boundaries in light of a case of inter-state war in the late twentieth

<sup>38</sup> Held, D., Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and, Jonathan Perratan 1999. 'The Territorial State and Global Politics' in David Held, A.M., David Goldblatt and, Jonathan Perratan, (ed.) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Oxford: Polity. Bach, D. 1999. 'Regionalism versus regional integration: the emergence of a new paradigm in Africa' in Grugel, J., and Hout, Wil (ed.) *Regionalism Across the North-South Divide: State strategies and globalization*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 164.

<sup>39</sup> Van Creveld 1991, op. cit. Kaplan, R. D. February, 1994. 'The Coming Anarchy'. *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>40</sup> Bach, 1999, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> Cerny, 1998, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Bach, 1999, op.cit., p. 152.

<sup>43</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'Rethinking African States'. *African Security Review* 10.

<sup>44</sup> ibid., p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Clapham, C. 1998. 'Degrees of statehood'. *Review of International Studies* 24: 143-157.

<sup>46</sup> Allen, C. 1999. 'Warfare, Endemic Violence and State Collapse in Africa'. *Review of African Political Economy*: 367-384. Reno, W. 1998. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>47</sup> Holloway, D., and Stedman, S.J. 2002. 'Civil Wars and State-Building in Africa and Eurasia' in Bessinger, M.R., and Young, Crawford (ed.) *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> Engel, U., and, Andreas Mehler, 2005. 'Under Construction: Governance in Africa's New Violent Social Spaces' in Engel, U., and , Gorm Rye Olsen, (ed.) *The African Exception*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

century. The strands of the literature concerned with the impact of globalization and of contemporary armed conflicts on the future of the territorial sovereign state retain heuristic value to the extent that they open up space to interrogate the changing meanings of sovereignty in the twenty-first century. This legitimate quest needs to be set up against the empirical evidence emerging from particular case-studies and from different regions within the international system.

If Africa's regional order is dwindling under the combined crisis of the state and of globalizing pressures, what is the alternative to the existing states carved within the territorial framework inherited from the colonial period?

It is unquestionable that the origins of Africa's boundaries' are contingent and largely the result of an artificial creation by the colonial powers.<sup>49</sup> Whether these boundaries have been an asset to state survival<sup>50</sup> or instead have hampered state trajectories towards consolidation<sup>51</sup> is indeed a source of great controversy.

Africa's boundaries - like all international boundaries - are artificial but unlike boundaries in some other parts of the international system are porous. Here again different authors offer different explanations. Whether the maintenance of this feature is the outcome of the states' dysfunctionality or the outcome of the absence of external threats, which would have forced upon political leaderships the imperative to create strong boundaries, is not possible to determine without considering the particular trajectories of the state. In addition, the OAU consensus on the respect to the existing boundaries at the time of independence prevented irredentist and separatist claims for self-determination, along lines other than decolonization, from gathering legitimacy and recognition on the regional stage. The majority of Africa's international boundaries have remained porous. However, not all swathes of the frontiers are equally permeable and the international boundaries between states and across the Western, Eastern, Central and Southern African regions have acquired a diversity of features and have been used in the pursuit of different aims since

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<sup>49</sup> Mayall, J. 2000. *World Politics: Progress and its limits*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 64.

<sup>50</sup> Herbst, 2000, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Abraham, G. 2006. 'Africa and its boundaries, a legal overview: From colonialism to the African Union' in Clapham, C., Herbst, J., Greg Mills, (ed.) *Big African States*. Johannesburg: Wits University

independence.<sup>52</sup> Following on from this, although the post-colonial states' political leaderships have faced similar challenges concerning their international boundaries, to assume that all the international boundaries have been eroded in a similar way by globalizing pressures or by (informal and/or irregular) trans-state flows of people and goods is an over-generalization. This thesis is built upon the theoretical assumption that Africa's international boundaries display diverse features. The various dimensions of the international boundaries are used by a range of actors (both state and non-state) in pursuit of their own aims. State and non-state actors in pursuit of their aims deploy different strategies concerning the international boundaries which may coincide at times, mutually reinforce or, instead, undermine each other. Finally, both state and non-state actors' aims and strategies are influenced by different conceptions of the international boundaries.<sup>53</sup>

Africa's porous boundaries have been affected in a range of ways both by domestic, regional and globalizing pressures, and have been both a constraint and an opportunity exploited differently by a range of state and non-state actors<sup>54</sup>. In addition the nature of the international boundaries between states further increases the saliency of the blurring line between domestic and international politics in the African state system, and particularly in the Horn of Africa.<sup>55</sup> The porous borderlands, in fact, constitute the twilight region where the domestic and the international in African politics become indistinguishable.

But is it helpful to understand Africa's porous international boundaries independently of the peculiar features of the process of state formation? Rather than doing so, this thesis is built upon the assumption that the analysis of the peculiar trajectories of state and nation building projects in different countries is a fruitful path to follow in order to explore the diverse features of Africa's international boundaries.

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Press. pp. 273-74. Griffiths, I. L. 1995. 'Political Boundaries' in Griffiths, I.L. (ed.) *The African inheritance*. London ; New York Routledge, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> Bach, 1999, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>53</sup> Donnan and Wilson, 1999, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> Nuguent, P., and Asiwaju, A.I. 1996. 'African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities'. London: Pinter.; Taylor, I., and, Williams, Paul 2004. 'Introduction: Understanding Africa's place in world politics' in Taylor, I.P.W. (ed.) *Africa in International Politics: External Involvement on the Continent*. London & N.Y.: Routledge, p. 3. According to the authors both the society of states and the global political economy influence the continent's affairs.

The focus on the trajectories of state and nation building on a case-by-case basis offers a unique vantage point in understanding the international implications of the domestic trajectories of each country's process of state formation. This line of enquiry allows us to engage with an overlooked dimension of a state's relation with its territory: the interplay between its domestic and international boundaries. As Achille Mbembe notes, although the re-drawing of Africa's international boundaries has been fiercely resisted by political leaderships, the re-drawing of domestic boundaries has been common currency within state building projects and is indeed a legacy from the colonial period.<sup>56</sup> Quite surprisingly, both the domestic and international implications of the re-drawing of domestic boundaries have been given scant attention. This feature of state formation is arguably one of the most fruitful paths to explore in our quest to understand contemporary armed conflicts in Africa, not only civil but also inter-state wars. This thesis deals only with the latter case.

This thesis recognizes that without considering a variety of actors' aims, conceptions and strategies concerning domestic and international boundaries only a partial understanding of processes of state disintegration and/or consolidation in relation to contemporary armed conflicts can be achieved. However, within the scope of this thesis only a clear set of identified actors will be dealt with. The thesis takes into account the diverse aims, conceptions and strategies concerning the domestic and international boundaries of Ethiopia and Eritrea, particularly of the following actors: states' agents and institutions, borderland communities along the territorial boundary between the two countries and urban, rural and diaspora formations' conceptions and practices concerning the boundaries.

There are three widely acknowledged international implications of Africa's porous boundaries, and the common denominator between them is their role in the erosion of the state's sovereignty and of the consensus around the norms which bind the African state system into a regional sovereign society of states. The international implications of Africa's porous boundaries are related to: 1) the phenomenon

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<sup>55</sup> Harbeson, J. 1991. 'The International Politics of Identity in the Horn of Africa' in Harbeson, J., and Rothchild, D. (ed.) *Africa in World Politics*. Boulder; San Francisco; Oxford: Westview Press, p. 122.

<sup>56</sup> Mbembe, A. 2002. 'At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality and Sovereignty in Africa' in Bessinger, M.R., and Young, Crawford (ed.) *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, pp. 59-61.

described as trans-state regionalism;<sup>57</sup> 2) the patterns of warfare, such as the spill-over effects of armed conflicts in neighbouring countries<sup>58</sup> and, finally, 3) the closely related pattern of mutual interference in each other's internal affairs.<sup>59</sup> The degree, density and the extent of these processes vary among countries, within and across regions in Africa. This thesis is only concerned with the interplay between these processes and, in part, the domestic and interstate security dynamics between Eritrea and Ethiopia and, finally, their interplay with the prevailing patterns within the Horn of Africa's broader regional security architecture. The role of boundaries in the politics of the region needs to be understood against this backdrop.

In relation to trans-state regionalism, Daniel Bach describes this process as 'a result of the exploitation of dysfunctions and disparities generated by existing boundaries, with debilitating effects on the state's control of its territory'.<sup>60</sup> The irregular movement of peoples and goods across boundaries has led to the emergence of trans-state informal networks which critically erode the state's capacity to regularize the rules governing trade, currency exchange and migration. Within the irregular movement of goods and people, the irregular trade in Eastern Africa of the narcotic leaf *khat* and the irregular migration across the Red Sea from Somalia's Puntland and Somaliland's ports are just two of the most striking cases in point. These activities have tended to proliferate and flourish beyond the states' control. However, the state's agents and institutions own contribution to their increased saliency and magnitude should not be overlooked. Paradoxically, state agents and non-state actors may act in connivance to the detriment of the consolidation of the state.<sup>61</sup> The extent to which this has been the case needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, this thesis incorporates the analysis of the specific historical circumstances of the crystallization of the boundaries. It is important to interrogate the extent to which the actors' practices concerning the boundaries are reproduced, or follow a single pattern, along different swathes of the adjacent regions to the frontier

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<sup>57</sup> Bach, 1999, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>58</sup> Mayall 1992, op. cit., p. 21; Rothchild, D. 2002. 'The Effects of State Crisis on African Interstate Relations (and Comparisons with Post-Soviet Eurasia)' in Bessinger, M.R., and Young, Crawford (ed.) *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, p. 203.

<sup>59</sup> Matthews, R. O. 1970. 'Interstate Conflicts in Africa: A Review'. *International Organization* 24, p. 345.

<sup>60</sup> Rothchild, 2002, op. cit., p. 203.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

between contiguous neighbouring countries. Following on from this, the thesis considers separately the practices across the boundaries between Southern Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia, between Western Eritrea and Eastern Sudan, between Eastern Ethiopia and Western Somaliland and Somalia, and so on. In the scope of this thesis the territorial boundaries between Ethiopia and Eritrea, between Ethiopia and Djibouti, and between the former and Somalia will be privileged for two main reasons: 1) the outbreak of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the suspension of all Ethiopian transhipments to the Eritrean ports and 2) the diversion of Ethiopia's transhipments to the Djibouti and to Berbera ports (Somaliland), and to a lesser extent to Bossaso (Puntland/Somalia) port.

Africa's porous international boundaries in relation to the patterns of warfare, such as the spill-over effects of armed conflicts in neighbouring countries, acquire two crucial attributes, which can unfold independently or simultaneously. Governments may be pressured to intervene across boundaries in order to provide support (military and/or political) to the contiguous state's citizens of its own ethnic groups. The thesis interrogates under which particular circumstances national governments are likely to resort to hot-pursuit missions of their own minority ethnic groups<sup>62</sup> who cross the states' boundaries in search of safe haven amongst their kinsmen on the other side of the boundary. Which have been the prevailing motivations of these forceful interventions across state boundaries? Are they subordinated to the merits of the particular case and/or to humanitarian imperatives or, instead, are they predominantly subordinated to *realpolitik* considerations?<sup>63</sup>

Africa's porous international boundaries have also led to a regionalization of the political space, particularly in the Horn of Africa. The members of opposition groups, regardless of ethnic affinities, tend to cross the boundaries in search of a safe haven, against persecution from their own state and/or to conduct insurgent operations against their homeland government. The neighbouring countries have not acted with restraint and have instead supported various insurgencies. In a tit-for-tat tactic the targeted state has also provided support to the other state's opposition groups. Has this

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<sup>62</sup> Mayall, 1992, op. cit., p. 21. Rothchild, 2002, op. cit., pp. 201-207.

<sup>63</sup> Rothchild, 2002, op. cit., p. 207.

been a continuous pattern? Is this pattern related to the nature of the regimes or to the broader features of the regional state system?

This feature of the pattern of warfare and the mutual interference in each other's internal affairs have been particularly salient in the Horn of Africa and have considerably eroded the consensus around the non-interference norm. It is particularly important to analyse whether these processes pose a threat to regional peace and stability or instead to the political leaderships at the helm of the states. The extent to which these processes have fuelled the prolongation of civil wars needs to be understood within the interplay between the domestic and the region's security dynamics. As a corollary it is legitimate to raise the question whether these patterns have remained ever-present or instead have tended to wax and wane according to the domestic, regional and international system's broader patterns?

### **1.3.3 Inter-state disputes and wars over territory in Africa**

In Africa inter-state war is not a common phenomenon. In fact, based on the number of death criteria, i.e., situations where the armed forces of African states have engaged each other in any conflict resulting in more than 1,000 battle deaths, only two would qualify as interstate wars: the Ethiopian- Somali 1977-1978 conflict over the Ogaden and Haud regions, and the 1998-2000 Eritrean-Ethiopian war.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, what seems to be particularly exceptional in Africa has been the low-incidence of inter-state wars in the post- colonial period. Markus Kornprobst distinguishes between border disputes and inter-state wars. A border dispute refers to a conflict between two states arising from the claim of at least one of these states to a part of the territory or, in extreme cases, to an entire region within the territory administered by the other state.<sup>65</sup> The cases of inter-state militarized disputes over the un-satisfactory nature of borders have not been rare occurrences.<sup>66</sup> Border disputes in Africa have been frequent.<sup>67</sup> In

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<sup>64</sup> Lemke, D. 2002. *Regions of War and Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 167.

<sup>65</sup> Kornprobst, M. 2002. 'The Management of border disputes in African regional sub- systems: comparing West Africa and the Horn of Africa'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40, p. 373. The author only includes disputes over land borders, excludes maritime disputes and the ones involving at least one European colonial power.

<sup>66</sup> The cases under scrutiny were the ones which involved direct military confrontation, short of escalating into full-scale war. According to Markus Kornprobst the inventory of border disputes in West Africa and the Horn of Africa involved the following dyads: WE- Liberia- Guinea; Mali- Mauritania; Ghana- Côte d'Ivoire (Sanwi irredentism) ; Liberia- Côte D' Ivoire; Ghana- Togo (Ewe

addition to the interstate wars over territory between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977-78, Libya and Chad fought over the Aozou Strip in 1987 and Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998-2000. Other cases of border disputes occurred: between Algeria and Morocco in 1963; between Nigeria and Chad (over Lake Chad) in 1983; between Nigeria and Cameroon (over the Bakassi Peninsula) in 1978-79 and in 1993-94; between Mali and Burkina Faso (over the Agacher Strip) in 1985; between Guinea Bissau and Senegal (over the Dome Flore) in 1991 and between Eritrea and Yemen (over the Hanish Islands).<sup>68</sup>

Ethiopia within Africa stands out because of the defence of its territorial integrity by all possible means. This is indeed a key feature of its foreign policy. The state's leadership has repeatedly resorted to all means at its disposal, both peaceful and forceful, to defend the territorial integrity of the country. First, let us assess the non-forceful ways that Ethiopia has used to uphold the country's territorial integrity. A notable and early example of the Ethiopian state's determination to uphold peacefully the territorial integrity of the state was Haile Selassie's successful plea to the League of Nations in 1926. Haile Selassie, at the time still Regent, requested the League to implement its normative framework, particularly article 10 of the League Covenant concerning aggression, in defence of Ethiopia's territorial integrity and political independence against Britain and Italy.<sup>69</sup> Haile Selassie claimed that a British and Italian economic agreement concerning their dealings with Ethiopia constituted a bilateral pact to exert diplomatic pressure and obtain economic concessions from Ethiopia. As a consequence Haile Selassie interpreted the economic agreement as an indirect threat to Ethiopia's territorial integrity and political independence and thus a breach to article 10 of the Covenant League. Ethiopia skilfully resorted to the League of Nations' obligation to combat aggression. As a consequence of Ethiopia's

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irredentism) ; Dahomey-Nigeria (Yoruba irredentism) ; Dahomey-Niger; Upper-Volta (BF)-Niger; Mali-Upper-Volta (BF); Mali-Upper-Volta (Agacher Strip); Ghana-Upper-Volta/ HA-Ethiopia-Somalia; Ethiopia-Sudan (major Gwyne line) ; Eritrea-Djibouti and Ethiopia-Eritrea. Other sources consulted include: Brownlie, I. 1979. *African Boundaries : A legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia*. Hurst & California: R.I.I.A.; Huth, P. K. 1996 *Standing your Ground : Territorial Disputes and International Conflict*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press , pp. 216-25; Day, A. J. 1987. 'Border and Territorial Disputes'. Harlow & Detroit: Longman and Gale, pp. 103-194.

<sup>67</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2005. 'Introduction: The Eritreo- Ethiopian war' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. xix.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

diplomatic protest via the League of Nations, Britain and Italy were compelled to annul the agreement under the moral weight of the international legal norm on non-aggression.<sup>70</sup> However, in other instances Ethiopia was compelled to resort to force in the defence of its territorial integrity against external threat at considerable cost. These wars resulted in a wide number of casualties for both parties. The first incident between Ethiopia and Italy was in 1887 and resulted in an estimated 1,000 casualties; in the war between Ethiopia and Italy in 1895-96 the estimated casualties were 19,000; the 1935-36 resistance against Italy's occupation resulted in an estimated 20,000 casualties for both parties;<sup>71</sup> and the war between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977-78 resulted in an estimated 45,000 casualties.<sup>72</sup> This historical trajectory confirms the centrality of territorial integrity within the pattern of Ethiopia's interstate relations and its determination to resort to all means necessary in defence against any threat to its boundaries. Perhaps the centrality of this feature in the country's history will be helpful in understanding why the border dispute with Eritrea, unlike other cases of border disputes in Africa, escalated into fully-fledged war. This will be further examined in chapters 2 and 5.

### 1.3.4 War and the Process of State Formation

For a truly comparative study of politics to develop, the great but incomplete drama of African state creation must be understood.<sup>73</sup>

The relationship between war and the process of state formation is central in understanding contemporary processes of state building. From this it will not necessarily follow that Tilly's axiom that 'war makes states and states make wars',<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Wilson, P. 2007. 'The International Politics of Aggression: an Historical Analysis' *Department of International Relations*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, p. 66.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>71</sup> Tir, J., Philip Schafer, Paul Diehl, and Gary Goertz 1998. 'Territorial Changes, 1816-1996: Procedures and Data'. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 16: 89-97; Sarkees, M. R. 2000. 'The Correlates of War Data on War: An Update to 1997'. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 18: 123-144.

<sup>72</sup> Gebru Tareke 2000. 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, p. 637. Samatar, A. I. 1988. *Socialist Somalia : rhetoric and reality*. London: Zed, p. 137.

<sup>73</sup> Herbst, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>74</sup> Tilly, C. 1985. 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime' in Evans, P., D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol (ed.) *Bringing the State Back in*. New York: CUP. Tilly, C. 2002. 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime' in Besteman, C. (ed.) *Violence: A Reader*. Hampshire; New York: Palgrave; Macmillan.

will apply to the African context or to other cases of state building in the contemporary developing world.

As Anna Leander well argues:

(...) Contemporary state building takes place in a globalised context which alters the effects of the central processes which Tilly and others argued placed war-making and state-making in a positive relationship.<sup>75</sup>

In contrast, this relationship must be considered on a case-by-case basis without assuming that the relationship is necessarily a negative one. This relationship needs to be understood against the causes and the outcomes of particular wars.<sup>76</sup>

In the analysis of the relationship between War and the process of state formation nowhere did Charles Tilly argue that the process should necessarily follow a similar pattern to the European one. As Benno Teschke argues: '(...) There is no single world historical pattern'.<sup>77</sup>

The features of the contemporary processes of state formation pose further challenges to the understanding of the outcome of the relationship between war making and state making. It is not possible in the short term (in a three to four decade period since most African states attained independence) to reach definite conclusions. However, it is important to identify the current processes and outcomes of this interplay. As the empirical evidence does not lend itself to straightforward answers the majority of authors either conclude for a reproduction of Tilly's axiom or the opposite. Keith Krause has looked for a middle ground concluding that war both makes states and breaks states.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Leander, A. 2004. 'Wars and the un-making of states: Taking Tilly seriously in the contemporary world' in Guzzini, S., and, Jung, Dietrich, (ed.) *Contemporary Security Analysis and Copenhagen Peace Research*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

<sup>76</sup> Saganami, H. 1996. *On the Causes of War*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>77</sup> Teschke, B. 2003. *The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics and the making of Modern International Relations*. London and New York: Verso, p. 272.

<sup>78</sup> Krause, K. 1998. 'Theorizing security, state formation and the 'Third World' in the post-Cold War World'. *Review of International Studies* 24: 125-136.

The formative period of statehood, as the European experience has shown, led to a greater salience of inter-state wars. The comparison is fruitful not by assuming that the same will happen in Africa but by seeking to understand what kind of questions the analogy raises. As Holsti remarks: 'Are we to assume that the ideas and practices that drove interstate wars in the eighteenth century in Europe must repeat themselves in twenty-first-century Africa?'<sup>79</sup>

Herbst argues that the reasons for the weakness of the African states can be found in the absence of inter-state wars.<sup>80</sup> What can the inter-state war between Ethiopia and Eritrea add to our understanding of the relationship between war making and state making?

The post-colonial political itineraries of the state in Africa show that many of the features taken for granted on the study of inter-state warfare fail to capture the complexity of the simultaneous processes of state consolidation and disintegration across Africa and, most importantly, the ways through which the state has been losing the monopoly of the means of coercion. When analysing the process of state formation in Africa one has to bear in mind the formal (Ethiopia and Eritrea) and unofficial (DRC, Uganda, Rwanda, etc) interplay between the conventional armed forces of states and non state armed factions, be they irregular militias and warlords or more traditional insurgent movements.<sup>81</sup>

The relations between the state and its citizens in both the domestic and transnational spheres are central to understanding the role of political violence in the process of state formation. In Africa, the diaspora is a key element in grasping the diversity of paths and strategies deployed by the state in the pursuit of its aims. With the increasing importance of diaspora communities and their permanent links with citizens living within the boundaries of the state (in particular relatives), diaspora formations are part of the set of actors to whom African states' rulers increasingly depend and eventually are accountable to.

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<sup>79</sup> Holsti, K. 1996. *The State, War, and the State of War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 14.

<sup>80</sup> Herbst, 2000, *op. cit.*

<sup>81</sup> Clapham, C. 1998. 'African Guerrillas'. Fountain & Indiana: James Currey.

Finally, the post-colonial period in Africa seems to confirm that war is not a consequence of political change but is likely to become its catalyst.<sup>82</sup> The complex relationship between war and state formation in Africa further highlights that this process is far from achieved, with outcomes yet to be ascertained. Whether war-induced activities lead to state consolidation or disintegration needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis and over an extended period.

#### **1.4 Methodological Approach**

This study will draw upon the accounts of authors and journalists who had first-hand access to Ethiopian and/or Eritrean sources, the protagonists, other social actors and/or those who were participant observers from either side of the border. These published accounts will then be complemented with empirical evidence collected during this author's own fieldwork in the two countries, in the aftermath of the war. It should be noted that neither the authors and/or journalists who had privileged access to first hand accounts of one party or the other, nor this author, favour one side over the other, or for that matter, necessarily endorse a pro-Eritrean or pro- Ethiopian stance. Indeed, given the deterioration and disappearance of the indispensable element of political trust between the two former allies, one's 'privileged' access to the protagonists in one side of the border clearly conditioned access to the other party's case (and at the time of writing still does). The persistence of this feature, especially in the aftermath of the war, unavoidably places constraints and limitations on independent reporting and scholarship. As a consequence, the growing literature of the case study provides asymmetrical accounts reflecting the researchers' ability to negotiate the politics of fieldwork with the protagonists. Yet, these studies attempt to pave the way for future accounts that can ideally benefit from equal access to both protagonists.

The chapters on the causes, conduct, outcomes of the 1998-2000 war rely on primary empirical evidence collected during fieldwork in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Secondary evidence, extracted from the growing literature on the case study, will be used to overcome the asymmetries in the data collected during fieldwork in the two

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<sup>82</sup> Halliday, F. 2005. *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 167.

countries. The primary empirical evidence was collected both through semi-structured interviews and participant observation in the aftermath of the war. The semi-structured interviews included a collection of first-hand qualitative data drawn from a wide spectrum of perspectives on the war. The individuals interviewed were drawn from the following social groups: military and civilian external observers of the post-war settlement, members of International Organizations (both intergovernmental and non-governmental), members of Eritrean organizations and state institutions working in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), members of Ethiopian organizations working south of the TSZ, in the Northern Ethiopian Region of Tigray, and finally, members of domestic 'embryonic civil society' in both countries. The semi-structured interviews with those directly affected by the conduct of the war offer a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives from former combatants who belonged to the insurgent movements during the war against the *Derg*, former combatants in the 1998-2000 war, citizens who identified themselves as part of borderland communities living on both sides of the border and those citizens expelled and 'displaced' during the war. The findings were supplemented with further interviews with Ethiopians and Eritreans visiting or living in Europe. In this thesis the focus on diasporas is related to understanding their role in world politics in relation to the homeland government. This thesis will follow Østergaard-Nielsen's definition of diasporas as transnational non-state actors:

Diasporas enter the international scenes as actors in their own right as they seek to intervene in the political affairs of their homeland, or when the homeland seeks to gain economic and political support from its citizens abroad, or to provide them with economic and political support in their adopted countries. In these instances, the diaspora becomes a linkage group between its host country and its homeland.<sup>83</sup>

In order to understand whether the diaspora's role in world politics is overstated or overlooked it is important to analyse in the first place the instances, modalities and specific links developed between a homeland government and its diaspora constituencies, spread in various host countries, and the relationship between diaspora members and state and non-state actors in the homeland.

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<sup>83</sup> Østergaard- Nielsen, E. 2001. 'Diasporas in World Politics' in Josselin , D., & Wallace, William (ed.) *Non-state actors in world politics* Basingstoke: Palgrave, p. 223.

Finally, the author collected evidence from participant-observation in a series of public events organised by several institutions and members of these diaspora formations in the UK.

When the rules of the research game raise the ethical dilemma of inadvertently damaging the lives of the interviewees the questions of anonymity and confidentiality must be fully respected by the author. Only with very few exceptions were interviewees willing to be identified, let alone quoted. The present author sought authorisation, in advance, from the interviewees to insert direct quotations. However, particularly when cited the anonymity of those interviewed is fully respected.

Conducting research in post- insurgent militarised states raises different challenges from fieldwork in the context of on- going armed conflicts. When conducting' fieldwork under fire<sup>84</sup> the researchers share the fear of escaping hostilities with the interviewees and need to be concerned with their personal and physical security. In post- insurgent or authoritarian states one has to be concerned about the implications of his/her research for the interviewees, as ultimately between one day and the next they could be classified as a threat to the legitimate order as defined by the regime; in comparison, the implications for the researcher fade away. In these circumstances the invisible wall of the state's authoritarian practices is extended to the interaction between its citizens and non-citizens. Despite these constraints and concerns, this study is based on primary empirical evidence and aims to contribute with original empirical evidence to the case-study literature.

The war and its aftermath significantly transformed the porous borders into a 'wall'. As a consequence, the practices across state boundaries changed and this significant transformation blocked movements of people and goods across the border. This significant shift placed further constraints on conducting field research along the disputed border. Indeed, this feature is not unique to Eritrea and Ethiopia, as Donnan and Wilson note:

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<sup>84</sup> Nordstrom, C., and, Robben, Antonius C.G.M, 1995. 'Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival'. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Governments often do not like foreign scholars, or national scholars from their own metropolitan centres, nosing around disputed borders, especially if the governments fear security breaches.<sup>85</sup>

Moreover, with the establishment of the TSZ within Eritrean territory the state acquired further justifications to enforce its control over the movements of both citizens and non-citizens within areas adjacent to the TSZ. This practice culminated in the curtailment of movements not only of International Organizations in general, but particularly of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).<sup>86</sup>

### **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of 7 chapters, with the Introduction and the Conclusion included. The thesis follows an understanding of war as a sequence of events and hence the first part focuses mainly on the causes, conduct and outcomes of this particular war. The final part examines the relationship between war making and state making in light of the case study's outcomes and the region's security dynamics. The 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea has a value added in understanding contemporary trajectories of state and nation building in relation to armed conflict against the region's normative framework and the prevailing patterns of the region's security architecture.

This thesis starts with a brief introduction to the problem and a review of the main areas of controversy in the literature of contemporary armed conflicts and in the Africa Area Studies literature on patterns of warfare in Africa. As defined in the framework of analysis, the focus is limited to the interrogations raised by the outbreak, unfolding and the outcomes of the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This first chapter defines the central research question and the aims and contribution of the thesis in understanding the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea within the broader patterns of warfare in the region and elsewhere.

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<sup>85</sup> Donnan and Wilson, 1999, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>86</sup> This has been the case particularly since November 2005.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are concerned with the causes, conduct and the outcomes of the war. These three chapters are guided by the central research question: whether the 1998-2000 war is a relic of the past, that is, a so-called Old War? Furthermore these three chapters examine the role of territory in understanding this inter-state war.

The chapter on the causes of the war examines the case study literature and provides a critical assessment of both the contributions produced immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, in the heat of events, during the conflict and in its aftermath. The latter studies, as the present one, have benefited from hindsight and although subordinated to the scholarly maxim of knowing the causes of things *sine ira et studio* the constraints highlighted with regard to the collection of data show how proximity to the events and the relations between the parties curtail access to information. The chapter provides a critical examination of the various causes of the war and puts forward the argument that territory was de-emphasised as a result of the predominant trend to consider territory and the boundary between the two countries as mere lines on a map.

The chapter on the conduct of the war follows a chronological approach since the escalation of the crisis on May 12 1998 until the signing of the peace agreement on December 12 2000. Chapter 3 seeks to understand the aims, motivations, strategy and tactics of the parties. The focus on the first, the second and the third rounds of fighting is important to understand the transformation of the value, conceptions and practices concerning the disputed border areas.

Chapter 4 analyses the outcomes of the war in its various dimensions, namely territorial, politico-military and socio-economic. This chapter is particularly important in order to understand the stalemate in the aftermath of the peace settlement.

Chapter 5 examines the relationship between war and state making and remaking for both states and their political leaderships. Following on from the conclusions of the outcomes of the war in relation to state consolidation and or disintegration for the two states, chapter 6 explores the trajectories of state and nation building against the region's security dynamics and reflects upon the 1998-2000 war's implications for the region's security architecture.

The Conclusion is preceded by an Epilogue on Eritrea and Ethiopia's divergent approaches vis-à-vis the Somalia crisis in 2006-2007, as well as the attempts by the United Nations Security Council and the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission to overcome the stalemate between the parties.

In the Conclusion, the research questions are re-examined in light of the thesis' findings. This chapter highlights the added value of the case study in understanding the challenges of globalization to the territorial state and particularly the significance of territory for the survival of the modern sovereign state in Africa. The thesis concludes by suggesting that rather than focusing our attention on the international rigidity of the borders inherited from colonialism in Africa and on the contingent origins of Africa's international boundaries, the most challenging questions facing African states are related to the non-interference norm and to the protection of human rights and democratization within the boundaries of existing states. This final chapter raises the implications and the limitations of the thesis' findings and reflects upon future areas of research.

## Chapter 2: Causes of the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia

### 2.1 On the Origins of the War: Looking at Causation

On 12 May 1998 the Ethiopian parliament announced that Eritrea had launched a war of aggression against Ethiopia and warned Eritrea that failure to withdraw its troops, from 'occupied' Ethiopian territory, would render war inevitable.<sup>1</sup> As Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll state:

'In four weeks what had started as a minor border skirmish had escalated into a full-scale bilateral war - the first such war on the continent in decades'.<sup>2</sup>

The 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia fulfils the conventional criteria for classification as inter-state war, namely with regard to the intensity of violence and the status of the protagonists.

According to the intensity of violence, the estimated number of total casualties far exceeds the 1,000 death threshold in any given year. Indeed, references to the total number of casualties range from 50,000<sup>3</sup> to 100,000.<sup>4</sup> The available evidence sets the combat related deaths at a minimum of 87,000.<sup>5</sup> According to the status of the protagonists, this was a war between the regular armed forces of two sovereign states. The World Bank Projects for Demobilization and Reintegration in Ethiopia and

<sup>1</sup> Iyob, R. 2000. 'The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, p. 666.

<sup>2</sup> Tekeste Negash & Tronvoll, K. 2000. *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War*. Oxford and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Tekeste Negash and Kjetill Tronvoll state that the number of fatalities ranged from 50,000 to 80,000. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup> Franklin Steves states that the number of total fatalities in both sides ranged 100,000. Steves, F. 2003. 'Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia- Eritrea Conflict'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16: 119- 133. Moreover, a World Bank Report for the Ethiopia Demobilization and Reintegration Project, of May 6, 2003, estimated that the number of beneficiaries included 68,000 families of deceased soldiers. World Bank Report no. AC109, 6.05.2003. World Bank 16 May 2002. 'Emergency Demobilization & Reintegration: Eritrea (P07360460)'. World Bank, <http://go.worldbank.org/9G5BT9KOO0.>; Amanuel Mehreteab 2002. 'Veteran combatants do not fade away: a comparative study on two demobilization and reintegration exercises in Eritrea'. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion.

<sup>5</sup> The stated number on the Eritrean side was 19,000 casualties. Amanuel Mehreteab 2001. 'Renewed Demobilization in Eritrea'. *Bulletin of the Bonn International Center for Conversion* 21, p. 2.

Eritrea after the 1998- 2000 war had as targets 150,000 and 200,000 soldiers respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The total number of displaced civilians was 600,000.<sup>7</sup> In addition, 75,000 Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin were expelled from Ethiopia.<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of the overthrow of the *Derg* regime, Eritrea had expelled 120,000 Ethiopian citizens involved in the army and the administration of the former province.<sup>9</sup>

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of what caused the war. The chapter draws upon the multiple contributions produced during the armed conflict and in its aftermath.

The chapter will argue that the border dispute was the central bone of contention. The analysis of the origins of the war, in this chapter, treats separately what triggered the conflict, and its causes. The chapter will proceed to analyse the background conditions to the conflict through the analysis of the socio-economic dimensions, political and military, and, finally, the territorial dimension.

The section on territory, firstly, examines the states' diverging trajectories and the ruling parties' conceptions of statehood, nationhood and of boundary maintenance in post- 1991 Ethiopia and Eritrea. The section closes with the analysis of the conceptions and practices of borderland communities directly affected by the secession of Eritrea and ends with a brief analysis of the contending visions of the Ethiopian homeland, after Eritrea's independence.

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<sup>6</sup> Adding the number of soldiers target for demobilization to total casualties one might estimate that the total number of troops reached 500,000. This number is the one advanced by Steves. Steves, 2003, op.cit., p. 119. According to Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll the number of troops involved 350,000 men and women in the Eritrean side and 450,000 men in the Ethiopian side. Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, 2000, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Steves, 2003, op.cit., p.119.

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch January 2003. 'The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue (June 1998- April 2002)'. vol.15, No.3 (A): HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ethioerit0103/ethioerit0103.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Gilkes, P., and, Plaut, Martin 1999. *War in the Horn: The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia: The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, p. 11.

The current stalemate around the delimitation and demarcation of the border reflects that both the causes of the war and that which kept it going were related in complex ways to territory.

## 2.2 Overview of the studies

As a general rule, the initial studies approached the economic, historical and political dimensions to identify the factors that could best explain the ‘grievances’<sup>10</sup> between the dominant factions within the national governments. The intensity of violence caused bewilderment both within Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the respective diasporas, and in the circle of Ethiopianists, Africanists and journalists, who reported from the frontline. Addis Ababa immediately prevented any journalists from having access to the frontline. Asmara, in line with the EPLF’s practice during the thirty-year civil war, facilitated the access of correspondents to the frontline. A key question emerged: how could two of the poorest countries in the world engage forcefully to settle a border dispute over a barren strip of land in the remote periphery of the states.

Some studies took the form of factual accounts to assess what happened; when, where, why and how the border dispute had escalated into conventional warfare. As discussed in chapter 1, contrary to what a strand of International Relations mainstream literature on the causation of inter-state warfare in relation to territory claims,<sup>11</sup> the literature on the case-study and the media coverage challenged the significance of territory as an underlying cause of the war.<sup>12</sup> The present chapter

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<sup>10</sup> According to the contributions of several authors that point to the prevalence of greed as the main causal explanation for contemporary armed conflicts, the evidence collected on the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea seems to suggest that elements of greed played a role in the outbreak of hostilities. Indeed, greed contributed largely to the increased rivalry between the ruling parties. Berdal, M., and David M. Malone 2000. ‘Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars’. Boulder and London: IDRC/ Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>11</sup> The central aim of the study is to test this explanation and the extent to which the evidence to collect will allow us to plausibly take in the post-Cold War era: ‘territorial disputes as an underlying cause of war.’ Vasquez, J. 1993. *The War Puzzle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 7. The relationship between territory and the causation of both past and contemporary armed conflicts is discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Abbink, J. 1998. ‘Briefing: The Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Dispute’. *African Affairs* 97: pp. 551-565. Tronvoll, K. 2004. ‘From war to peace - and back to war again? The failure of OAU/UN to create sustainable peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia’ in Sørbo, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa’s Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

(and the remainder of the dissertation) will analyse the role of territory in understanding this particular war.

The focus on the causes, conduct and/or outcomes varied according to the dates of publication and to its remoteness in relation to the conflict.<sup>13</sup>

In different proportions these studies continued to analyse the economic, historical and political dimensions of the conflict. However, within the historical dimension the process of nation building became a central theme. Within this mode of inquiry two accounts prevailed: 1) the extent to which the question of the definition of the national identity was linked to the diametrically opposed views adopted by the two states<sup>14</sup> after 1991 and 2) the importance of the legacy of the Italian colonization of Eritrea<sup>15</sup> and of its failed attempt to colonize Ethiopia.<sup>16</sup> Guazzini's early contribution to the understanding of the war stands out because it was among the first to elucidate the political and symbolic influence of the boundary for the consolidation of Eritreans' national identity.<sup>17</sup>

Besides the connection between the challenges of possession of statehood and nationhood, the history of the relations between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) became a cornerstone theme. Several studies tended to stress the continuity of informal relations between the ruling parties in post-1991 Ethiopia and Eritrea. The proximity between the former leadership of the insurgent movements implied a lack of institutionalisation that the context of statehood had required.<sup>18</sup> The regional level was added as many

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<sup>13</sup> The list in Appendix 1 provides a selection of scholarly contributions produced during the armed conflict and in its aftermath.

<sup>14</sup> The Ethiopian constitutional model implied restructuring the administrative subdivisions of the country on an explicitly ethnic principle. Ultimately the Constitution recognized the right to self-determination, including a right to secession. The EPRDF/TPLF divided Ethiopia into nine regions according to the major sub-nationalities or ethnic groups. The Eritrean government followed the opposite path by creating six administrative regions (zoba) that cut across ethnic and religious cleavages.

<sup>15</sup> Eritrean Studies Review 1999. 'Eritrea & Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation to Conflict'. *Eritrean Studies Review, Special Issue 3*.

<sup>16</sup> Triulzi, A. Janeiro/ Julho 2002. 'Violence and the acknowledgement of tense past in the Horn : a note on the Ethio- Eritrean War (1998-2000)'. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 2: 91- 102. This will be further discussed in chapter 3 on the analysis of the historical and symbolic dimensions of territory.

<sup>17</sup> Guazzini, F. 1999. 'La Geografia Variabile del Confine Eritreo- Etiopico tra Passato e Presente'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l' Africa e l' Oriente* LIV: 309-348.

<sup>18</sup> Iyob, 2000, op. cit.

authors stressed that the war aimed to guarantee political influence and hegemony in the Horn of Africa,<sup>19</sup> a perception shared by the warring parties.

Another strand of the literature emphasised the central role of warfare in the process of state and nation formation. On the one hand, some authors argued that in this sense the war had benefited both parties.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, scholars concluded that the results remained extremely fragile and not very persuasive with respect to the hypothesis that war has got a capacity to build nations and states.<sup>21</sup> Chapter 5 will focus exclusively on the relationship between war and state making (and re-making) and national identity formation and consolidation.

Several authors and internal observers depicted the war as a war between 'Brothers'. These accounts suggested that the war only concerned the Tigrinya-speaking factions within the EPRDF and within the PFDJ. But was the war only between the two Tigrinya-speaking communities at the helm of the state in the two countries? Eritrea's independence had formally changed the nature of the relations not only between the political authorities but also between the communities in the borderlands.<sup>22</sup> However, as the war unfolded it became clear that relations had changed fundamentally<sup>23</sup> not only between the two communities divided by the border, but also between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This question in turn leads to an examination of the current classifications of this particular war.

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<sup>19</sup> ibid., Kornprobst, M. 2002. 'The Management of border disputes in African regional sub-systems: comparing West Africa and the Horn of Africa'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40: 369-393.

<sup>20</sup> Stylian, D. mars 2000. 'Chroniques de la Guerre Érythréo- Éthiopienne'. *Politique Africaine* 77: 183-191 ; Pausewang, S., Tronvoll, Kjetil, Lovise Aalen 2002. 'Ethiopia since the Derg: A Decade of Democratic Pretension and Performance'. London & N.Y: Zed Books; de Waal, A. 2000. 'Wars in Africa' in Kaldor, M. (ed.) *Global Insecurity: Restructuring the Global Military Sector, Vol III*, London and New York: Pinter, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Clapham, C. 2000. 'War and State Formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Paper presented at the colloquium ' La guerre entre le local et le global', Paris, Centre d' Études et de Recherches Internationales, 29- 30 May 2000', p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, D. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, footnote 18, p. 84.

<sup>23</sup> Tekeste Negash and Kjetill Tronvoll, 2000, op. cit., p. 94.

The debate on whether the war was an inter-state or intra-state war can only be partially understood without reference to current debates on the transformation of warfare.<sup>24</sup>

Alex de Waal argues that ‘(...) the war is anything but anarchic or ‘new’: it is redolent of 19<sup>th</sup> century European wars during the age of emergent nationalism’.<sup>25</sup>

Shaw classifies the Ethio- Eritrean Conflict as an orthodox inter-state/ regime conflict.<sup>26</sup> However, Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll although classifying the war as inter- state, contended that the war displayed characteristics of a civil war.<sup>27</sup> In a similar vein Leenco Lata claims that the war ‘can perhaps best be described as inter- state war that is strikingly similar to intra-state conflict’.<sup>28</sup>

The present study argues that this is an inter-state war. Few other cases of contemporary armed conflict lend themselves to such a straightforward classification.

The distinction between inter-state and intra-state war in the post-Cold War era still holds its accuracy. The analysis in this chapter is based upon this premise. However, by acknowledging the distinction between inter-state and intra- state war one should not dismiss the importance of considering domestic causes and regional implications of the inter-state war; as the complexities of the dynamics of this particular war show.

### **2.3 On the crisis that triggered the conflict**

When the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea escalated into conventional warfare the event was received with shock. Abbink promptly claimed that :‘(...) the eruption of

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<sup>24</sup> Chapter 1 discusses the transformation of warfare and the major patterns of contemporary armed conflicts.

<sup>25</sup> de Waal, 2000, op.cit., p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> Shaw, T. 2003. ‘Regional Dimensions of Conflict and Peace- Building in Contemporary Africa’. *Journal of International Development* 15, p. 488.

<sup>27</sup> Tekeste Negash and Kjetill Tronvoll, op.cit., p. 94.

<sup>28</sup> Leenco Lata 2003. ‘The Ethiopia- Eritrea War’. *Review of African Political Economy* 97, p. 374.

violent conflict in the Ethiopian-Eritrean dispute is neither unexpected nor the result of a real border dispute'.<sup>29</sup>

However, one has to distinguish between what caused and what triggered the conflict. Although the sources for potential armed conflict were all present, the war was not inevitable. The occurrence of the border incident *per se* was unlikely to be sufficient to cause the escalation of the crisis on its own. Indeed, the way the two governments handled the increasing tension and rivalry between the ruling parties, at both the central state and regional state levels, determined the course of events.

Four events can be pinpointed as having had immediate consequences for the outbreak of hostilities. These incidents were related to the boundaries' question and to the ambiguities with regard to the territorial jurisdictions of the states since Eritrea's independence. The first incident occurred in July-August 1997 and was related to the movement of Ethiopia's armed forces within Eritrea's territory. The second was related to Tigray's Regional administrative map, which included large swathes of Eritrean territory. The third one, in the same year, was the introduction of a new Eritrean currency, which heightened ongoing economic disputes over trade and increased exponentially the saliency of the border. The final incident occurred on May 6 1998 and precipitated the escalation of the crisis.

In the first incident, in July 1997 an armed TPLF/EPRDF unit requested access to Eritrean areas inhabited by the Afar, pursuing a non-state armed group called the *Ugugumo*. The forces went as far as Adi Murug, in the Bada area,<sup>30</sup> but the precedent, although handled in cordial terms, had been set. Eritrea's President wrote directly to Ethiopia's Prime Minister to protest against the occupation of Adi Murug.<sup>31</sup> This event acquires particular significance for three reasons: 1) it is referred to in the first framework for an Agreement between the two parties;<sup>32</sup> 2) the hot

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<sup>29</sup>Abbink, 1998, op.cit., p. 552.

<sup>30</sup>Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 665.

<sup>31</sup>ibid., p. 665.

<sup>32</sup>The Framework Agreement only mentions the July August 1997 incidents over the administration of Adi Murug. Indeed, the precise circumstances of this incident remain unclear. While Iyob refers to Ethiopia's hot pursuit mission of the *Ugugumo*, Peninou relates this incident to the ARDUF. Gilkes and Plaut allude to the Ethiopian pursuit mission of an Afar opposition movement. Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 21. Gilkes and Plaut, 1999, op.cit. Péninou, J.-L. 1998. 'The Ethiopian-Eritrean Border Conflict'.

pursuit mission of a domestic insurgency across state borders and the dismantlement of the Eritrean administration to replace it by Ethiopia's state officials set a precedent and contributed to increasing suspicion between the two leaderships and, finally, 3) in its aftermath the ruling parties decided to set up the long overdue Joint Border Commission to handle the ambiguities between the Treaties' borderline and the *de facto* openness of the border over the past century.

In the second instance, the Eritrean government accused Tigray's regional administration in Mekele of being responsible for the outbreak of hostilities. According to the Eritrean government, Tigray's regional administration issued a map in which the boundaries between the two countries had been modified without prior notification. The Regional Administration dismissed this claim. Similarly to other cases of domestic border tension between the new regions within Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Federal state did not intervene. The matter was handled by the regional authorities and the neighbouring state.

The introduction of the Eritrean currency exacerbated and brought to the fore the growing rift between the ruling parties with regard to trade between the two countries, and especially between Eritrea and the Ethiopian Northern Region of Tigray.

Finally, the immediate precipitant of conflict occurred in May 1998, when an armed Eritrean patrol, within what it regarded as Eritrean territory, was fired on and four of its members killed by Tigrayan forces.<sup>33</sup>

Several external observers tend to argue that the war was caused by an ill-considered Eritrean reaction to provocation by local officials on the Ethiopian side of the border, and then escalated beyond the capacity of either government to control.<sup>34</sup>

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*Boundary and Security Bulletin/ International Boundaries Research Unit 6*, p.50. This will be further discussed in section 2.4.3.

<sup>33</sup> Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 663.

<sup>34</sup> Clapham, 2000, op.cit., p.13. Alex de Wall points in the same direction: Although each side accused the other of having prepared for a major war, the evidence points to mutual miscalculation being the major reason for the descent into armed conflict, de Waal, 2000, op.cit., p. 12.

As the incidents that triggered the escalation of the crisis show, in all four instances the bone of contention was tied to boundaries' delimitation, demarcation and/or maintenance. The second part of the chapter integrates the four incidents within the analysis of the various dimensions of the causes of the war.

## 2.4 The causes of the 1998-2000 War

### 2.4.1 Economic and social dimensions

With Eritrea's independence, Ethiopia became the only landlocked country in the Horn of Africa.

The EPRDF/TPLF promptly recognized Eritrea's independence, but in exchange free access to the Eritrean Assab port was granted to Ethiopia. In addition to this significant agreement, the free movement of people and goods between the two states was maintained, as well as the common currency. However, the Ethiopian government failed to put in place specific criteria for Ethiopians of Eritrean origin residing in Ethiopia. As a consequence, those who decided to remain in Ethiopia after Eritrea's independence enjoyed dual citizenship.<sup>35</sup> Following from the ambiguities surrounding the acquisition of Eritrean citizenship for those Ethiopian citizens of Eritrean origin, this group's status became open to contention.<sup>36</sup> According to several voices in Addis Ababa, this set of provisions established an important exceptional and, indeed, privileged treatment of Eritrea and its citizens as compared to relations between Ethiopia and citizens from other neighbouring countries.<sup>37</sup>

This chapter argues that the measures agreed between the transition governments benefited both states, particularly members of the ruling parties in both countries and those segments involved in formal and informal economic relations.

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<sup>35</sup> This was quite an exceptional situation as the Ethiopian state's practice historically was to recognize only a single nationality. Chapter 4 discusses the principles of citizenship in further detail.

<sup>36</sup> As Styan notes the Ethiopian government between 1993 and 1998 overlooked the legal and economic identity and status of Ethiopians of Eritrean origin and did not put in place criteria to regularize their investments in Ethiopia. Styan, D. 2005. 'Twisting Ethio-Eritrean Economic Ties: Misperceptions of War and the Misplaced priorities of Peace, 1997-2002' in Jacquin-Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 194. The rules governing citizenship acquired serious economic implications for this group of citizens once the war started, as chapter 3 will discuss.

This section will first look into the economic and social dimensions of the relations between the two states and the ruling parties, as well as to groups within society that benefited from the end of the insurgency in Northern Ethiopia and in Eritrea. This section covers mainly the economic and social relations between the ruling parties between 1991 and 1998. However, if one fails to analyse the post- 1991 relations between the ruling parties without reference to the preceding period its evolution will only be partially understood. The relations between the insurgent movements can be understood in light of their relations while strategically united in their aim to overthrow the *Derg*.

The section will look into three key aspects of the economic and social relations between the states in the post-1991 context: 1) the access to the port via the Assab-Awash- Addis Ababa corridor; 2) the introduction of the Eritrean currency and the arrangements on cross- border trade and, finally, 3) the social implications of these economic changes.

### **The access to the port via the Assab-Awash-Addis Ababa corridor**

Both borderland communities, urban and diaspora groups were suspicious of the ruling party in Addis Ababa over the loss of access to the sea in the aftermath of Eritrea's independence. However, until 1997 the arrangement of free access to the port service and the transit of goods to Ethiopia seemed to minimize Ethiopia's new status as a landlocked country.<sup>38</sup>

In different proportions, Ethiopia's new status benefited contiguous coastal neighbours, namely Eritrea, Djibouti and to a lesser extent Somaliland. However, in the post-1991 context, the Assab route remained Ethiopia's main corridor to the sea.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview, Addis Ababa, July 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Transit and Ports Services Agreement between the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea. September 27, 1993 in Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission 19 Dec., 2005. 'Final Award - Ports - Ethiopia's Claim 6 between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea': The Hague, p. 3.

Prior to 1974, 60 per cent of Ethiopia's foreign trade transited via the port of Djibouti. However, in the aftermath of the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia, the *Derg* avoided this route because of increased insecurity generated by domestic insurgent movements operating in the Somali, Afar and Oromo areas, which overlapped with the Djibouti corridor. During this period Assab held 90 per cent of the total share of Ethiopia's import and export traffic, while the remaining 10 per cent was channelled via the Djibouti port.<sup>39</sup>

The overthrow of the *Derg*, which brought to an end the insurgency in the North, contributed to the exponential growth of the traffic along the Addis Ababa-Assab corridor. During the civil war, although relations between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Afar Liberation Front (ALF) were generally tense,<sup>40</sup> the insurgent movements carried joint ambushes to the Ethiopian army along the stretch of the road, which runs through Afar territory.<sup>41</sup>

The share of traffic along the corridor grew from 700,000 tonnes in 1991 to over 2.7 million tonnes in 1995. This growth signified an increase of 400 per cent in a five-year period. The return truck journeys increased from 15,000 in 1991 to 45,000 in 1995. At this point, the transit of goods from the port of Assab to Ethiopia, accounted for 90 per cent of imports and over 50 per cent of exports.<sup>42</sup> In 1997 exports from Eritrea to Ethiopia were 63 per cent of total exports in goods. Non tax-revenues rose nearly to 23 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1997, almost half of which came from charges to Massawa, and especially from the Assab port service granted to Ethiopia.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Anonymous 2005. 'Positive Neutrality: Djibouti' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 171.

<sup>40</sup> John Young concludes that the most difficult area for the TPLF within the Tigray province was south-eastern Tigray, especially the Afar inhabited areas. Young, J. 1997. *Peasant revolution in Ethiopia : the Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 170.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>42</sup> Cabanius, P. 23-27 June 2003. 'Improvement of Transit Systems in the Horn of Africa, Sixth Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions'. New York UNCTAD, <http://www.unctad.org/templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3633&lang=1>, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank/ International Finance Corporation, Africa Regional Programme on Enterprise Development : Pilot Investment Climate Assessment' Obstacles to the Expansion of Eritrea's Manufacturing Sector' Final Report, December 2002.

Retrievable 16/03/04 <http://www1.worldbank.org/rped/> , pp . 6-7.

It seems that with Eritrea's independence Ethiopia did not consider alternative routes to Assab. The evidence suggests that Ethiopia's ruling party favoured the maintenance of the majority of freight movements via the Eritrean port of Assab. Questions related to the pitfalls of over-dependency upon one port were not perceived as a hindrance to Ethiopia's foreign trade relations.<sup>44</sup>

With regard to geographical distance from the Ethiopian capital, Assab retained the comparative advantage of geographical proximity: it is located 882 kilometres from the Ethiopian capital. The second best option was the Djibouti port, 910 kilometres from Addis Ababa, followed by the Berbera port (Somaliland) which is located 964 kilometres east of Addis Ababa. The Bossaso port (Puntland) is the fourth option with regard to geographical proximity. Port Sudan (Sudan) is located 1881 km from Addis Ababa and Mombassa is 2077 kilometres from Addis.<sup>45</sup> In addition, the arrangements between the two ruling parties reinforced the advantages of the Assab transit route.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea, other ports in the region were still able to benefit from the movement of Ethiopia's cargo. During this period Ethiopia used the Djibouti and Berbera corridors as additional routes to the Assab one. While the Assab route's traffic to and from Ethiopia reached 2,7 million tonnes in 1995, the Djibouti route had a share of 1,7 million tonnes of additional Ethiopian freight movement.<sup>46</sup> By 1997, Ethiopia accounted for 65 per cent of the trade shipped through Berbera, and 60 per cent of the exports through the Somaliland port were from Ethiopia;<sup>47</sup> but the question of finding an alternative to Assab was raised just after the Badme incidents.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> As the chapter 4 will discuss only with the outbreak of hostilities and in the aftermath of the war did Ethiopia implement measures to address the pitfalls of exclusive dependency on one route and port for foreign trade.

<sup>45</sup> The Reporter (Addis Ababa) Jan 21, 2006. 'Ethiopia's Search for a Port'. [http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article\\_2006\\_01\\_21\\_3058.html](http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article_2006_01_21_3058.html).

<sup>46</sup> Cabanius, 2003, op.cit., pp. 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Yusuf Abdi Gabobe July 27, 2002. 'Editorial: Somaliland: Transit Shipment Corridor To Ethiopia?' *The Somaliland Times*. <http://www.somalilandtimes.net/Archive/Archive/00002800.htm>.

<sup>48</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission 2005, op. cit., p. 4 While Ethiopia accused Eritrea of having closed the border on May 22 1998, Eritrea resented the former decision to divert all shipments to the Djibouti port and to cancel all Ethiopian Airlines flights to the city-port.

Eritrea's port service to Ethiopia remained the most competitive in the region. The second section will show the extent to which Eritrea's manufactured goods were mainly geared towards the Ethiopian market. Indeed, prior to the war, Ethiopia's dependency on Eritrea for access to the sea for its foreign trade was paralleled by Eritrea's industry dependency on the Ethiopian market, especially the Northern Region of Ethiopia: Tigray.

### **The introduction of the Eritrean currency and the arrangements on cross-border trade**

Eritrea's independence reconfigured formally the relations between the two countries. The implications of Eritrea's secession for Ethiopia went beyond the loss of access to the sea. This part will seek to understand the implications of two sets of changes in the economic policies of both states: i) the introduction of the new currency by Eritrea and the new currency exchange mechanisms required by Ethiopia ii) the changes in cross- border trade introduced by the Ethiopian government. These changes had implications for the relations between the two states at the national and regional level. At the regional level, the new cross-border trade procedures impacted mainly upon Eritrea, the contiguous Northern Ethiopian Region of Tigray, and the borderland communities in both states.

In 1997, the dual exchange rate was unified, and the Bank of Eritrea was established. This was also the year when the new currency, the Eritrean Nakfa (ERN) was introduced, on par with the Ethiopian Birr (ETB). This was done with the expectation that the rate of parity between currencies would be kept. The Ethiopian government declined the proposal and instead insisted that the transactions should be carried in hard currency, in Letters of Credit. After the disagreement, Ethiopia issued new Ethiopian Birr notes creating resentment among its counterpart. As Herbst argues, currency exchange mechanisms (i.e. the definition of the means of conversion between domestic and international units of money) should be understood as part of the boundary politics of the state.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 24-25.

With the introduction of the *Nakfa*, Ethiopia's government demanded that all cross- border trade should be carried in Letters of Credit with the exception of trade below 2000 ETB or approximately US\$ 233, i.e., petty border trade.<sup>50</sup> In response to Ethiopia's distinction between petty and major trade, Eritrea's government reiterated that its policy of economic liberalisation implied openness to trade with foreign countries, Ethiopia included. The costs of implementing the mechanisms required by the Ethiopian government would be a hindrance to trade relations. The Director of the Eritrean Bank further argued that the distinction between petty and major cross-border trade and the conduct of foreign trade relations in hard currency would encourage the smuggling of goods across the border.<sup>51</sup> The disagreement over the new trade policy pointed to a similar problem faced in the ex- Soviet Republics in the aftermath of the Cold War. This shift of policy and the subsequent disagreements mirror '(...) the practical difficulties involved in disentangling the infrastructure of previously integrated state economies'.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the disagreements on the modalities of implementation of the new Eritrean currency, the Eritrean government went about this measure to assert its national economy's autonomy *vis-à-vis* Ethiopia.

The consequences with regard to price fluctuations were immediately felt. Basic commodity prices, such as salt exported from Eritrea and *teff* exported from Ethiopia, immediately increased.

But perhaps more significantly to the economic exchange between the two countries was the new requirement on trade above the 2000 ETB threshold. Eritrea's industrial sector had been oriented towards the Ethiopian market since its inception. Moreover, Ethiopia's new trade policy with Eritrea was discriminatory. The trade regimes governing the relations of Ethiopia with other contiguous neighbouring states, namely Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya were not submitted to similar requirements.

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<sup>50</sup>Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, 2000, op. cit., p. 36; Iyob, 2000, op. cit.; Tekie Fessehatzion 2002. *Shattered Illusion, Broken Promise: Essays on the Eritrea- Ethiopia Conflict (1998- 2000)*. Lawrenceville & Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup>Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, op.cit., p. 36.

Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll claim that the ‘(...) new trade policy created a barrier between the two countries that had never existed before’.<sup>53</sup>

In 1995 manufactured commodities exports to Ethiopia accounted for 76 per cent of manufactured goods exports,<sup>54</sup> while only 6 per cent of Eritrea’s imports originated from Ethiopia. However, food imports from Ethiopia were still significant, accounting for 21 per cent of the total. Eritrea’s export sector was critically dependent on Ethiopia. Eritrea’s trade surplus with Ethiopia represented a key part of Eritrea’s balance of payment profile.<sup>55</sup> In Eritrea, industry accounted for 27 per cent of GDP, while agriculture accounted for 16 per cent. The new trade policy disrupted the flow of manufactured goods to Eritrea’s industry primary market. As Styan notes:

There were credible expectations that Eritrea’s industrial base, integrated to its natural markets in northern Ethiopia and eastern Sudan, would provide a foundation of post- 1991 Eritrean economy.<sup>56</sup>

In cross- border trade, as in other areas, the diametrically opposing paths followed by the leaderships with regard to policy making compromised their bi-lateral relations. Indeed, while Eritrea followed an export-oriented growth strategy for development, with Ethiopia as the key market of destination for its exports, Ethiopia seemed to have favoured an import substitution strategy to protect its Northern Region’s nascent industries from Eritrean competition.

While this new set of procedures governing the economic and social relations between the two states was decided in Addis Ababa and Asmara, the Ethiopian regional authorities were left with the daunting task of its implementation. As with the internal re-drawing of Ethiopia’s domestic boundaries the government in Addis Ababa designed the policies evaluating poorly the implementation constraints at the regional level.

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<sup>52</sup> Mayall, J. Spring 1992. ‘Nationalism and international security after the Cold War’. *Survival: The International Institute for Strategic Studies Quarterly*, p. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, 2000, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> Mainly textiles, footwear and beverages. Styan, 2005, op.cit., p. 188.

<sup>55</sup> ibid., p. 188.

<sup>56</sup> ibid., p. 189.

As the analysis of the relations between the party-owned companies will show the discriminatory trade policy towards Eritrea, contrary to accusations of TPLF favouritism of Eritreans in Ethiopia, mirrored the ruling party's underlying policy of protecting not only Tigray's nascent industries from Eritrea's competition, but other sectors of economic activity.

The rivalry between party-owned companies had increased before the introduction of Eritrea's own currency. The rivalry was most noticed in Western Tigray. This rivalry over access to the market escalated in the Humera area, which was incorporated in Tigray's province after the redrawing of regional boundaries in 1995.<sup>57</sup>

The Red Sea Corporation was operating in Humera, along with the Guna Trading Company, among other traders from different parts of the country. Their commercial aim in the area was to buy agricultural products, mainly grain produced by post- 1991 resettled returnee households.

The Red Sea Corporation was a trading company owned by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice.<sup>58</sup> According to Young, the Guna Trading Company was one of the Endowment Fund for the Rehabilitation of Tigray's (EFFORT) most important holdings. The Companies owned by EFFORT operated as private enterprises. However, as EFFORT was predominantly managed by senior TPLF members, the Guna Trading Company was, indeed, owned by TPLF members. The thirty-two directors of EFFORT were elected by the TPLF's functional mass associations, and the Fund was managed by seven sitting members from the TPLF's Central Committee upon its creation in mid- 1995. Quite significantly, Siye Abraha, member of the EPRDF Politburo and former Minister of Defence was the Chairman

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<sup>57</sup> Criticism over the incorporation of territory from other regions into Region 1 (Tigray), namely from Gondar and Wollo has increased dissension towards the Ethnic based Federal Model. Humera was one of the incorporated districts from Gondar (the other were: Tselemt; Welkait; Tsegade). The incorporated districts from Wollo were: Raya Azebo; Alamata; Ofla. The Ethiopian People's Patriotic Front (keffagne) emerged as an underground movement for the liberation of Humera/ Tselemt/ Welkait/ Tsegade. Tilahun Yilma January 1996 'Ethiopia should secede from the Provinces of Tigray and Eritrea'. *Ethiopian Review* 3.

<sup>58</sup> Kassahun Berhanu 2000. *Returnees, Resettlement and Power Relations: The making of a political constituency in Humera, Ethiopia*. Amsterdam: VU University Press, p. 186.

of EFFORT. Other Directors with senior positions within the TPLF were appointed as Chairmen of enterprises overseen by the Fund.<sup>59</sup> EFFORT also assumed the responsibility for overseeing most of the existing companies, predominantly in the field of transportation.<sup>60</sup>

Prior to 1997, Young had already noted the increasing rivalry between companies owned by the PFDJ/EPLF and by the TPLF. As the author remarked:

Concerns have inevitably been raised about future government and party plans for the economy, as well as the likelihood that conflicts may arise between EPLF-owned companies that are also operating in Ethiopia.<sup>61</sup>

Kassahun Berhanu's research in the Humera area (western Tigray Region) provides substantive evidence on the increasing rivalry between PFDJ and TPLF owned companies involved in trade. As of 1996 the Guna Trading Corporation had managed to secure a *de facto* monopoly of the agricultural local market. The Rea Sea Trading Corporation had been hampered from operating in the area through a succession of administrative requirements. Kassahun Berhanu's interviewees claimed that disagreements over the conduct of trade and of Eritrea's access to the Ethiopian northern market had created tensions between the operators of the Red Sea Trading Corporation and the regional authorities in 1995-1996.<sup>62</sup> According to Kassahun:

It was reported by the local people that loaded trucks owned by the Red Sea Corporation remained stranded in Humera for several days by order of the regional government demanding that the Corporation could take its merchandise to Eritrea after fulfilling a host of requirements like making the items ready for export by attaching labels to the packages indicating the items were produced in Ethiopia. (...) It was alleged that this conditionality was not made known to the Corporation when it came to Humera to undertake the purchase of farm products. As of 1996, the Firm did not appear in the Humera market again.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Young, J. 1997. *Peasant revolution in Ethiopia : the Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 88.

<sup>60</sup>ibid., p. 88.

<sup>61</sup>ibid., p. 86.

<sup>62</sup>Kassahun Berhanu, 2000, op.cit., footnote 159, pp. 187-88.

<sup>63</sup>ibid., footnote 159, pp. 187-88.

Young suggests that EFFORT's operations reached far beyond Tigray.<sup>64</sup> It is plausible to consider the extent of the involvement of party-owned companies in the transport of goods and other commodities along the Addis Ababa-Assab corridor prior to the outbreak of hostilities. As a future area of research, it would be interesting to understand whether the participation of the two ruling parties-owned companies in the transport sector was extended to this corridor and whether it led to similar rivalry.

Another economic question related to foreign trade was the polemic around coffee export. According to Ethiopian sources, the problem emerged due to the exportation of Ethiopian coffee with Eritrean labels to the US.<sup>65</sup> However, Eritrea dismissed the allegation and there is no substantive evidence available to confirm the Ethiopian position.

Ultimately, the rivalry between party-owned companies raised the stakes of the disagreement over foreign trade arrangements between Asmara and Addis Ababa.

Eritrea's expectation of parity between currencies, Ethiopia's refusal of this proposal and its requirement of distinguishing between petty and major trade can perhaps be understood as policies germane to what were best known as 'beggar-your-neighbour policies' during the Great Depression years in Europe.<sup>66</sup> Mayall argues that 'the competitive economic nationalism of the 1930s contributed to the European crisis and to the drift towards war'.<sup>67</sup> The changes on the economic arrangements between Ethiopia and Eritrea's governments can be best understood as a manifestation of competitive economic nationalism.

### **The socio-economic implications for borderland communities**

Eritrea's status as an Italian colony attracted migrant labour from the Tigray Province. Eritrea later became the commercial and financial centre of the Italian East African Empire. During this period Eritrea had far more industrial and commercial firms than

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<sup>64</sup> Young, 1997, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>65</sup> Jenny Hammond, The Eritrea/Ethiopia border issue: report on a recent visit. Paper presented at the North East Africa Seminar, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Oxford, 13/02/04.

<sup>66</sup> Mayall, 1992, op.cit., p. 28.

<sup>67</sup> ibid., pp. 28-29.

the Ethiopian provinces or Italy's Somalia colony.<sup>68</sup> This meant that opportunities beyond the traditional sector of agriculture were available to an extent lacking in Ethiopia. For most of the twentieth century, the Tigrayan peasants had migrated North (to Eritrea and especially to the capital, Asmara) when in need of supplementary income.<sup>69</sup> Quite significantly, neither the incorporation of Eritrea as an Ethiopian province, nor the civil war or Eritrea's independence had disrupted this practice.

The outbreak of hostilities in 1998 and the subsequent closure of the border dramatically changed the most convenient destination for migrant labour from the Ethiopian Northern region of Tigray, as will be further discussed in chapter 4.

The Afar used to straddle the border in search of pasture, water and access to markets. The contiguity with both Eritrea and Djibouti and the relations with kin across borders meant that the Afar would search for buyers for their cattle and livestock regardless of the border. Indeed, during the civil war against the *Derg* the Afar were treated forcefully and with suspicion by the Ethiopian state because of their long-standing trade in cattle with the Eritreans.<sup>70</sup> This practice was continued in the aftermath of Eritrea's independence. Despite the grievances generated by the loss of Assab and other stretches of land within traditional Afar's territory, the Afar continued to cross into Eritrea, for access to markets and as a transit point on their way to markets in Djibouti.<sup>71</sup> The two-year war and the closure of the border disrupted the economic livelihood of the Afar borderland communities.

In guise of conclusion to this section, the analysis of the economic and social dimensions suggests that the functional cooperation agreed between the transition

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<sup>68</sup> Between 1935 and 1941, when Italy invaded and occupied Ethiopia, although Addis Ababa was the capital of the Italian East African Empire, Eritrea remained the main commercial and economic centre. Indeed, by 1940, 54,8 per cent of the industrial firms of the Italian Empire were located in Eritrea, while 30,6 per cent were located in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces ('Shewa, Harar, Amara and Oromo & Sidamo') and the remaining 14,6 per cent were located in the Somalia's Italian colony. With regard to commercial firms Eritrea's economic prominence within the Italian East African Empire is again undisputable: 56,2 per cent of the firms were located in Eritrea, with 30 per cent in the remaining Ethiopian Provinces and 13,8 per cent in Somalia. Bearing in mind the population proportions in each of the Provinces of the Italian East African Empire, Eritrea's privileged economic status within the Empire is indeed very significant. Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll, 2000, op.cit., p. 41.

<sup>69</sup> Young, 1997, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>71</sup> Philpott, J., ; Asnake Abera, ; Kassaye Hadgu, February 2005. 'Livelihoods/ Emergency Assessment in Afar Region'. Oxfam GB: Oxfam International.

governments in the aftermath of Eritrea's secession failed. With hindsight, the maintenance of the earlier path of cooperation could have sustained the consolidation of the necessary economic buffer mechanisms against the more militant forms of nationalism upon which the governments embarked. The disagreements over economic policies and arrangements on trade contributed to the crisis and to the drift towards war.

As the section on the economic and social dimensions has shown, the manifold problems of disentangling the previously integrated economies, coupled with the disagreements over the economic arrangements agreed immediately after Eritrea's secession, led to the heightening of rivalry and competing economic national orientations. The economic dispute concerning foreign trade between Ethiopia and Eritrea antedated the introduction of the Eritrean currency. However, the failure to agree on the exchange rate exacerbated the increasing rivalry between the ruling parties and increased the saliency of the border between the two countries.

In conclusion, as Clapham reminds us:

In states which derived a high proportion of their income from customs duties, and from state manipulation of markets for agricultural produce, control over the boundaries was essential to provide the financial underpinnings of the state itself; the creation of national currencies, through which governments sought to establish their control over domestic economic transactions, can in turn be seen as a form of boundary maintenance.<sup>72</sup>

Quite significantly, since 1997 and in the aftermath of the war most analysts failed to acknowledge Eritrea's introduction of its own national currency as a mechanism of boundary delimitation. After the drift in the bilateral economic relations any incident on the border gained a saliency, which had been absent before. Perhaps, the Adi Murug incident did not lead to an escalation of the crisis because the element of rivalry at the time was not as pronounced as in 1998, when the incident in Badme occurred.

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<sup>72</sup> Clapham, C. 1999. 'Boundaries and States in the New African Order' in Bach, D.C. (ed.) *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Desintegration*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 55.

## 2.4.2 Political and military dimensions

### Political

The secession of Eritrea and the transition period ran smoothly and were advantageous to the ruling parties.

The nature of the post-insurgent states was conditioned by the different legitimacy enjoyed by the movements which had led the insurgency against the *Derg*. According to Clapham, the EPLF constituted a classical example of a secession insurgency, while the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (which descended from the regional Tigray People's Liberation Front) was a reform insurgency. Although ideologically and militarily these were different movements 'in none did the government concede power to the opposition'.<sup>73</sup>

Even before the two-year war, Abbink claimed that both countries had a dominant party political structure with no significant opportunities for opposition to participate, and Ethiopia ruled with a subservient parliament which had no legal right to initiative.<sup>74</sup>

The nature of the relations between the insurgent movements during the civil war affected the nature of the relations between the ruling parties in its aftermath. The psychological legacy, according to some observers,<sup>75</sup> was relevant because the relationship was unequal, with the TPLF in the weakest and most dependent position. This situation was diametrically reversed with the TPLF's capture of the Ethiopian state.

According to Péninou one can identify the moment of rupture between the leaderships of the EPLF and the TPLF as 1985. At this time, a strategic conflict arose around the issue of Tigray's independence. The rupture lasted until 1988. For the EPLF, it was clear that Eritrea's independence could only be recognized as long as there was a change of regime in Ethiopia. Simultaneously, the EPLF was rightly

<sup>73</sup> --- 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 242.

<sup>74</sup> Abbink, 1998, op.cit., p. 558.

convinced that neither the UN nor the OAU would recognize its claim to self-determination to the extent that it implied a disintegration of Ethiopia. For this reason, Eritrea's independence could not be linked to Tigray's secession from Ethiopia.<sup>76</sup>

The seeds for disagreement between the leaderships were planted in this period. The purposes of the struggle forced them to cooperate in order to achieve the common aim: the overthrow of the *Derg*. Once the civil war was over and Eritrea achieved sovereignty and the TPLF emerged at the helm of the state the unresolved issues re-surfaced.

### **Military dimension: the demobilization processes**

In the aftermath of the civil war the immediate challenge was the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration both of Ethiopia's state and non-state armed forces, and Eritrea's combatants.

This section considers the demobilization processes in Ethiopia and Eritrea after the overthrow of the *Derg*. The purpose is to analyse to what extent the demobilization processes and the subsequent reintegration of ex-combatants in the societies (state and non-state armed forces) played a role in the outbreak of hostilities in 1998. While the studies conducted so far seem to confirm the overall success of the programmes, it is important to consider two questions: 1) was there any political disruption by ex-combatants between 1991 and 1998 in either country?; 2) to what degree was reintegration of demobilized soldiers achieved?

As Campbell argues, the relationship between war and state formation outlined by Tilly<sup>77</sup> and others needs to 'integrate a balance between the emphasis on

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<sup>75</sup> Interviews in Addis Ababa, July 2003.

<sup>76</sup> Péninou, J.-L. juillet 2000. 'Les Ambitions cachées d' Addis- Abeba : Ethiopie- Erythrée, une paix en trompe l'oeil'. *Le Monde Diplomatique* URL <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/07/PENINOU/14025>.

<sup>77</sup> Tilly, C. 1985. 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime' in Evans, P., D. Rueschemeyer and T. Skocpol (ed.) *Bringing the State Back in*. New York: CUP.

raising and using troops with attention on how states rid themselves of unwanted troops'.<sup>78</sup>

From the onset, the demobilization process posed numerous challenges to both governments. In Ethiopia, it entailed conducting the largest demobilization exercise in the aftermath of the Cold War, namely, close to half a million soldiers<sup>79</sup> of Mengistu's army and another 22,000 combatants of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).<sup>80</sup> The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) established the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Members of Former Army and Disabled War Veterans on June 14, 1991. The overall cost, between mid-1991 and 1995, was estimated at US\$ 195 million.<sup>81</sup>

In Eritrea the challenge was to demobilize 54,000<sup>82</sup> out of 95,000 combatants.<sup>83</sup> The demobilization process was set to start after Eritrea's statehood was internationally recognized, i.e. after the results of the April 1993 referendum. At the end of 1992 the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) established an autonomous Department for Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Fighters (Mitias), within the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (ERRA). Altogether an estimated US\$ 82 million was paid for the re-integration of ex-combatants, of which only US\$ 12 million, including pledges, was provided through foreign assistance.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Campbell, A. 2003. 'Where do All Soldiers Go? Veterans and the Politics of Demobilization' in Davis, D.E., and, Pereira, Anthony W. (ed.) *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 114.

<sup>79</sup> This value refers to a total of 455,000 ex-combatants including returnees from refugee camps in Sudan (52,000) and Kenya (80,000). Daniel, A., and Dercon, Stefan 2000. 'From the Gun to the Plough: the Macro- and Micro- Level Impact of Demobilization in Ethiopia' in Kingma, K. (ed.) *Demobilization in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Development and Security Impacts*. London: Macmillan Press., p. 134. Colletta, N. J., Kostner, Markus, Wiederhofer, Ingo 1996. 'Case Studies in War to Peace Transition: The Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex Combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia, and Uganda, World Bank Discussion Paper no.331': World Bank, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Coletta et al. refer to the demobilization of a total of 21,200 fighters from the OLF, which included 20% of women fighters. Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Colletta et al., 1996, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>82</sup> This value includes 13,500 women (25%). Bruchhaus, E. M., and Amanuel Mehreteab 2000. 'Leaving the Warm House: the Impact of Demobilization in Eritrea' in Kingma, K. (ed.) *Demobilization in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Development and Security Impacts*. London: Macmillan Press, p. 103.

<sup>83</sup> Amanuel Mehreteab, 2002, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

In Eritrea the seeds of discontent among ex-combatants were planted through the announcement in 1993 that EPLF personnel should continue voluntary national service.<sup>85</sup> Ruth Iyob claims that the incident was resolved peacefully:

On the morning of May 20, 1993, a commando unit took over Asmara International Airport in protest. (...) By early afternoon, young fighters carrying Kalashnikovs took over key government offices (...). The protest (*Adma Tegadelti*) was limited to Asmara and did not elicit similar actions from the armed units stationed in other parts of Eritrea.<sup>86</sup>

In the aftermath of *Adma Tegadelti*, the president of Eritrea announced on radio and television that steps would be taken to reduce the size of the army and to initiate salary scales.<sup>87</sup>

Marchal provides a different account of the same event. According to Marchal, after the occupation of the airport, 130 were arrested, 24 were released and 100 were punished with 1 to 10 years in prison.<sup>88</sup> However, their pledges did not remain unheeded resulting in a three times increase in the initial 'salary'.

On July 1994 another disruption occurred. This time a group of disabled ex-combatants blocked the road between Asmara and Massawa, in Mai Habar. Finally, an army unit intervened reacting in a disproportionately forcible fashion.<sup>89</sup> The intervention of the army highlighted the lack of preparation for guaranteeing order in the context of peace.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Issaias Afeworki announcement emphasised that 'The decision to remain as unpaid volunteers taken by the seventh meeting of the Central Committee, was based on the fact that this country did not have the sufficient economic resources. ' Issaias Afeworki statement in ' Press Conference of Ato Issaias Afeworki', Hadas Ertra n0.78, May 29, 1993 cited by Ruth Iyob, 1996, p. 142. In addition, Amanuel Mehreteab, head of the Demobilization and Re- Integration Program for ex-fighters between 1992 and 1996 acknowledges the importance of the incident on May 1993 as '(...) a potent reminder of what the future holds if timely preventive measures are not instituted.' Amanuel Mehreteab, 2001, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>86</sup> Iyob, R. 1995. *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, resistance, nationalism 1941-1993*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 142.

<sup>87</sup> Iyob, 1995, op.cit, p. 142.

<sup>88</sup> Marchal, R. 1997. 'Érythrée: la difficile transition civile' in Marchal, R., Messiant, Christine (ed.) *Les Chemins de la Guerre et de La Paix: fins de conflit en Afrique orientale et austral*. Paris: Karthala, pp.141- 152. This version was confirmed by ex- EPLF combatants who left Eritrea after independence. Interview, London, April 2007. With hindsight it already gave signs of the President's increasingly authoritarian leaning after the end of the civil war. These events will be discussed further in chapter 5 and 6.

<sup>89</sup> This intervention resulted in three to twelve deaths. Roland Marchal, 1997, op.cit., p. 143.

<sup>90</sup> ibid., p. 143.

One of the goals of demobilization in 1993 was to create an army with 30,000 to 35,000 effectives. The overall number raised concern. As Marchal critically assessed, an army of that size was equivalent to the number of troops that Mozambique had agreed to keep at the time of the signature of the Rome Agreements. In Mozambique, the number was reduced by half, in relation to a population five times higher than that of Eritrea. Moreover, in Eritrea the army was to be established through national conscription. The conscription consisted of 6 months of military and political training, followed by 12 months of service for the effort of national reconstruction.<sup>91</sup> This observation highlights the inherent contradiction between expanding military power and attaining the disarmament of subjects.<sup>92</sup> Secondly, it raises questions about Eritrea's aims of guaranteeing military supremacy within the region.<sup>93</sup>

One of the criteria to assess the success of the reintegration of ex-combatants is the degree to which they become unnoticed in the local communities.

After independence pressures increased and ex- combatants settled predominantly in Ali-Ghidir near the town of Tessenei. Ali-Ghidir was selected as a destination because of the cotton plantation, which the Italian colonial state had established in 1928. After Independence the government of Eritrea put in place measures for the development of large-scale farms in this region. A substantial area of land was cultivated in the Ali-Ghidir estate and other plantations. The Land Proclamation No. 58/ 1994 introduced favourable conditions for newcomers to settle in this area. The provision which placed all the land under state ownership led to an increasing emphasis on large- scale agriculture in the region, through the expropriation of land from local populations.<sup>94</sup> The groups that live in the area, namely the Kunama, Beni Amer and Nara resented the influx of settlers and the way the state authorities granted concessions of land, and in particular the preferential treatment of demobilized EPLF combatants.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>92</sup> Alec Campbell provides a parsimonious perspective on this problem in Alec Campbell, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> The compulsory military service and Eritrea's foreign policy towards the region will be further discussed in chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

<sup>94</sup> Alexander Naty 2002. 'Environment, Society and the State in Western Eritrea'. *Africa* 72: 569- 597.

As Alexander Naty emphasises:

(...) the Kunama are angry at the state or individuals taking away their land. Likewise, pastoral communities like the Beni-Amer are resentful because they have lost a great deal of grazing land: the free movement of their livestock has been severely constrained.<sup>95</sup>

The situation in the Gash-Barka region exposes how some measures relating to the reintegration of demobilized soldiers and refugees increased the potential for social tension and magnified grievances between the local communities, the newcomers and the state.

The Ethiopian state was still a weakly institutionalized state depending strongly on military might and patronage.<sup>96</sup>

The task of demobilizing the ex-*Derg* soldiers was daunting. Furthermore, the OLF, one of the political factions to sign the transitional Charter, withdrew from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) and opted for insurgency against the EPRDF in the summer of 1992. The EPRDF captured 22,200 OLF combatants in June 1992. This contingent of combatants was added to the Derg soldiers for demobilization.<sup>97</sup>

The process of restructuring the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) occurred much later. The ENDF absorbed 6,000 ex-*Derg* soldiers whose special skills were needed in the military.<sup>98</sup>

The character of public disruption by ex-combatants in Ethiopia acquired different contours to the incidents described in Eritrea. After demobilization, lawlessness, armed banditry and crime were on the rise in the eastern and southern

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<sup>95</sup> ibid., p. 586.

<sup>96</sup> Abbink, J. March 2001. 'Review of Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society (2nd edition) by Donald Levine'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, p. 176.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel and Dercon, 2000, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>98</sup> A further 1,400 were employed in the Ministry of Health. Another 39,330 were referred to contractual employment, for example, with the Ministry of Agriculture, especially state farms. This

parts of the country. According to a World Bank study, many ex-combatants seemed to have harassed the population, looted property and committed murder.<sup>99</sup> However, the extent of the involvement of demobilized soldiers in destabilizing local communities is difficult to assess due to the overall increase of non-state armed groups' opposition and insurgency to the EPRDF/TPLF, in the newly created regions of post-1991 Ethiopia.<sup>100</sup>

In 1995, 30,000 EPRDF soldiers (mainly TPLF fighters) were disbanded<sup>101</sup> in a move to reflect the new conception of the ethnic-based Federal model. The goal was to substitute this contingent with new recruits from various nationalities according to the criteria of proportional composition. Evidence shows that several thousands of these demobilized EPRDF fighters were incorporated into the police force with an increase in their salary.<sup>102</sup>

In addition, similarly to what happened in Eritrea in the Ali-Ghidir plantation, a significant proportion of the 30,000 EPRDF demobilized combatants were encouraged to participate in the Humera resettlement scheme for cotton growing. This meant the settlement of a large proportion of the demobilized soldiers in new communities on sparsely populated land in western Tigray. On a political level, the designated land had only recently been annexed to the Tigray region at the expense of Gondar. Despite criticism to the Humera cotton scheme, reports confirmed that the program moved to a smallholder approach, which privileged the allocation of land to families.<sup>103</sup> According to Kassahun Berhanu the newcomers to the area in addition to ex-combatants comprised returned refugees from Sudan.<sup>104</sup>

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group represented over 10 % of the total number of Derg demobilized soldiers. Colletta et al., 1996, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>99</sup> Colletta et al., 1996, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>100</sup> Further insights into the increase of internal armed opposition to the EPRDF will be provided in section 2.4.3 and in chapter 6. For an important scholarly contribution to the reflection on the complexities of the ethnic based conception of statehood in Ethiopia two publications stand out. James, W. et al. edited volume. James, W., Donham, Donald L., Kurimoto, Eisi and Triulzi, Alessandro 2002. 'Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and After'. Oxford: James Currey. Turton, D. 2006. 'Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective'. Oxford: James Currey.

<sup>101</sup> Daniel Ayalew and S. Dercon, 2000, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>102</sup> Africa Confidential, 22 September 1995. cited in Daniel Ayalew and S. Dercon, op.cit, p. 134.

<sup>103</sup> Colletta et al. , 1996, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

<sup>104</sup> Kassahun Berhanu, 2000, op.cit.

The question of land redistribution to demobilized soldiers is critical, particularly within social formations where the majority of the population is concentrated in rural areas and highly dependent upon agriculture. The TGE created favourable conditions for the allocation of land to demobilized soldiers through a proclamation, at the local level, which authorised the allocation of land previously held by the community to the ex-combatants.<sup>105</sup> In cases where ex-combatants did not have access to land they were eligible to one hectare of state land. In these cases, the state allowed for the local communities to decide on the distribution of land among ex-combatants. Interestingly enough, Colletta et al., gathered evidence suggesting that land redistribution did not occur in those parts of the country (Tigray, Gondar, Gojjam) which had been occupied for a longer period by the TPLF, prior to the overthrow of the *Derg*.<sup>106</sup>

Ultimately, only a minority of the ex-combatants benefited from access to the means of maximizing the returns which the ‘domestication’ of the prevailing disorder required.<sup>107</sup> Chapter 5 will continue this theme in order to assess the question of which groups benefited from the closure of the border and from substitution of the Eritrean port of Assab for other ports in the Horn of Africa.

Pausewang and Aalen stress that, at first sight, the EPRDF government Defence Budget compared to the one in the *Derg* declined impressively. However, the costs of the military forces were spread across the budgets of the Ministry of Interior and the regional states, in administration and transport costs, and investments. The authors conclude that if these items are added together, the benefits of disarmament were, indeed, minor.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> InterAfrica Group, 1994, p. 9 cited in Colletta et al., 1996, op.cit., p. 56.

<sup>106</sup> ibid., p. 56.

<sup>107</sup> Chabal, P., and, Daloz, Jean-Pascal 1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Oxford/Bloomington & Indianapolis: International African Institute/ James Currey and Indiana University Press. p. xix. The demonstrations by ex-combatants prior to the war already showed the resentments created by President Issaias Afeworky’s discriminatory treatment of ex-combatants. While some were expected to continue serving on a voluntary basis, those closer to the President were moved with their families to the villas where the previous administrators had lived and were awarded as well with prominent portofolios either in the government or in the party-owned companies. Interviews in London, May and June 2007.

<sup>108</sup> Pausewang and Aalen, 2002, op.cit., p. 234.

Through the analysis of the demobilization processes in Ethiopia and Eritrea this section argues that demobilization is not only a consequence but also a cause of variation in state formation and development.<sup>109</sup> The emplacement of returnees and demobilized combatants in the periphery of the state seemed to follow a peculiar logic of extending the state's agents and institutions into its periphery. The emplacement of communities close to the border can in part be understood as a purposeful logic of creating buffer mechanisms in the absence of the normal array of state's agents and institutions in the frontier between sovereign states.

The emplacement of ex-combatants, and other returnees, in the Ali- Ghidir cotton plantation (Gash- Barka in Eritrea) and in Humera (Tigray's Region in Ethiopia) shows how those who had participated or supported the insurgent movements who captured the state, benefited from the distribution and access to critical resources provided by the state. In this respect, prior to the 1998-2000 war, the post-insurgent states' political leaderships retained a certain degree of loyalty to their background as 'popular movements'. However, as the section on the economic and social dimensions of the causes of the war highlights this legacy was increasingly compromised by their capture of the state and by the ruling parties' privileged ownership of companies in key sectors in the new economic fabric in post-1991 Eritrea and Ethiopia.

As a concluding remark, the section on the political and military dimensions has shown that the relations between the political leaderships, inherited from their alliance against the *Derg*, facilitated the transition in both countries. However, as disagreements arose in the conduct of international relations between the governments, tensions from the previous period re-surfaced.

The incidents of public disruption by ex-combatants in Eritrea and the forceful intervention by the state's agents already showed signs, at the time minimized, of the President's increasingly authoritarian orientation. In Ethiopia, the continuity of insurgency warfare waged against the government gave signs of the

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<sup>109</sup> Campbell, 2003, op. cit., p. 114.

failure of the state to guarantee the monopoly of the means of coercion and of the pitfalls of the particular EPRDF/TPLF conception of Ethiopian statehood.

Finally, quite significantly, the demobilization and reintegration processes led to different outcomes. In Eritrea, the demobilization of the ex-combatants was coupled with continuous compulsory military service. As a consequence, Eritrea retained an army disproportionate to its population. In Ethiopia, despite considerable demobilization of the combatants of the various warring parties during the civil war, the military retained significant influence within the executive, and the ex-combatants had privileged access to critical resources distributed by the state. In both states, the former senior military commanders for the insurgent movements retained key positions in the newly created party-companies. The dividends of the successful capture of the state, however, were not evenly distributed among former combatants in Ethiopia and in Eritrea. In Eritrea, immediately after formal accession to Independence, the public disruption by former combatants already provided clear indications of the growing drift between the ruling party and its veterans from the civil war. In Ethiopia, the failure of the Transition Government to accommodate the OLF already provided signs that the spoils of the capture of the state would not be evenly distributed across the insurgent movements which had contributed to the ousting of the previous regime.

#### **2.4.3 Territory: state trajectories and borderland communities' conceptions and practices with regard to the new frontier**

##### **Trajectories of state and nation building: conceptions of statehood, nationhood and of boundary maintenance**

The statehood tradition of Ethiopia could not be more contrasting with the immense challenge faced by Eritrea on the eve of Independence. However, in post- 1991 Ethiopia the ruling party introduced an original conception of Ethiopian statehood. The Eritrean and Ethiopian conceptions of statehood not only differed but had the potential to run into collision.

As Jacquin-Berdal argues, territory was central to the definition of Eritrea:

(...) Eritrea's national identity cannot be traced to any ethnic substratum; instead it is territorially defined. (...) The new state's favourite emblem is the country's geographical map.<sup>110</sup>

As Clapham remarks, in sharp contrast to the Eritrean path, in Ethiopia:

(...) the constitution of the 'Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' expressed the new relationship between nationality and territoriality in a way which sharply differed both from former Ethiopian constitutions, and from the colonially demarcated frontiers which defined most other African states.<sup>111</sup>

The Ethiopian Empire was a territorial state, rather than an ethnic unit, defined by the people who belonged to it; a tradition reproduced by the *Derg*.<sup>112</sup>

The introduction of a Federal model based on ethnicity corresponded to a peculiarly Tigrayan conception of Ethiopian statehood.<sup>113</sup> The immediate consequences were soon to become visible and this process of fragmentation immediately led to increasing demands on new territorial divisions corresponding to each of the nationalities. Citizenship based on the new nationalities became more salient as it determined rights to public allocations within each of the national subdivisions.<sup>114</sup> This process led to the creation of nationality territories within the Ethiopian state, and to a considerable redrawing of Ethiopia's domestic boundaries. As chapter 5 and 6 shall discuss, the ruling party's approach to state re-making had domestic, as well as significant international implications.

The EPRDF/TPLF innovative approach to state building both domestically and with regard to its foreign policy were interwoven to such an extent that any shift

<sup>110</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, D. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, p. 136.

<sup>111</sup> Clapham, C. 1996. 'Boundary and Territory in the Horn of Africa' in Nuguent, P., and Asiwaju, A.I. (ed.) *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*. London: Pinter, p. 246.

<sup>112</sup> Clapham, 1996, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>113</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Insecurity and Intervention in the Horn' in May, R., and Furley, Oliver (ed.) *African Interventionist States*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>114</sup> ibid., p. 246.

of orientation in the political and economic policies had manifold implications both at the domestic and international level.

The Ethiopian government's approach to state building, at the domestic level, impacted upon the relations between i) the federal state and its constituent regional states and ii) Ethiopia's Regional states' institutions and agents among themselves. At the international level, this approach impacted upon the relations between: i) the Ethiopian state and other contiguous states in the Horn of Africa and ii) Ethiopia's Regional states' institutions and agents and other contiguous states in the Horn of Africa. These implications will be analysed thoroughly in the remaining components of this section on the territory-related causes of the war.

Although for Ethiopia's and Eritrea's governments, territory remained central to the conception of statehood, the two cases reflect the two broad kinds of the relationship between a state and its boundaries. Clapham remarks that there is a fundamental distinction between boundaries which are created by states and states that are created by boundaries. In the first case, the boundaries may be adjusted in one direction or the other without affecting the identity of the state which lies within them. In the second case, the boundaries come first, and the state is then created within them. Ethiopia is closer to the first process, while Eritrea is closer to the second. In the latter case, and paraphrasing Clapham, any change in Eritrea's boundaries raised basic questions about what Eritrea was.<sup>115</sup> In the end, the two conceptions and diverging approaches to state building placed the governments on a collision route. As Clapham argues, along with a powerful concept of boundary goes an equally powerful concept of territory.<sup>116</sup>

### **Borderland communities' conceptions and practices with regard to the new frontier**

Eritrean independence was perceived differently by various groups in Ethiopia and in Eritrea.

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<sup>115</sup> Clapham, 1999, op.cit., p. 54.

<sup>116</sup> Clapham, 1996, op.cit. in Nuguent, p. 239.

Within Ethiopia different groups still looked with suspicion at Eritrea and at the Ethiopian ruling party because of its role in the loss of Eritrea.

While resentment in the urban areas, and especially in the Ethiopian capital, was common prior to the unexpected war it was generally not vocalised until the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998.<sup>117</sup>

Although Eritrea's independence divided ethnic groups like the Beni Amer, the Kunama, the Saho, the Tigrinya-speaking communities and the Afar, three groups merit particular attention because of their saliency for the understanding of the causes of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. As the previous section has argued, it should remain present that the border between the two states prior to the outbreak of hostilities in May 1998 remained a *de jure border*. For all practical purposes, the lack of delimitation and demarcation of the border meant that borderland communities continued with usual daily business regardless of the borderline. For the vast majority of the borderland communities, living on the Ethiopian side of the border, Eritrea's independence was of secondary importance in the face of the general sense of security generated by the end of the civil war against the *Derg*. Despite the widespread satisfaction with the post- conflict context, several groups either expressed resentments towards Eritrea's independence or were at odds with shifting loyalty to the successor state.

These three ethnic groups straddling the borders particularly affected by Eritrea's secession were: i) the Afar in north-eastern Ethiopia and south-eastern Eritrea, ii) the Tigrinya-speaking communities in the Ethiopian northern Region of Tigray (both in the central and western zones) and in Eritrea, and iii) the Kunama in the north-western part of the Ethiopian Region of Tigray (and central areas) and in south-western Eritrea in Gash Barka.

### **The Afar in northeastern Ethiopia and southeastern Eritrea**

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<sup>117</sup> The different conceptions of the borders and of the homeland will be discussed in chapter 3 in the analysis of the historical and symbolic dimensions of the war and the territorialization of national identities.

According to Markakis, the Afar in Ethiopia have neither forgotten nor forgiven the loss of their land, nor have they given up hope of reclaiming it.<sup>118</sup>

The loss of land was added to pre-existing grievances. The Afars (and the Somalis) in Ethiopia as pastoralists have posed challenges to the state's centralizing pressure. The states in the Horn of Africa and particularly the Ethiopian state have tended to 'marginalise pastoralists and attempt to either assimilate them into - or exclude them entirely from - the state apparatus'.<sup>119</sup>

Both the Afar and Somali regions have remained at the periphery of Ethiopia's state with implications with regard to the limited extension of the state's agents and institutions to their territory. The post- 1991 Federal model based on ethnicity subscribed the devolution of a certain degree of autonomy to the regional level of government; however in practice the measures to implement these significant changes remained in the realm of intentions. Indeed, the widespread and chronic food insecurity in the Afar region is still of paramount importance.<sup>120</sup>

The long-standing marginalisation of the Afars coupled with the loss of territory, with Eritrea's secession, further fuelled Afars' resistance to the central state. Indeed, one of the Afar insurgent movements, the Afar Revolutionary Democratic United Front (ARDUF), conducted a guerrilla campaign against the EPRDF/TPLF and the EPLF/ PFDJ until the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea. Prior to the two-year war, this insurgent movement could be best described as a secession insurgency as it was said to pursue the unification of a 'greater' Afar territory. The movement's aim of unifying the Afar seems to have found limited support from more moderate Afar groups.<sup>121</sup> As with other insurgent movements within Ethiopia, the aims of the ARDUF seem to defy permanent classification. In 2007 it was unclear whether the movement pursued secession or reformist aims with regard to the Ethiopian state.

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<sup>118</sup> Markakis, J. 2003. 'Anatomy of a Conflict: Afar and Ise Ethiopia'. *Review of African Political Economy* 96, p. 447.

<sup>119</sup> Bryden, M. January 1996. 'Situation report on Region 2 (Afar National Regional State)'. Addis Abeba: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue\\_web/AFAR1A.htm](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/AFAR1A.htm), p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Philpott et al., 2005, op.cit., p. 26 The same report concludes that the education coverage in the Afar region is one of the lowest in the country, p. 36.

<sup>121</sup> Bryden, 1996, op. cit.

The unification goal of the Afars within a single entity could either be based upon the premise of seeking self-determination for the Afar unified entity as a sovereign state, or as an autonomous region within the Ethiopian state. In the former case, achieving this aim would imply secession for Afar groups from Eritrea and Djibouti. Indeed, disagreement on this question has led to the emergence of different factions within the ARDUF. On the ground the Afar, mainly pastoralists, viewed the borders as imaginary lines. Moreover, the Afars were also citizens in the neighbouring states of Djibouti and Eritrea. These two layers of identity (ethnic group identification and citizenship) need not necessarily be perceived in mutually exclusive terms.<sup>122</sup> The movement seems to have subsequently abandoned the aim of unifying the Afar either in a separate state or within Ethiopia.<sup>123</sup>

The situation in the Afar National Regional State continued to be tense after the transition in Ethiopia to multiparty politics and to the constitutionally recognized right to create political parties on the basis of ethnicity. The ethnicization of politics fuelled tension among the Afar people. Indeed, Afar insurgent movements<sup>124</sup> and the Afar party within the ruling coalition - the Afar People's Democratic Organisation (APDO) - seemed to pursue irreconcilable political agendas. The *Ugugumo*, meaning Revolution, can be classified as a secession insurgency. The *Ugugumo* was created by the *Derg* in order to prevent the extension of TPLF's control to this part of the Tigray Province<sup>125</sup> and hence avoid the disruption of the traffic and the military supply line from the Assab port. During the civil war the most difficult area for the TPLF within the Tigray province was south-eastern Tigray, especially the Afar areas.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, July 2005.

<sup>123</sup> Les Nouvelles d' Addis 15 mars/ 15 mai 2007. 'Retour sur l'actualité : Afar, partenaire ou ennemi ?'  
*Les Nouvelles d' Addis*, 56, [http://www.lesnouvelles.org/P71\\_c1xfb0r\\_journal/LNA56.html](http://www.lesnouvelles.org/P71_c1xfb0r_journal/LNA56.html).

<sup>124</sup> According to Matt Bryden's report from 1995, *Ugugumo* fighters had targeted the homes and property of APDO members in the Dallol area (Zone 2) and accused the party representatives of treason to the Afar cause. Bryden, 1996, op. cit.

<sup>125</sup> According to Young, the *Ugugumo* was a creation of the *Derg*. The movement was initially led by *Derg* officers and the *Derg* supplied arms to the movement. The *Ugugumo* were motivated by the promise of Afar autonomy within Ethiopia and by sharing the *Derg*'s opposition to the EPLF/ TPLF secession aims for Eritrea; which was a threat to Afar unity. The *Ugugumo* achieved political legitimacy with Afar clans, especially with those communities resident outside Tigray .Young, 1997, op.cit., p. 151.

<sup>126</sup>ibid., p. 170.

The Afar insurgent movements continued to resort to guerrilla tactics in post-1991 Ethiopia and Eritrea. During this period violent conflicts between Afar clans and Tigrayans did not decline.<sup>127</sup>

The connections between this insurgent movement and other insurgent movements still active in the Afar region are not clear. Similarly to the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) it is plausible that the insurgents remained deeply entrenched within the pastoral communities.<sup>128</sup> Other Afar insurgent movements and political parties, although not subscribing to the movement's resort to force an agenda, seem to display sympathy and have conjecturally benefited from direct and indirect support from the *Ugugumo* opposition to the ruling APDO. According to Bryden, the Afar National Liberation Front (ANLF), which prior to the two-year war held the third place in the regional parliament with 10 seats, was said to empathise with the *Ugugumo*'s opposition to the ruling APDO.

In 1995 in the aftermath of Ethiopia's regional elections Matt Bryden reported that in the Afar Regional state:

(...) Politically, however, the situation cannot be described as stable: the past few months have seen sporadic outbreaks of political violence, and an overt struggle for power in the regional administration that has effectively paralysed government. Some parts of the region, particularly the north-western zone (Zone 2), are reported by the regional administration to be disturbed and possibly unsafe for travel.<sup>129</sup>

In the aftermath of the civil war and after Eritrea's Independence, the uninterrupted intensity of traffic along the Addis Ababa-Manda-Assab road hardly benefited the Afar.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, as Bryden claims:

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<sup>127</sup> Young, J. 1998. 'Regionalism and Democracy in Ethiopia'. *Third World Quarterly* 19, p. 200.

<sup>128</sup> As it will be further discussed in chapter 4, the Afar clans involved in the conflict with the Ise clan in 2002 along the Addis Ababa- Djibouti road reportedly benefited from support from the *Ugugumo*.

<sup>129</sup> Bryden, 1996, op. cit.

<sup>130</sup> Bryden, M. January 1996. 'Situation report on Region 2 (Afar National Regional State)'. Addis Ababa: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue\\_web/AFAR1A.htm](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/AFAR1A.htm).

The roads have evolved into a micro-economy dominated by highlanders and alien commercial interests: most of the commerce - bars and hotels - associated with the transport sector, are owned and managed by members of other ethnic groups. Prostitution and alcohol flourish. Services, from room and board to schooling and health care, are often available only in Amharic or not at all and primarily benefit migrant workers rather than the indigenous Afar.<sup>131</sup>

Despite the implementation of the new Federal model based on ethnicity and on the principle of devolution of more autonomy to the regions, the Afar region remained largely within the periphery of the state. Dissention, contention, violent conflict both among Afars supporting different political parties and/or insurgent movements, was magnified by the ethnicization of politics in Ethiopia. In addition, violent conflict between the Afar and dominant ethnic groups from the Regions bordering the Afar Regional State, namely Tigray and Somali Regions continued, to a certain extent, fuelled by the new ethnic-based Federal model.

The tension and violent conflict between the Tigrayans and the Afar antedated the introduction of the Federal Model based on ethnicity. However, contrary to the ruling party's expectation and rhetoric, the ethnic, formula did not dilute conflict and/or diminish the grievances towards the central government.

The tension and violent conflict between Afar clans and the Ise clan from the neighbouring Ethiopian Somali Region was, indeed, exacerbated by the creation of Regional states based on ethnicity with ill-delimited boundaries between the regions.

The violent conflict between Afar and Ise pastoralists over access to water and grazing land, which had previously been mainly a conflict between pastoralists has tended to become an ethnic conflict. This is one of the cases which illustrate well the domestic implications of the EPRDF/TPLF approach to state building.

Knowledge on the Afar insurgent movements operating on both sides of the Ethiopian and Eritrean border is still unsatisfactory and meagre. This state of affairs, prior to the 1998-2000, was in part related to the limited presence of the state's institutions and agents along the frontier, in the Afar inhabited zones.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

In conclusion, it seems that besides unanimity in the resentment towards Eritrea's independence, Afar clans, political parties and insurgent movements do not follow a similar approach and degree of loyalty towards the Ethiopian state. The *Ugugumo* and the ARDUF seem to have similar agendas with regard to Afar nationalism.<sup>132</sup> However, further research is needed on the aims of the two movements and on the relations between the two. The splintering of the ARDUF, in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war, further diluted Afar militant nationalists' claims for a 'Greater Afar' state, which envisaged reuniting the Afar divided by the borders between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

The outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea significantly changed Afar conceptions and practices with regard to the boundaries. In addition, the conduct of battles within Afar territory, contributed to a rapprochement between the Afar and the ruling party in Ethiopia.<sup>133</sup>

### **The Tigrinya-speaking communities in the Ethiopian northern Region of Tigray (both in the central and western zones) and in Eritrea**

Boundary- related problems emerged in the early 1990s. When disagreements arose between Eritrean and Tigrayan farmers over land claims, problems of sovereignty became more evident. These land disputes illustrated the problem of reconciling territorial sovereignty with local administration.<sup>134</sup> This case captures well the complexities of the international implications of the EPRDF/ TPLF's approach to state building.

As in other regions, the EPRDF failed to anticipate the implications for regional authorities of the full implementation of the redrawing of domestic boundaries implied by the ethnic-based Federal model. While the root causes of this particular incident are germane to the conflict between pastoral communities in the

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<sup>132</sup> The two movements, *Ugugumo* and the ARDUF operate in the same area, which in the past led to ambiguity and confusions between the two. Indeed, this ambiguity highlights the sparse knowledge on the manifold Afar opposition movements and their political aims.

<sup>133</sup> This will be further developed in chapter 3.

Afar and Somali Ethiopian Regions (access to a critical resource, i.e. land) the fact that the communities were divided across ill- delimited and disputed state boundaries added complexity. Tigray's Regional administration agents and Eritrean state agents' handling of the incident further escalated the saliency of the border dispute.

### **The Kunama in the northwestern and central areas of the Ethiopian Region of Tigray and in southwestern Eritrea in Gash Barka.**

Although the Kunama are estimated to represent only 2 per cent of the Eritrean population the area where they are centred, Gash Barka has been submitted to increasing demographic and environmental pressure, with the potential to lead to conflict between communities in the area.<sup>135</sup> The Kunama as a whole tend to be identified as people who sided with the *Derg* during the war. The beginning of the secession insurgency in the early 1960s in Eritrea exacerbated tensions between the Kunama and other ethnic groups in the Gash Barka region.<sup>136</sup> For their survival the Kunama had to seek support from Ethiopia; which enabled them to resist the various Eritrean insurgent movements almost until the final years of the civil war.<sup>137</sup>

The stigma as Alexander Naty's study confirms still persisted after Eritrea's independence (and at the time of writing still does).<sup>138</sup> Decentralization in Eritrea has led to increased marginalization of the Kunama. As early as 1997, external observers

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<sup>134</sup> Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 673.

<sup>135</sup> Alexander Naty, 2002, op.cit., p. 574.

<sup>136</sup> This region is the breadbasket of Eritrea. The area was renamed Gash-Barka in the aftermath of an administrative restructuring in 1995. The former name of the area was Gash- Setit. According to Alexander Naty, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), whose leadership was dominated by the Beni- Amer , Tigre and to a lesser extent the Nara, mistreated the Kunama people from the very outset by burning their villages and killing community elders in some localities. These activities alienated the Kunama people, p. 574.

<sup>137</sup> This should not be interpreted as if there were not individual Kunama within the liberation fronts. There were a considerable number of them in the ELF; many Kunama from regions such as Ilit and Sokodas joined the ELF from the very beginning of the movement. Alexander Naty, 2002, op. cit.

<sup>138</sup> According to Lussier the stigma still persists in spite of the fact that the Ethiopian army numbered many Eritrean Tigrini in its ranks and that the Kunama's decision was in great measure determined by the action of the ELF in the beginning of the liberation struggle. Indeed, Idris Awate, the celebrated national hero who opened the hostilities against Ethiopia in 1961, is remembered by the Kunama as their main executioner in the period of 1943-1949, which occurred during the British Military Administration in Eritrea. Lussier, D. 1997. 'Local Prohibitions, Memory and Political Judgement among the Kunama: An Eritrean Case Study' in Fukui, K., Kurimoto, Eisei and Shigeta, Masayoshi (ed.) *Ethiopia in broader perspective, Volume II, papers of the XIIIth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Kyoto, 12-17 December 1997*

*International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Kyoto: Shokado Book Sellers, p. 442.

warned of particular intensity of military action in the area.<sup>139</sup> This in turn has led to an increased resentment of the Kunama towards the PFDJ government.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities the diverging state trajectories of Ethiopia and Eritrea already raised concerns for ethnic groups divided across borders. In particular, the Ethiopian model had the potential to gain attractiveness to communities north of the Mereb River. Both Afar and Kunama's multiple grievances towards the state on both sides of the border were articulated in ethnic terms. This came about, in part, as a consequence of Ethiopia's ruling party's approach to the nationalities' question in Ethiopia. Domestic state building and nation building in Ethiopia had repercussions across borders. As Pausewang notes:

The nomadic Afar people in Eritrea were urged to integrate in the national entity, but when they crossed the border - which they regularly do in their annual movements - they became citizens of an Afar state with its own administration, with schools and courts and even a radio station broadcasting in their language. As time passed, the Kunama further north complained they were becoming a minority in their own home country as more and more refugees returning from Sudan were settled in their plains. When the war erupted, Ethiopia was quick in exploiting their discontent by setting up a radio programme in Kunama language across the border.<sup>140</sup>

Chapter 3 will show how the escalation of the conflict further exacerbated the tension around the two states' diverging paths to national identity formation and consolidation. If prior to the war the question of state loyalty was important but not a matter of individual security, under wartime conditions the question became a matter of survival. The war contributed to cementing loyalty to the state in mutually exclusive terms; in a way none of the previous regimes in Addis Ababa had managed to accomplish.

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<sup>139</sup> Lussier stresses that: 'Eritrea's growing involvement with the Sudanese civil war and persisting incidents at the frontier have made the western lowlands a target of military surveillance. Deep political problems are masked behind the current focus on refugees/returnees from the Sudan and humanitarian assistance.' *ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>140</sup> Pausewang, S. 2004. 'Aborted or nascent democracy? Structural reasons for the failure of democratisation in Ethiopia' in Sørbø, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, p. 145.

If the borders' conception prior to the war were not at the forefront as chapter 4 will show, they were the portent source for mobilization and for maintaining the rank and file on the trenches along the border. For borderland communities the openness of the border was replaced by its closure and their daily lives were disrupted fundamentally.

With hindsight, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's speech at the ceremony which marked Eritrea's independence is now reviewed with tragic irony:

Let bygones be bygones. We have commenced a new chapter. In this new chapter we will not build a wall at the Mereb.<sup>141</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

Several factors, often overlooked, resulted in an impressive recipe for conflict escalation. The different trajectories of the states, the different conceptions of statehood and nationhood and the diverging approaches to state building and nation building had practical and, immediate consequences, for borderland communities. This will be further developed in the analysis of war and state making/remaking (chapter 5).

Ethiopia's Tigray regional administration's requirements with regard to trade, prior to the introduction of the new Eritrean currency, already seemed to suggest the ruling party's increasing determination and concern to control the movement of goods across its borders with Eritrea. These requirements were arguably introduced as part of an economic polity bent on protecting Tigray's economic actors (namely party-owned companies) from competition from their Eritrean counterparts. In addition, the introduction of the new currency was a form of boundary maintenance, as Clapham suggests. These diverging approaches to economic policies raised the saliency of the borders and in the meantime created an impending rivalry between the two ruling parties. When the incident in Badme occurred, the border dispute, combined with this

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<sup>141</sup> Alemseged Abbay 1998. *Identity jilted, or, Re-imagining identity? : the divergent paths of the Eritrean and Tigrayan nationalist struggles*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, p. 230.

preceding rivalry, escalated the crisis to a magnitude that took both protagonists and borderland communities by surprise.

## Chapter 3: The Conduct of the War between Eritrea and Ethiopia

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 depicted the background conditions and the various causes that led to the outbreak of hostilities. This chapter aims to move beyond what triggered and caused the conflict and focuses specifically on how the war unfolded and how it was brought to an end. It provides an analysis of the period after the 6 May 1998 crisis, in which the border incident between the Eritrean small infantry unit and Ethiopian local militia and administrators led to the loss of life on the Eritrean side.<sup>1</sup> Eritrea's decision on 12 May 1998 to move its regular armoured forces to the disputed border village Badme, and its environs, escalated the crisis leading to the military engagement between Eritrean and Ethiopian regular armed forces. The move by the Eritrean Defence Force (EDF) triggered Ethiopia's formal announcement in Parliament, on 13 May 1998, of its determination to act in defence of its sovereignty if Eritrean forces failed to withdraw from the disputed areas. The chapter covers the period from May 12, 1998 until the December 12, 2000 Algiers peace agreement.

The first part of the chapter conveys the way the political and military conduct of the war was seen from Eritrea and from Ethiopia. This strategy is followed in order to avoid the asymmetries of the available data on the Eritrean and Ethiopian accounts on the conduct of the war.

The peace negotiations did not hamper the war's unfolding. As a result, this section will be linked to the one which portrays the military conduct of the war, namely the first, second and third rounds of fighting according to the dominant views from Addis Ababa and Asmara. This section seeks to analyse the relationship between the political aims of the war and the unfolding of events on the battlefield. The analysis of the inter-state war's conduct will then be expanded by assessing the opponents' tactics of supporting opposition armed groups through neighbouring

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<sup>1</sup> Connell, D. Autumn 1998. 'Report from the field: From Alliance to the Brink of All-Out War: Explaining the Eritrea- Ethiopia Border Crisis.' *Middle East Report* 208: 40-42.

countries. The full implications of the 1998- 2000 war for the region shall be discussed in the chapter 6.

The section on the social and economic dimensions will seek to understand if there was an element of greed in the war rationale and if it had any impact as a source of motivation to engage, pursue and prolong military confrontation rather than engage with the various proposals to reach a negotiated settlement.

Finally, the section on territory seeks to understand how the divergent interpretations of history on both sides of the border were fuelled by the warfare propaganda. In addition, this section will demonstrate that the two-year war became an important source of national mythology for both states. Indeed, this state of affairs bore similarities with previous wars which had opposed Ethiopia to an external enemy.<sup>2</sup>

The final section seeks to understand how the positions in the battlefield reflected the ambiguity and the different conceptions and practices of various groups with regard to the border between the two states.

### **3.2 Seen from Eritrea and from Ethiopia**

#### **3.2.1 Eritrea**

The aims of the opponent seen from an Eritrean standpoint seem to have been depicted differently as the war unfolded.

During the first round the Eritrean army did not push beyond the territory they had argued fell within Eritrea's jurisdiction. The decision on 12 May 1998 to move its regular armoured forces to the disputed border village - Badme - and its environs followed from this reasoning.

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<sup>2</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'War and State Formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Paper Presented at the Failed States Conference, Florence 10-14 April', p. 9.

In line with the ‘official’ claim, the EDF pursued the offensive and occupied positions around three major sectors of the frontier: Badme (Western Front)/Tsortona-Zalambessa and Irob areas (Central Front) and Bada and Bure areas (Eastern Front).

The Eritreans depicted the subsequent escalation of the crisis into a full- scale war as part of a TPLF plan for the creation of a Greater Tigray.<sup>3</sup>

The crisis and its escalation were justified as a response to the Tigrayan minority practice in post-1991 Ethiopia of encroaching into land traditionally within the realm of other groups. The PFDJ leadership was, arguably, persuaded that the war would lead to the weakening of the dominance of the TPLF within Ethiopia’s ruling party.

During the second round of fighting, the Eritrean troops’ morale remained high but the intensity of the carnage in the battlefield shifted Asmara’s perceptions about Addis Ababa’s war aims. At this point, in addition to gaining access to the Red Sea, Eritrea contended that Ethiopia was fighting to reassert regional hegemony. In an interview, President Issaias Afewerki claimed that from the Eritrean standpoint the war started as a border dispute. Ethiopia’s determination to fight was tied to its preference for another government in its former province.<sup>4</sup> As the war unfolded, its main justification relied on Eritrea’s need to resort to force to survive as a sovereign state. From a confrontation between the Tigrinya- speaking communities on both sides of the Mereb, the war was understood and justified as a continuation of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Eritreans had once again to fight for their hard-won independence.

The third round marked a turning point as Ethiopian troops advanced beyond the disputed areas and captured territory well inside Eritrea. Eritrea now depicted itself as the victim of Ethiopian aggression and of invasion.

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<sup>3</sup> Gilkes, P., and, Plaut, Martin 1999. *War in the Horn: The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia*: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Vick, K. February 14, 1999. ‘Eritrea’s ‘Mosquito’ Plagues Ethiopia’ *Washington Post*, <http://www.uvm.edu/~fgause/horn.htm>.

Finally, as the third round took the Eritreans by surprise it was perceived that Ethiopia's main war aim was to annihilate the Eritrean military capabilities and manpower and oust the ruling party (PFDJ).

Kidane Mengisteab and Okbazgi Yohannes suggested that the gains for Eritrea would be quite limited. For Eritrea the war aims were subordinated to:

- 1) 'The imperatives of demarcating its borders and, eventually,
- 2) To enhance the stature of its President'.<sup>5</sup>

This last line of argument gained saliency only in the aftermath of the Peace Agreement. With hindsight, growing dissent within Eritrea came as an outcome of disagreements over the conduct of the war within Eritrea's policymaking circle close to the President. As Paulus Tesfagiorgis claims:

The Eritrean President, ignoring his own government's institutions and people with experience, and abandoning international relations and norms, made the war his own personal one, as he wanted to make the victory his personal one, with all its implications. According to him, victory was certain. He also seemed to have completely overestimated his military capability while underestimating the military might and determination of the Ethiopians, especially the TPLF.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.2.2 Ethiopia**

Seen from Ethiopia the war aims seem to have changed and oscillated as the war unfolded, especially during the final offensive.

The aims of the war seem to have changed especially after the victorious outcome of Ethiopia's 'Operation Sunset'. The conduct of the war led to disagreements within Ethiopian policy-making circles. However, as in Eritrea, the greatest divergences seemed to have emerged during the final offensive.

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<sup>5</sup> Kidane Mengisteab, a., Okbazghi Yohannes, 2005. *Anatomy of an African Tragedy: Political, Economic and Foreign Policy Crisis in post- Independence Eritrea*. Trenton & Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 261.

Initially, the Ethiopians were convinced that the Eritreans had resorted to force as a display of political and military strength. In the face of the poor progresses of the Ethiopia- Eritrea Joint Border Commission, Asmara had resorted to a belligerent approach. As had happened in previous border disputes between Eritrea and other contiguous neighbouring states, the calculations, on the Eritrean side, were that the crisis would not significantly escalate and would lead to immediate international mediation. At this juncture it was common to portray Eritrea as a 'trouble maker in the region'.<sup>7</sup> The Ethiopians argued that the incident in Badme was just part of a previous pattern of Eritrea's foreign policy with regard to disputes over its borders: to use force first and, then, call for international mediation.

The TPLF/ EPRDF regime was largely convinced that the EPLF/PFDJ continued to wage war as a necessary ingredient to keep Eritrea together.<sup>8</sup> Ethiopia interpreted the Eritrean move as a breach to Ethiopia's sovereignty.

From an Ethiopian standpoint, it seemed the EPLF/PFDJ was still convinced of the invincibility of the Eritrean army. The mythology of military triumph was paramount for Eritrean nationalism and for the country's leadership.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, continuous and compulsory military service in Eritrea meant that the EPLF/ PFDJ regime could count on at least 150,000 new conscripts, trained, equipped and ready for deployment; whereas Ethiopia needed to recruit and train new contingents of troops.<sup>10</sup>

In the aftermath of Operation Sunset, the parties' failure to reach an agreement over the OAU peace proposal led to an entrenchment of positions. At this stage,

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<sup>6</sup> Paulos Tesfagiorgis 2004. 'A brief understanding of the current crisis in Eritrea: What can be done?' in Sørbø, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Interview , Addis Ababa, August 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Medhane Tadesse 1999. *The Eritrean- Ethiopian War: Retrospect and Prospects: Reflections on the Making of Conflicts in the Horn of Africa 1991- 1998*. Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Enterprise, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup>Clapham, 2001, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Addis Ababa, July 2005.

disagreements over the war aims permeated the decision-making circle in Ethiopia.<sup>11</sup> However, the stated aims of the war remained the re- capture of the occupied areas and ensuring the defence of Ethiopia's sovereignty over the contested territory.<sup>12</sup> Uncertainties about Ethiopia's likely attempt to advance towards the capital created the final pressure for Eritrea to capitulate to Ethiopia's initial pre- condition for the peace negotiations, i.e., to withdraw to the positions held before the events that had triggered the conflict around Badme.

With regard to the Eritrean President's claim that Addis Ababa was bent on the ousting of the incumbent regime in Eritrea, Yemane Kidane<sup>13</sup> contented that:

Issaias is trying to mobilize the Eritrean people behind him, because the people of Eritrea are not happy about the border issue. We've made it crystal clear that we are concerned only with our sovereignty. Any change in government, is the responsibility of the Eritrean people.<sup>14</sup>

However, during the final offensive, the strategic plan seemed to favour incursions from Eritrean insurgent movements alongside the Ethiopian armed forces. The third round of fighting confirmed Ethiopia's support and cover for the infiltration into Eritrean territory of the PFDJ's main opponents. In the Western Sector, arguably one of the war aims behind the occupation of the Gash Barka region (Eritrea) and of Barentu (the regional capital of Gash Barka) was to provide support for opposition movements to the PFDJ, such as: the ELF faction led by Abdullah Idris's, especially combatants in Adi Koto<sup>15</sup> and the Eritrean Kunama Democratic Movement (EKDM).<sup>16</sup> However, the Ethiopian forces took over Tesseney, Adi Koto and finally

<sup>11</sup> Hansen, S. J. 11 January 2006. 'Organisational Culture at War: Ethiopian Decision-making and the War with Eritrea (1998-2000)' *Department of International Politics*. Aberystwyth: University of Wales.

<sup>12</sup> Medhane Tadesse, 1999, op.cit., p. 176.

<sup>13</sup> Yemane Kidane, at the time was a senior official in the Ethiopian government. Yemane Kidane was in a privileged position to interpret the opponents' aims. Yemane Kidane was originally one of the two EPLF veterans who had moved to Tigray during the early formative years of the TPLF insurgency to provide training to the movement. Yemane Kidane's field name was Jamaica. As a consequence, Yemane Kidane became a TPLF combatant and remained within the TPLF up to the overthrow of the Derg regime and its aftermath. Yemane Kidane is of mixed Eritrean and Tigrayan parentage like many Ethiopian and Eritrean citizens. Young, J. 1997. *Peasant revolution in Ethiopia : the Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> Vick, 1999, op.cit., p. A29.

<sup>15</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, July 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Naty, A. 2001. 'Memories of the Kunama of Eritrea towards Italian Colonialism'. *Africa: Rivista dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* LVI, p. 588.

withdrew. In the Central Sector, another splinter of the ELF (composed mainly by Tigrinya-speaking members) benefited as well from Ethiopian support, and went to Senafe (in the former Akele Guzai District).<sup>17</sup> In the eastern sector, the ENDF provided support for the Eritrean Afar opposition movement.<sup>18</sup>

The main goal was the weakening of Asmara's regime by providing support to opposition movements in a position to seize power and dislodge the PFDJ and the President. At the time, however, Eritrean opposition movements were not in a position to exploit the Ethiopian advance to their own advantage.

Paulus Tesfagiorgis argued that the different ELF factions and other opposition groups used the war as an opportunity of revival and to gain visibility.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.2.3 Peace Negotiations**

During the first round, the Eritreans immediately called for international mediation. The first attempt came from the then Chairman of IGAD, President Aptidon of Djibouti. It was immediately followed by a peace proposal by the Vice-President and Minister of Defence from Rwanda - Paul Kagame and US Sub Secretary of State for African Affairs - Susan Rice.

Eritrea perceived the negotiations as favouring Ethiopia. The public announcement in Addis Ababa that the two parties had agreed to a US- Rwanda brokered peace proposal, without informing Asmara in advance, justified Eritrea's decision to pull back from the peace negotiations. This was the first of a series of missed opportunities for peace.

The moratorium into air imposed after the June 1998 bombings in the Eritrean capital- Asmara- and in the Tigray Region's capital - Mekele - was respected by both parties. However, the lull was exploited by both opponents as a preparation for further engagements on the battlefield.

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<sup>17</sup> ibid., p. 588.

<sup>18</sup> ibid., p.588.

In January 1999, the UNSC passed the resolution that recognized the OAU peace proposal as the basis for future negotiations between the parties.<sup>20</sup>

Immediately, after the beginning of the second round of fighting and with the Ethiopian army's successful recapture of Badme, in February 1999, the Eritreans agreed to re-open peace talks and called for a cease-fire; but to no avail.

The second round of fighting ended with the rainy season. Between September 1999 and May 2000 the fighting was interrupted. This truce coincided with the period of most intense diplomatic activity and, paradoxically, preparations for war. However, as the lull between the parties settled and mediations for peace intensified, one of the worst crises in Ethiopia since the 1984-85 famine unfolded, unnoticed by the international media until March 2002.<sup>21</sup> At this juncture the media drew attention to the possible link between the slow international response to the drastic deterioration of the food security situation in Ethiopia and the war. During this critical period estimates indicate that 10 million were in need of food assistance.<sup>22</sup> The war did not hit the drought affected areas in Ethiopia directly, which were mainly in the eastern agricultural highlands and in the eastern and southern lowland pastoral areas (particularly in the Somali Region).<sup>23</sup> However, the humanitarian response to the 1999-2000 crisis was conditioned and disrupted by the war. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi refused to accept any food aid shipped through the Eritrean port of Assab.<sup>24</sup> The Prime Minister insisted that the war and the drought were separate issues and should not be linked to the distribution of the urgently required food aid.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Paulos Tesfagiorgis, 2004, op.cit., p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> Security Council resolution 1226 (1999) on the situation between Eritrea/Ethiopia. <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1999/sc99.htm>

<sup>21</sup> Hammond, L., &, Maxwell, Daniel 2002. 'The Ethiopian Crisis of 1999-2000: Lessons Learned, Questions Unanswered'. *Disasters* 26, p. 276.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey, P. 26 April, 2000. 'Why another drought in Ethiopia? (Dateline ACT/ Ethiopia 03/2000)' *Action by Churches Together (ACT)*, Addis Ababa, [http://act-intl.org/news/dt\\_nr\\_2000/dteth0300.html](http://act-intl.org/news/dt_nr_2000/dteth0300.html).

<sup>25</sup> According to Jeffrey the Ethiopian government had recently acquired four new Russian-built Su-25 attack jets, worth \$ 20 million each. *ibid.* The Eritrean government authorisation for international agencies to use the Assab port to facilitate food aid distribution is one of the few and significant openings during the course of the two-year war.

According to Hammond various external policymakers, including the UK Secretary for International Development and EU Commissioner Paul Nielsen, 'vocalised the view that the war was wasting valuable resources that should have been going to prevent humanitarian suffering'.<sup>26</sup> International donors restrained their response to the humanitarian crisis due to the unsettled armed conflict.<sup>27</sup>

In the face of mounting external pressure Prime Minister Meles Zenawi stated: 'In Ethiopia, we do not wait to have a full tummy to protect our sovereignty'.<sup>28</sup> The Prime Minister added that the Ethiopian government did not believe that '(...) protecting one's sovereignty is a luxury for the rich'.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, in May 2000, as the UN delegation and the US Ambassador to the UN- Richard Holbrooke flew back from their meeting with the parties' delegations (May 10, 2000) the Ethiopian government authorised the military commanders to start the major surprise offensive of the war two days later (on the 12th). On May 14, as the Ethiopians voted for regional elections, the Ethiopian Television (ETV) delivered news from the war front reporting the breakthrough of the Ethiopian army into the various Eritrean fronts.

As the third round of fighting continued, delegates from both sides were meeting in Algiers. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, two days before the anniversary of Eritrea's independence, announced in Addis Abeba that in Ethiopia: 'We shall negotiate while fighting. We shall fight while negotiating'.<sup>30</sup>

As the EDF was forced to withdraw from Barentu (around the 18th May) and one day after the celebration of the 7th anniversary of Eritrea's Independence (24th May), the Eritrean government announced its troops had withdrawn from all disputed border areas that were occupied after the 6 May incident. The cease-fire agreement

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<sup>26</sup> Hammond and Maxwell, 2002, op.cit., p. 276.

<sup>27</sup> ibid., p. 276. According to Hammond, both the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments refused to have their foreign policy dictated by external actors.

<sup>28</sup> quoted in Hammond. ibid., p. 276.

<sup>29</sup> White, P. 2005. 'Sovereignty and Starvation' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 219.

<sup>30</sup> CNN May 22, 2000. 'Ethiopian, Eritrean armies in crucial border fight'  
<http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/africa/05/23/hornofafrica.01/>

was signed on 18 June 2000. The Peace Agreement was finally signed in Algiers on 12 December 2000.

### **3.2.4 Political and military dimensions**

This section will explain how the positions on the battlefield conditioned the international mediated negotiations to bring the conflict to a halt. More specifically, it will address the following questions: to what extent did the engagement on the battlefield involve only the conventional armed forces of the two states? To what extent did the two armies only follow conventional warfare tactics? To what extent was armed violence directly targeted at civilians? Finally, this section will seek to highlight how the military conduct of the war elucidates the understanding of the political aims of the war. The diverging positions with regard to the conduct of the war reflected different understandings of the political aims of the war within each state's executive<sup>31</sup> and contending conceptions of the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, after the latter's independence.<sup>32</sup>

#### **The first and second rounds of fighting**

The first round of fighting was submitted to Eritrea's aim of establishing by force what the Eritrea-Ethiopia Joint Border Commission had failed to achieve via the bilateral diplomatic negotiations. Despite having secured the upper hand, the Eritrean offensive halted once territorial control of the disputed areas had been secured.

From Badme, the Eritrean forces occupied the Badumma plains. In the central sector the EDF came from Senafe<sup>33</sup> reaching Maichea,<sup>34</sup> without the sparse

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<sup>31</sup> However, the disagreements within the executives of the belligerent states only came to light in the aftermath of the war, as chapter 4 will discuss.

<sup>32</sup> For more detailed accounts on the military unfolding of the war in the theatre of operations, two works stand for its accuracy and precision of details. One was produced during the war and the other in its aftermath, respectively: Gilkes and Plaut, 1999, op.cit. Plaut, M. 2005. 'The Conflict and its aftermath' in Jacquin-Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press.

<sup>33</sup> Senafe is located in Eritrea, 15 kilometres north of the border with Ethiopia and of the contested border village of Maichea.

<sup>34</sup> Maichea is in ancestral Irob land on the border with Eritrea. The village had been under Ethiopian administration. This village is not to be confused with another town with similar spelling Maichew/Maychew in Central Tigray, which is located southwest of Adwa. Last, A. July August 1998. 'Villagers shrug off conflict'. *Horn of Africa Bulletin* 10, p. 5.

population<sup>35</sup> offering resistance. From there, the EDF managed to control the significant Aiga escarpment. Whoever controls this strategic hill acquires strategic control over the west, as far as the Zalambessa area. After having secured this area, the EDF proceeded into Alitena. In Alitena local militia provided a stronger resistance to the occupying forces. The EDF finally secured control of this location. From Alitena the EDF proceeded into Zalambessa<sup>36</sup> where a fiercer engagement occurred on June 3. The hostilities were brought to a lull in mid-June with Eritrea having the indisputable upper hand on the western and central fronts, and in the Badme and Zalambessa areas respectively.

The Eritrean offensive in the central sector encountered a greatly lesser defence on the Ethiopian side. The defence was poorly organised and the Ethiopians were taken by surprise. The border incident in Badme had occurred in May 6, 1998. By May 31 the EDF was in effective control of the disputed areas in the Central sector.

According to the Ethiopian version, after the incident in the area of Badme on 6 May 1998 and until 12 May 1998 the first incursions of Eritrean troops into Ethiopian territory were only stopped by irregular armed forces. In the case of Central Tigray the advance of Eritrean troops was stopped with the immediate call to demobilized ex-combatants (mainly TPLF) and local militia. At this time the TPLF had 28,000 demobilized combatants. The majority were living in Tigray.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the demobilized TPLF combatants there were 50,000-60,000 militia combatants in the region. At this time the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) had only one Brigade in the whole of Tigray.<sup>38</sup>

During the first offensive Eritrean troops held positions as far as Zalambessa with shelling reaching as far as Adigrat (25 kilometres from Zalambessa).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> A. Last estimates that the total population at the onset of hostilities was 400. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, August 2005.

<sup>38</sup> Approximately 3000 troops. The EDF units at this time were undersized. This number is just an estimate.

<sup>39</sup> Gilkes and Plaut, 1999, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-31.

When the crisis escalated, the Ethiopian military commanders were faced with a double challenge: re-mobilization and the deployment of large contingents of troops to the border areas. In addition, the necessary supply routes had to be ensured and the loss of access to Assab imposed a further constraint.

In the aftermath of the war, its intensity led some to pursue the interpretation that the war had been in preparation before the May 1998 incidents.<sup>40</sup> If this had been the case it seems quite unlikely that the outbreak of hostilities and the subsequent occupation of vast stretches of territory both around Badme and in Central Tigray, near the Zalambessa border town, would have occurred so close to the rain season. Indeed, the outbreak of hostilities came about in clear contrast with the Fronts' conduct during the civil war. The EPLF and the TPLF avoided the conduct of insurgency campaigns during the rain season not only to avoid disruptions to the agricultural cycle, but also for tactical reasons. The two-year war erupted just before the start of the most intense cycle of the rain season. As a consequence, the 1998 war caught the peasants by surprise, and many struggled to commute between hiding places in caves and the fields, in order to minimize the disruption of crop cultivation.<sup>41</sup> This previous feature seems to confirm Gilkes and Plaut's contention that the May 1998 incidents were the result of a miscalculation rather than subordinated to a well devised strategic plan.<sup>42</sup>

The available figures on military spending, as a percentage of GDP, seem to lend credence to the claim that the war took the Ethiopian side by surprise. However, the data should not be interpreted at face value because Ethiopia's related military expenditure is likely to have been spread through various Ministries under different categories.<sup>43</sup> In Eritrea, the data for 1995 also include the government's expenditure

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<sup>40</sup> Trivelli, R. M. 1998. 'Divided histories, opportunistic alliances: Background notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean war'. *Afrika Spectrum* 33: 257-289.

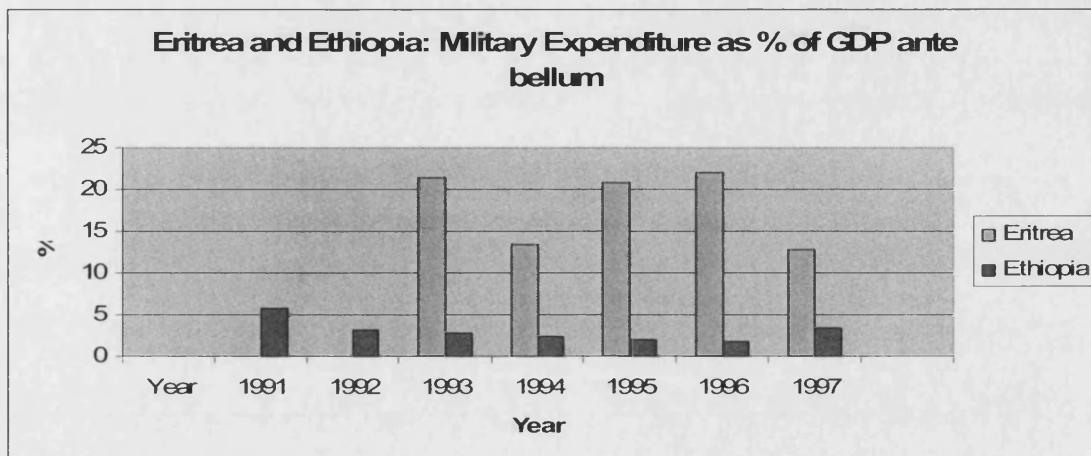
<sup>41</sup> Behailu Abebe 2004. 'War stories, displacement and coping experiences of the displaced from the Ethio- Eritrean war' in Pankhurst, A., and Francois Piguet, (ed.) *People, Space and the State: Migration, Resettlement and Displacement in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University. In both Ethiopia and Eritrea the planting season starts in May, preceding the 3 months of 'kramt', the intense rain season which lasts from the end of June until early September. Hammond and Maxwell, 2002, op.cit., p. 263.

<sup>42</sup> Gilkes and Plaut, 1999, op.cit., p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Pausewang, S., Tronvoll, Kjetil, Lovise Aalen 2002. ' Ethiopia since the Derg: A Decade of Democratic Pretension and Performance'. London & N.Y: Zed Books, p. 234.

on demobilization.<sup>44</sup> However, the data confirm that Eritrean society was, indeed, highly militarised; in relation to its total population and territory, and in comparison to its southern neighbour. In addition, the data confirm the centrality of the armed forces for the economy, both prior to and after the war, as chapter 5 will discuss.

Figure 1: Eritrea and Ethiopia Military Expenditure as % of GDP *ante bellum*<sup>45</sup>



As Figure 1 suggests, Eritrea, from the military standpoint, was likely to have held an advantage over Ethiopia at the onset of the armed conflict. As chapter 4 shall discuss the *ante bellum* level of military expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, was the lowest in both countries since the overthrow of the *Derg* and Eritrea's independence.

In terms of tactics, the first and second rounds of fighting were commonly characterised by external observers as germane to World War I.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, key battles during the first and second rounds of fighting resembled First World War style trench warfare.<sup>47</sup> The first round was characterized by division- level infantry assaults, backed by air strikes and artillery barrages. In the second round similar tactics were deployed but the levels of fire-power intensified,<sup>48</sup> reflecting the armaments' race

<sup>44</sup> SIPRI 1999. *SIPRI Yearbook 1999 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 322.

<sup>45</sup> The graph was created by the author on the basis of the available data in SIPRI. For the data refer to the table in Appendix 2. --- 2005. *SIPRI Yearbook 2005 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 357.

<sup>46</sup> Africa Confidential 1998. 'Eritrea/Ethiopia: Masters of War' 39; Africa Confidential 1998.

'Ethiopia/Eritrea: Brothers at war' 39; Africa Confidential 1999. 'Ethiopia-Eritrea: World-class war' 40.

<sup>47</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. June 5-11, 2000. 'Ethiopia-Eritrea: Addis Ababa's victory' *West Africa*, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Connell, D. Spring 1999. 'Shootout in the Horn of Africa: A View from Eritrea'. *Middle East Report*: 4-5.

which occurred during the truce between May 1998 and February 1999. The warring parties fortified their positions along the disputed border areas with trenches, barriers and bunkers, 'roofed with logs, stone and dirt for cover from aerial and artillery bombardment'.<sup>49</sup>

Between June 1998 and December 1998 both countries concentrated their efforts on the purchase of armaments and transport of hardware military equipment to the frontier. Ethiopia had to deal with mobilization, the training of the new conscripts and the deployment of troops along the previously 'unmonitored' border.

From the first round it became clear that the parties were not willing to reach an agreement at the diplomatic internationally mediated talks. The stalemate on the diplomatic front reflected the stalemate on the battlefield.

The second round was characterized by the Ethiopian counter- offensive launched in February 1999. This Offensive came to be known as 'Operation Sunset'. The bulk of the ENDF's units were mobilized to Badme. The first Ethiopian attempt to seize Badme on 6 February 1999 failed. On 26 February 1999 after intense fighting Ethiopian forces broke through the Eritrean lines and captured Badme. The aim of this operation was to overcome the previous stalemate. The outcome pointed to a reversal of the strategic positions of the belligerents. The operation comprised synchronization of the infantry's operations with the air force. On the ground, the infantry operations were supported by tank attacks. Eritrea subsequently tried to re-capture Badme but its three counter-offensives failed.<sup>50</sup>

During this phase one of the fiercest battles was waged in Tsorona. Ethiopia's attempt to break through the Eritrean lines failed, leading to one of the most intense combat- related fatalities episode of the two- year war. The outcome of these two major battles confirmed the stalemate on the battlefield. Ethiopia's advantage in

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Plaut, 2005, op. cit.

Badme was curtailed by Eritrea's advantage in Tsorona. Up to this point the EDF was still convinced that it could win the war.<sup>51</sup>

Even if this was an 'old' conventional war between the armed forces of the two states, the destabilization through support to domestic opposition movements via neighbouring countries is a feature highlighted in the 'new wars literature' and increasingly salient in contemporary armed conflicts. The regional repercussions of this tactic shall be discussed in the chapter on the regional security architecture and in the epilogue on the Somalia crisis during 2006-2007.

After the first round of fighting, Ethiopia rebuilt its relations with the Sudanese government. Ethiopia gradually withdrew support from the Northern Sudanese movements, namely the Sudan Alliance Forces (SAF) because of its close alignment with the Eritrean government. However, until March 1999 it still allowed the SPLA forces to use its territory.<sup>52</sup> As a consequence of Addis Ababa's rapprochement with Karthoum since November 1998, the SPLA was, later, ordered out of Gambella.<sup>53</sup> According to Connell, in January 1999 Sudan launched a major offensive against its opposition forces (which were backed by Eritrea) in two areas alongside its western border with Eritrea.<sup>54</sup> The Sudanese offensive along Eritrea's western border contributed, arguably, to the EDF's low expectations of an Ethiopian offensive along this sector of the border. However, as the third round unfolded the ENDF benefited from an under-concentration of Eritrean troops along this sector and a contingent entered Eritrean territory and reached Barentu via this ill-defended sector of the border, as the next section will discuss.

### **The third round of fighting**

The third round started on May 12 2000. In the third round the ENDF made use of the difficulties of the terrain in the western front to launch a massive surprise

<sup>51</sup> Dan Connell claims that: 'Most frontline fighters saw the conflict as a second battle for Eritrea's survival as a nation'. Connell, 1999, op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> de Waal, A. 2004. 'Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa'. London: Hurst & Company, p. 212.

<sup>53</sup> Young, J. 1999. 'Along Ethiopia's western frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in transition'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, p. 332.

offensive. The knowledge of the enemy's terrain contributed to Ethiopian military strategists' decisive breakthrough. The soldiers advanced across the Mereb River in order to take over an ill-guarded mountain between the Eritrean front lines. The Ethiopian soldiers took over the village of Enda Aba Simeon, which dominates this escarpment.<sup>55</sup> For this operation the Ethiopian soldiers had to rely on the support of animal force, namely donkeys, to carry armament, supplies and other military equipment.<sup>56</sup> Finally, the nature of the terrain rather than a constraint was correctly perceived by the war strategists as providing scope for outflanking the Eritrean defences<sup>57</sup> and then for proceeding with the encirclement of the major front-lines. Simultaneously, the Ethiopian army opened a new front breaking through the Eritrean lines in the northwestern border with Sudan and Eritrea via Humera (Ethiopian territory). The Ethiopian troops captured Om Hager (Eritrean territory), advancing towards Tesseney encountering minor resistance.<sup>58</sup> After coordinated military engagement in this town the Ethiopian forces then advanced to Barentu. From Barentu, the Ethiopian army moved north-east towards Agordat, while the main advance continued parallel to the border towards Mendefera.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the breakthrough created the conditions for the Ethiopian offensive to be waged within Eritrean territory. The Ethiopian armed forces opposed the Eritrean army in the north of Badme and pursued the offensive in Zalambessa, on the central front.<sup>60</sup>

The successful capture of Barentu and the surprise encirclement of Eritrean troops in Badme and Zalambessa served to mask the Eritrean army's defeat and the ill-planned withdrawal.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Connell, 1999, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Péninou, J.-L. juillet 2000. 'Les Ambitions cachées d' Addis- Abeba : Ethiopie- Erythrée, une paix en trompe l'oeil'. *Le Monde Diplomatique* URL <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/07/PENINOU/14025>, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Plaut, 2005, op.cit., p. 106.

<sup>57</sup> ibid., p. 106.

<sup>58</sup> Interview in Ethiopia, July 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick Gilkes, 'Free rein for Eritrean opposition', BBC News Online: World: Africa , Tuesday, 23 May, 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Plaut, 2005, op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>61</sup> Indeed, according to Plaut an entire Eritrean battalion retreated into Sudan and surrendered to Sudan's authorities. Ibid , p. 105. Dan Connell provides further evidence to substantiate this claim in the interview conducted with Petros Solomon in Asmara in August 2001 prior to his detention, which continues at the time of writing. Connell, D. 2005. 'A Conversation with Petros Solomon, August 23, 2001' in Connell, D. (ed.) *Conversations with Eritrean Political Prisoners*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 134.

The losing of ground to the opponent was covered internally with justifications that Eritrea was fighting its second war for independence, and with appeals to the international community to bring the Ethiopian government's invasion to an end. For Asmara, the war was no longer about the border, and the threat of Ethiopia's army reaching the capital seemed imminent.

For the final round, Ethiopia's army had ensured both numerical and air superiority. During the civil war, Ethiopia's *Derg* air superiority did not hamper the EPLF's victory. As Alemseged Tesfai points out 'eventually warplanes were discounted as decisive factors in the outcome of major battlefield confrontations'.<sup>62</sup> The outcome of the civil war confirmed the limits of strategic airpower. However, in the two- year border war, during the third round ENDF engineered a close coordination between air and ground forces to support the army units fighting on the ground. The final round departed from First World War style trench warfare with a significant shift to mobile troops' movements, using tactics germane to Second World War. The second round had showed the limits of strategic air power. What determined the outcome of the third round was not Ethiopia's aerial superiority but the high commanders' knowledge of the enemy's terrain, their capacity to anticipate the opponent's strategy and tactics and their capacity to strike exactly where they were least expected. In clear contrast, dissenting voices from the incumbent regime in Asmara suggest that the over- concentration of decision on the President and his closed circle, and the sidelining of experienced senior military commanders proved fatal to the Eritrean government's conduct of the war.<sup>63</sup>

The Ethiopian government learned the lessons from the major setbacks in the first and second rounds, in Badme and Tsortona respectively. The shift from frontal attacks to bypassing and then encirclement shifted the course of the war and its outcome, providing the Ethiopian government with the military upper hand and a decisive military victory.

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<sup>62</sup> Alemseged Tesfai 2003. 'Land and Liberation in Eritrea: Reflecting on the work of Lionel Cliffe'. *Review of African Political Economy* 96, p. 251.

<sup>63</sup> Group Interview, London, April 2007.

Finally, by 24 May, Eritrea's government declared that it would agree on redeploying its forces to the positions held prior to 6 May 1998.<sup>64</sup> The Ethiopian flag was lifted up in Zalambessa on May 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>65</sup> The intense diplomatic activity to implement an arms embargo during the previous round only became mandatory during the third round of fighting on 17 May 2000 (UNSC resolution 1298). The mandatory one-year embargo covered arms transfers, military equipment, training and arms industry's support for the two countries. Russia, one of the main suppliers during the war (and a permanent member of the UNSC), only implemented the embargo by the end of August 2000; after the parties had signed the 18 June Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.

However, none of the peace initiatives in the periods of truce came close to success. The question emerges: Why a conflict fought for more modest goals than those of the war for Eritrea's independence was pursued with such intensity? Although there is no agreement on the number of total casualties, available estimates suggest that the thirty-year civil war led to 65,000 military<sup>66</sup> and 250,000 civilian<sup>67</sup> casualties. The two- year border war led to 70,000 to 100,000 military casualties on both sides.

The section on territory will illuminate how the border incident escalated into a border war, which raised militant nationalism's emotional appeal into unexpected and extreme levels. The tragedy in the theatre of operations was further exacerbated by inflammatory media coverage both in Ethiopia's new founded private media<sup>68</sup> and in the manifold web *forums* over the internet.<sup>69</sup> Yet, for students versed in the study of nationalism and in the implications of its militant versions, the war intensity should come as no surprise.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. June 5-11, 2000, op.cit., p. 25.

<sup>66</sup> Pool, D. 1998. 'The Eritrean People's Liberation Front' in Clapham, C. (ed.) *African Guerrillas*. Fountain & Indiana: James Currey, p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Aida Mengistu, 2006. 'Nationalism and Identity in Ethiopia and Eritrea: Building Multiethnic States' in Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges to Good Governance*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, p. 97.

<sup>68</sup> Hansen, 2006, op.cit.

<sup>69</sup> Guazzini, F. May 19-21, 2004. 'The Construction of Political Nationalism on the Web: Borders, Social Spaces and Identities in the Ethio- Eritrean Case Study' International Conference, *States, Borders and Nations: Negotiating Citizenship in Africa*. Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh unpublished paper. Guazzini, F. 2001. 'Riflessione sulle Identità di Guerra nel Cyberspazio: il Caso Eritreo- Etiopico'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l' Africa e l' Oriente* LVI: 532-572.

Arguably, four crucial battles changed the course of the war and impacted upon the war aims and the final military outcome: i) Operation Sunset and the Ethiopian army's successful recapture of Badme (second round); ii) Ethiopia's major defeat in the battle in Tsortona (second round); iii) Eritrea's government decisions on the conduct of the war in the aftermath of the battle and withdrawal from Barentu (final round), and iv) the military engagement in Adi Begio (Bure Front) and Ethiopia's decision not to advance toward Assab.

The outcome of Operation Sunset allowed the Ethiopian government to recover from the defeat during the first round of fighting. Yet, during the second round, the battle of Tsortona was a major setback for the Ethiopian army and the carnage in the battlefield and the remnants of the fighting in the no man's land haunted protagonists and observers. In the third round there were two crucial moments: Eritrea's commanders' decision to withdraw from Barentu and Ethiopia's decision makers' option to cease hostilities when the military arguably had the upper hand and the Eritrean port of Assab was within the ENDF's reach. However, the Eritrean narrative of the third round in the Bure Front seems to challenge the Ethiopian version of the outcome of the major military engagement in the eastern front. The Assab front was near to Adi Begio (Bure Front), the theatre of operations where the highest carnage of Ethiopian soldiers occurred during the final round. Reid refers that in Adi Quala a new town hall was named after this smaller village where intensive fighting took place in the third round. An elder commented that 'Adi Beigo was the graveyard of the *woyane*'.<sup>70</sup> The Eritrean narrative of events in the Bure Front seems to challenge the prevailing perception that Ethiopia's decision not to recapture Assab was only politically conditioned, rather than militarily constrained. The fact remains that political decision makers prevented the military commanders from advancing toward the city port of Assab. The military's decision to abide could either have been motivated for fears of a civil war<sup>71</sup> or for the potential battle-related fatalities<sup>72</sup> which such an operation would entail.

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<sup>70</sup>Reid, R. 2005. 'Caught in the headlights of history: Eritrea, the EPLF and the postwar nation state'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, pp. 475-76.

<sup>71</sup> Interview Addis Ababa, July 2005.

Arguably, the conduct of the war in the Bure Front had major implications for the splits in both the TPLF and the PFDJ in the aftermath of the war, as we shall see in chapter 4.

### **3.2.5 Economic and social dimensions**

This section on the social and economic dimensions of the war looks at how the outbreak of hostilities was perceived as an opportunity to bring to the surface existing economic and social grievances created by Eritrea's independence. It will seek to understand if there was an element of greed in the war rationale and if it had any impact as a source of motivation to engage and pursue military confrontation rather than diplomatic negotiations.

The examination of greed and grievances as factors that keep many contemporary armed conflicts going is incomplete if the historical dimension is not incorporated into the analysis. As a consequence, this part of the analysis leads to the closing section of the chapter, which explores the relationship between social and historical grievances and greed factors in explaining the intensity, the course and the duration of the war.

The demobilisation processes in the two countries led to difficulties with regard to the re-integration of the demobilized combatants into civilian life. It needs to be assessed whether among this segment some may have found appeal in joining the call to arms in the absence of better alternatives in civilian life. This observation confirms that economic factors need to be taken into account as part of a complex interaction with other grievances related to cleavages in the social formations. This hypothesis, however, should not overshadow the significance of both states' authoritarian apparatus and how access to critical resources at the local level was conditioned by one's good performance as a committed citizen, of which military service was a duty.

When the Eritrean forces first entered Ethiopian territory, destruction and pillage followed. In the final Ethiopian offensive, May 2000, deep inside Eritrean

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<sup>72</sup> Interview London, March 2005.

territory, destruction, pillage and looting also took place. Indeed, the tactics used by both belligerents correspond to common tactics of modern warfare.

The economic resentments over Eritrea's introduction of a new currency, the nature of the trade agreements with Eritrea and the perception of a clear disadvantage in Ethiopia's terms of access to Assab had a clear impact on the conduct of the war. Indeed, the continuing polarization of domestic public opinion in Ethiopia around the army's failure to capture Assab cannot be understood without taking into consideration economic/greed factors as incentives for armed violence.

For Eritrea, Ethiopia's decision to divert all shipments due to Assab either to Djibouti or to Somaliland (to the port of Berbera) heightened resentments over Ethiopia's refusal to accept parity between the *Nakfa* and the *Birr* and for depriving Eritrea of one of the key sources of government revenue, i.e., the provision of the port services to Ethiopia.<sup>73</sup>

The war, in addition, brought to the surface criticisms to the privileged access to critical resources accorded to Eritreans and Ethiopian Tigrayans in the post-1991 Ethiopia.

According to Assefa Negash the EPRDF's policy- privileged members identified with the former insurgent movements. Positions as Vice-Director of the Ethiopian Electric Light and Power Authority were the tenure of citizens who held dual nationality. Assefa Negash goes as far as to argue that this position was held by 'a national of a neighbouring country, i.e., Eritrea'. The basis for this claim was the fact that the individual in question had voted in the Eritrean Independence referendum<sup>74</sup>. As a consequence of these pre-existing resentments, the war unleashed the debate around the nationalities' question, as discussed in chapter 2.

The definition of who was an Ethiopian and who was an Eritrean, in mutually exclusive terms, became critical with the border war. As it is well documented, the

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<sup>73</sup> Hansson, G. 2003. 'Building New States: Lessons from Eritrea' in Addison, T. (ed.) *From Conflict to Recovery in Africa*: Oxford University Press/ UNU/WIDER.

consideration of this key question led to massive expulsions under conditions heavily criticised by NGOs, both from the local emerging civil society and also from those with a global reach. The redefinition of citizenship prior to the war had already led to expulsions of 120,000 Ethiopian citizens from Eritrea, but at the time the Ethiopian ruling party had remained silent.<sup>75</sup> In contrast, by early 1999 more than 50,000 Eritreans had been expelled or crossed the border for fear of reprisals from Ethiopia.<sup>76</sup>

Ultimately, even if key economic and strategic motivations to continue the war existed, the military on both sides respected the cease-fire. The war was brought to an end after Ethiopia's victorious outcome, partly for military reasons, partly for economic ones. The financial burden of another year of armed conflict conditioned the decision to launch a final and decisive offensive that could guarantee a return to the *status quo ante*.

Despite the lack of valuable economic resources on the western and central fronts the two belligerents were willing to fight over territory. This leads us to consider other significant dimensions of territory, as the final section of the chapter will show.

### **3.3 Territory**

As the war unfolded the symbolic and historical dimensions of territory gained saliency. This section seeks to understand how the construction of national identity became entrenched along the battle lines and led to the enhancement of divergent interpretations of history and of founding national myths to mobilize 'soldiers' and 'public opinion' on both sides of the border. Finally, the section examines the relationship between the borders and national/ local identities.

#### **3.3.1 Historical and symbolic dimensions**

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<sup>74</sup> Assefa Negash 1996. *The Pillage of Ethiopia by Eritreans and their Tigreans surrogates*. L.A.: Adey Publishing Company.

<sup>75</sup> Triulzi, A. Janeiro/ Julho 2002. 'Violence and the acknowledgement of tense past in the Horn : a note on the Ethio- Eritrean War (1998-2000)'. *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 2, p. 97.

<sup>76</sup> Gilkes and Plaut, 1999, op.cit., p. 53.

The conduct of the war on the military front was accompanied by an increasing saliency of historical grievances that had long remained silenced. On the Ethiopian side, three historical themes reappeared during the conflict: 1) the comparison between the victory against the Italians in 1896 in the Battle of Adwa and the victory against the Eritreans in February 1999 in Operation Sunset; 2) the definition of the Eritrean enemy dating back to the involvement of Eritrean troops, the *ascaris*, in the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in World War II and, 3) the rehabilitation of the EPRDF/ TPLF as the bearers of a long tradition of Ethiopian unity whenever the sovereignty of the state is threatened by external aggression.

Badme, the spot of the conflict, was soon to achieve the same standing as Adwa. Adwa, as will be further discussed, was the key location of Ethiopian resistance during the 19th century's scramble for Africa by the major European powers. As the war unfolded the importance attached to the areas under dispute increased. According to Triulzi, the deliberate co-incidence of the celebrations of the victory at Adwa and the Ethiopian successful re-capture of Badme reflects this intentional definition of the interstate war as the 'second Adwa'. Triulzi notes:

(...)The war helped the country to redefine an enduring site of memory and charge it with new symbolic meanings which were daily sanctioned by the conflict itself.<sup>77</sup>

This analogy alluded to the historical meaning of that founding moment of resistance of the Ethiopian state and of the consolidation of its boundaries. Badme can only be equated with Adwa to the extent that it represents a key event in the delimitation of the colonial inherited borders in the Horn of Africa.

The war propaganda reflected a much broader resentment against Eritrea's independence. During the Federation years, immediately after the Italian occupation, and especially with the annexation of Eritrea as an Ethiopian Province, any mention of Eritrean collaboration with Italian troops was simply silenced. With the war the 'ascaris' were again brought to the limelight as players alongside the Italian troops in ensuring the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.<sup>78</sup> In clear contrast to the Imperial regime

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<sup>77</sup> Triulzi, 2002, op.cit., p. 99.

<sup>78</sup> ibid., pp. 95-97.

and *Derg*, during the war it was common to find references in the media to the participation of Eritreans in Italy's successful campaign that led to the five-year occupation of Ethiopia.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, when the war with Eritrea broke out in May 1998 the EPRDF was forced, by an unexpected level of Ethiopian national sentiment, to abandon its previous emphasis on ethnic diversity. The demands of the war intensified centralizing pressures over issues such as conscription. Meles Zenawi's legitimacy decreased within the TPLF, but improved within the coalition, the EPRDF, and among other groups in society. Indeed, the ruling party used the war to prove its 'nationalist credentials'.<sup>80</sup> Despite all internal divisions the motto 'Ethiopia first' seemed to re-emerge from the ashes of the previous regime. Indeed, this marks continuity in Ethiopian politics through successive regimes, since Emperor Menelik had managed to guarantee the borders of the sovereign Ethiopian state during the European powers' 'scramble for Africa'.

During the final stage of the war Prime Minister Meles Zenawi played the victory card successfully. The final offensive against Eritrean armed forces was launched during the May 2000 elections. The coincidence of these two major events seems to suggest that this strategy was followed to boost the EPRDF support's base throughout the country.

On the Eritrean side, one historical theme re-emerged during the conflict: 1) the genealogy of the Project of a Greater Tigray was traced back to the incursions of Emperor Yohannes and his commander *Ras Alula* in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>81</sup>

Reid suggests that this historical parallel emerged in the late 1990s. Indeed, during their struggle for self-determination Eritreans rarely substantiated their claims in a deeply-rooted historical identity.

As Jacquin-Berdal points out:

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>80</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, July 2003.

Eritreans defined their nationalist aspiration as emanating from their shared colonial experience and presented the question of independence essentially in territorial and international legal terms, arguing that Eritrea's right to self-determination should be decided on the same grounds as those of other ex- African colonies.<sup>82</sup>

These developments highlight the relevance of the historical dimensions of territory to understanding the centrality of the border question in this particular war. In addition, these considerations point to a more significant development. As the war unfolded, the propaganda warfare led not only to diverging interpretations of history but also to a revival of historical myths. The media and the warring parties daily fuelled these historical myths and, more significantly, the states constructed and sanctioned their revival. The subsequent section will analyse the revival of these myths to illuminate their role as boundary-defining mechanisms, which gained particular salience as the war unfolded.

### 3.3.2 Historical myths as boundary-defining mechanisms

Ethiopia and Eritrea and especially the Amhara and the Tigrinya- speaking communities north and south of the Mereb (Abyssinia) shared a common history up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e., until the Italian colonization of Eritrea.<sup>83</sup> Their foundation myths were based upon the dynastic, as opposed to the national, principle. With the emergence of nationalism in Eritrea a significant shift occurred. As Sorenson claims:

(...)while contact with Abyssinian kings to the south was acknowledged, Eritrean nationalists claimed that no Abyssinian king ruled the whole territory and that Turkish and Egyptian occupation contributed to the development of a separate regional history.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Reid, R. 2003. 'Old Problems in New Conflicts: Some observations on Eritrea and its relations with Tigray, From Liberation struggle to Inter-state War'. *Africa* 73, p. 379.

<sup>82</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, p. 86.

<sup>83</sup> Donham, D. 1986. 'Old Abyssinia and the new Ethiopian empire: themes in social history' in Donham, D., and, James, Wendy (ed.) *The Southern marches of Imperial Ethiopia : essays in history and social anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Sorenson, J. 1993. *Imagining Ethiopia : struggles for history and identity in the Horn of Africa*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, p. 43.

Eritrea's nationalism had to be pushed against the past 'when Eritrea was inextricably linked to the main Abyssinian body'.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Eritrea's nationalism is 'historically grounded in the liberation war 'and posed an intrinsic challenge to the myth of 'Greater Ethiopia'.<sup>86</sup> This section does not examine the historical accuracy of the facts; its aim is to analyse how the interpretation of history and its use by the ruling parties during both the civil war and the two-year war, elevated historical myths as boundary defining mechanisms.

The 1998-2000 war was accompanied by diametrically opposed interpretations of the Italian expansion in the Horn of Africa. While for Eritrea the colonial legacy remained the legitimate basis for self-determination and was used to nurture state and national identity formation and consolidation after 1993; for Ethiopia the legacy of the state's successful military victory over Italy's attempt to colonize Ethiopia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century remained one of the founding myths of the modern sovereign state.

The incumbent regime in Ethiopia equated the Ethio-Eritrean war with the 19<sup>th</sup> century armed conflict between Ethiopia and Italy. The incumbent regime in Eritrea equated the Ethio- Eritrean war with the armed conflict between the EPLF and Ethiopia.

The applicability of Kolstø's typology on historical myths as boundary-defining mechanisms to the Ethiopia and Eritrea border war acquires particular heuristic and analytical value because as Triulzi argues:

(...) the war itself made the border a bulwark of national identity, the visible mark of separation between the two countries. In this sense, from the very beginning, 'borders were an issue which represented something much larger, namely nationality and identity' and could easily become 'causes' of war.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Reid, R. 2001. 'The Challenge of the past: The Quest for Historical Legitimacy in Independent Eritrea'. *History in Africa* 28, p. 268.

<sup>86</sup> Dorman, S. R. 2005. 'Narratives of nationalism in Eritrea: research and revisionism'. *Nations and Nationalism* 11, p. 217. Jacquin-Berdal, D. 2000. 'State and War in the Formation of Eritrean National Identity' in Vandersluis, S.O. (ed.) *The State and Identity Construction in International Relations*. London: MacMillan Press. Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> Triulzi, A. 15-16 June 2006. 'Badme: Competing claims and symbology along a contested border between Ethiopia and Eritrea,' *AEGIS Conference, African Cities: competing claims on urban space*. Centre of African Studies: University of Edinburgh: unpublished paper, p. 13.

During the war, propaganda, either in the media and/or over the internet, diffused the Eritrean and Ethiopian versions of these historical myths and counter-myths. The intensity of the war propaganda simultaneously fuelled and mirrored the bloodshed on the frontlines.<sup>88</sup>

This section examines how propaganda during the war played on alleged historical grievances, which are apprehended in a more systematic fashion with Kolstø's typology.

### **The myth of being *sui generis***

In the Eritrean case, the myth of being *sui generis* antedated the 1998-2000 war. The myths constructed on this basis are particularly important because they shed light on Eritrea's interpretation and sanctioning of its own separate historical trajectory. The myth of being *sui generis* was paramount to Eritrea's definition of a separate identity with regard to: i) other insurgent movements, such as the TPLF; and ii) other post-colonial states in Africa.

The myth of being *sui generis* characterized the relations between the two Fronts during the civil war. One of the central sources of tension between the EPLF and the TPLF was the latter's initial ambiguity with regard to the insurgency's aims.<sup>89</sup> When the TPLF voiced its aim of seeking self-determination for Tigray, the EPLF immediately resisted this trend and exerted pressure upon the TPLF leadership to abandon it. From the EPLF standpoint, TPLF's attempted secession would not only fail to gather legitimacy internationally, but would also undermine the Eritrean case by stealing its singularity and specificity.<sup>90</sup> In addition, this aim would imperil

<sup>88</sup> Hansen, 2006, op.cit. Stig Harle Jansen's thesis contributes to the understanding of the evolution of the public debate and decision-making before and during the war. The thesis reflects upon the opening up of the press and shows how the oppositional press' coverage of the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea after 1991 and with the outbreak of the hostilities constrained the EPRDF to follow a more nationalistic direction. Guazzini, 2004, op.cit. Federica Guazzini contributes to the understanding of the public debates on the internet. Guazzini claims that the debates reflected the different usages of history and of the liberation war in order to make sense of the armed conflict. Simultaneously it re-opened the debate on Eritrea's relations with Tigray (and Ethiopia at a later stage) and on the relations between *shabya* (EPLF) and *woyane* (TPLF).

<sup>89</sup> Young, J. 1996. 'The Tigray and Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Fronts: a history of tension and pragmatism'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34: 105-120.

<sup>90</sup> Marchal, R. 1993. 'L'après-Mengistu dans la Corne de l'Afrique : une stabilisation impossible ?' *Cultures & Conflits* 8: 40-63, <http://www.conflits.org/document529.html>, p. 10.

Eritrea's fight for self-determination, as it raised the suspicion of a plea to revive the idea of a 'Greater Tigray', uniting in one territory the two Tigrinya-speaking communities north and south of the Mereb. This concern was anchored on the merger of Eritrea and Tigray, as a Greater Tigray Province, during the Italian re-organization of Ethiopia within the East African Empire, which occurred between 1936 and 1941.<sup>91</sup>

EPLF's pressure upon the TPLF to abandon the orientation toward secession is best understood within this purposeful and successful strategy to present the Eritrean case as, indeed, *sui generis* in comparison with the TPLF. Eritrea's claim for self-determination was based on its legacy as an Italian colony. When the hostilities broke out, the revival of this line of argument and suspicion followed. At the beginning of the hostilities, from the Eritrean standpoint, the escalation of the Badme crisis reflected the 'woyane' (i.e. TPLF) project to revive the 'Greater Tigray' aim. From the Ethiopian standpoint, Medhane Tadesse responded that:

(...) The TPLF killed the whole project once and for all when it declared in 1975 that the Eritrean question was a colonial question.<sup>92</sup>

The counter-myth to the *sui generis* is the myth at common descent.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the rhetoric in Addis Ababa and among non-Tigrinya speaking communities<sup>94</sup> in Ethiopia is quite distinct from that of the Ethiopian Tigrinya speaking communities with regard to Eritrea. In spite of the war, Tigrinya-speaking communities and Tigrayans, based either in the capital or in Tigray, insisted that:

We and the Eritreans are the same 'people' and now we are separated because of the closure of the border.<sup>95</sup>

Others, while sharing the perception of the commonalities between the 'people', would insist that the problem was between the leaderships.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Gilkes, P. 1975. *The dying Lion : feudalism and modernization in Ethiopia*. London: Julian Friedmann Publishers, p. 192.

<sup>92</sup> Medhane Tadesse, 1999, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>93</sup> Kolstø, P. 2005. 'Myths and boundaries in south-eastern Europe'. London: Hurst & Co, p.19.

<sup>94</sup> I used the term Tigrinya-speaking communities rather than Tigrayan ethnic group because in Tigray people who identify with other ethnic groups also speak Tigrinya and tend to share this view.

<sup>95</sup> Several interviews in Tigray, July 2005.

<sup>96</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, August 2005.

In the end, it was not the partition of the territory and Eritrea's independence that separated the Tigrinya-speaking communities in Ethiopia from their counterpart across the border; it was the two-year war and the closure of the border that followed it.

The narrative in Asmara and among Tigrinya-speaking communities in Eritrea shows how Eritrea after Independence still perceived the need to strive to remove itself from the shadow of its larger and more powerful neighbour to the south. During the war and in its aftermath, Tigrinya-speaking communities in the Eritrean capital would use the David – Goliath metaphor to highlight their heroic resistance to Ethiopia's renewed threat to its independence:

Eritrea needed to defend itself from Ethiopia; Eritrea needed to defend its hard-won Independence.<sup>97</sup>

In comparison with other colonial states in Africa, Eritrea's trajectory was *sui generis* because the areas from which it had been divided had remained formally independent.<sup>98</sup> Eritrea's colonial boundaries had separated it from ethnically contiguous areas, reflecting what had happened elsewhere during the colonial partition of Africa. The tensions that had punctuated the civil war were revived during the two-year war. Eritrea's fears were anchored in its historically-formed separate national consciousness in contradistinction to Ethiopia's continuing territorial claim. As Halliday and Molyneux argue, the fact that Ethiopia had not undergone a corresponding period of colonial rule did not annul or obliterate the preceding territorial claim.<sup>99</sup> The Tigrayan rulers in the 19th century had resented Menelik's concession to the Italians of part of their territory.<sup>100</sup> Eritrea's claim that the 1998-2000 war was a second war for its Independence should be understood against this background.

### **The myth of being *antimurale* and *martyrium***

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<sup>97</sup> Interview in Asmara, August 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Halliday, F., and, Maxine Molyneux 1981. *The Ethiopian Revolution*. London: Verso, p. 175.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>100</sup> Rubenson, S. 1976. *The survival of Ethiopian independence*. London.

In the context of the two-year war one historian promptly captured the reappearance of the past in the antagonistic propaganda warfare. Triulzi was among the first to aptly draw attention to this function of historical myths. By equating the recapture of Badme in February 1999 to a ‘second Adwa’ the Ethiopian government was drawing upon the foundation myth of the Ethiopian modern sovereign state.<sup>101</sup> Badme sealed the victory of Ethiopia over external aggression,<sup>102</sup> acquiring a similar standing to Adwa a century earlier. Furthermore, both Adwa and Badme shared the same geographical location within Ethiopia: in Tigray’s region. As a century earlier, the region was once again portrayed as the main theatre where Ethiopia stood united against the threat to its territorial integrity.

This strategy successfully contributed to: i) legitimise the government’s conduct, ii) extend the basis of support of the EPRDF and iii) continue with calls to contributions from the larger society to the war effort, either with troops and/or taxes. Indeed, the war forced the ruling party to downplay the saliency of the sub-nationalities, entailed by the Federal model based on ethnicity, and shift to revive skilfully ‘the old centralist interpretation of the survival of Ethiopian independence’.<sup>103</sup>

The two most common *antemurale* myths in Ethiopia can be traced back to the history of the expansion of Islam and European colonialism into the Horn of Africa.

The propaganda warfare during the 1998-2000 conflict focused more on the latter. However, it is important to note that during the early period of Eritrean insurgency, Addis Ababa revived the historical myth of Ethiopia as the ‘ancient Christian outpost encircled by hostile Muslim forces’<sup>104</sup> to justify its effort to defend Ethiopia from the threat presented by the secession insurgency in Eritrea.

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<sup>101</sup> Triulzi, 2002, op. cit.

<sup>102</sup> Rubenson, 1976, op. cit.

<sup>103</sup> Barnes, C. 2003. ‘Sovereignty, Identity and Modernity: Understanding Ethiopia’. *African Affairs* 102, p. 511.

<sup>104</sup> Sorenson, 1993, op. cit., p. 43.

Eritrea was depicted as a ‘foreign’ creation. Addis Ababa portrayed the secession insurgent movement, embodied by the ELF at that point,<sup>105</sup> as a creation of Arab states bent on the disintegration of Ethiopia and on the transformation of the Red Sea into an ‘Arab Lake’.<sup>106</sup>

With the overthrow of the Emperor and the Revolution, the *Derg* continued to justify its effort, to control forcibly the Eritrean insurgency, on the basis of its external creation. In continuity with the previous regime, the Eritrean insurgency was presented as a ‘foreign’ creation. In line with the previous regime, the historical myth of Ethiopia’s need to survive against ‘external aggression’ was central. This time the historical myth of Ethiopia as the last outpost in Africa encircled by the European colonial powers was revived. But the *Derg*’s secular nationalism superseded the old nationalism based upon the dynastic principle and inextricably linked to Orthodox Christianity.<sup>107</sup> The most common versions of the *antemurale* myth in Ethiopia mirror the characteristics found in Kolstø’s definition.

In conclusion, during Eritrea’s insurgency, Ethiopia’s emphasis on the need to defend Eritrea as part of the true ‘civilization’ was revived in two ways: i) the long standing medieval myth of the Orthodox Christian Kingdom in Africa: Ethiopia as the bulwark of Christianity against Islamic expansion, and ii) the myth of Ethiopia as the bulwark of independent statehood in Africa against European colonialism. In the two instances Ethiopia’s unity in the face of ‘external aggression’ was implicitly celebrated.

Finally, in the myth of being *anti murale*, Tigray, within Ethiopia’s historical trajectory, was once again the region where the defence of territorial integrity against external aggression was upheld. The EPRDF/TPLF revived the historical myth used by the *Derg* to counter Ethiopia’s northern insurgencies, especially the EPLF.

While Ethiopia revived the myth of Ethiopia’s heroic victory at Adwa against Italy, during the two-year war Eritrea resorted to its martyrs’ heroic resistance against

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<sup>105</sup> During the imperial era.

<sup>106</sup> Sorenson, 1993, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

Ethiopia's successive regimes' oppression, discrimination and persecution during the thirty-year war for independence.

Ethiopia's historical myth of Adwa purports to its grandeur, power and might as the sole state in Africa to have victoriously resisted European colonialism and defeated a European power. Eritrea's historical myth, in stark contrast, reports to the heroic resistance of its fighters, the martyrs, and their sacrifice to prevent Eritrea from remaining the target of discrimination and persecution from its neighbour.

Kolstø's contention shows that this feature is not unique to Eritrea:

The experience of victimization and its presence in the collective memory raises group awareness. Members of the group may begin to think of themselves as members of a particular nation precisely because they have become victims of atrocities that are afflicted upon them by others.<sup>108</sup>

According to an ex-combatant for the EPLF, Eritrea's conduct during the two-year war was entirely justified. The ex-combatant emphasised Eritrea's stance as reflective of its continuous need for self-defence in face of its powerful neighbour to the south: 'Eritrea just wants peace but our neighbour keeps on tempting us'.<sup>109</sup>

Finally, the analysis of the inter-state war against the background of the civil war sheds light not only on the understanding of which historical myths were brought back to the fore, but also helps to understand the ones which faded away or were purposefully silenced in the official discourse. While the myth of Eritrea's invincibility faded as the war unfolded, especially during the final offensive, the PFDJ presented the ill-devised withdrawal as germane to the strategic withdrawals conducted during the three-decade war. Indeed, the final offensive and the military outcome of the two-year war led to 'the abrupt collapse of the myth of Eritrean invincibility'.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Clapham, C. S. 1988. *Transformation and continuity in revolutionary Ethiopia*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, p. 195.

<sup>108</sup> Kolstø, 2005, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>109</sup> Interview in Asmara, August 2004.

<sup>110</sup> Clapham, 2001, op. cit., p. 13.

While the EPLF and the TPLF alliance in the civil war against the *Derg* was built on the common experience of oppression and discrimination of Eritrea and Tigray at the hands of successive Ethiopian regimes<sup>111</sup> the collective memory of this common experience was totally silenced in Ethiopia during the two-year war. Tigray's martyrs of the civil war were replaced by the region's singular standing as the outpost of the Ethiopian state against external aggression.

### **The myth of antiquitas**

According to Kolstø, nationalists often misappropriate earlier state formations as their own to prove that the old state that controlled the territory was the one with which they identify.<sup>112</sup> However, these earlier state formations, corresponding to pre-modern states, were based on a dynastic and not a national principle.<sup>113</sup>

Ethiopia could draw more openly on the myth of *antiquitas*. Eritrea, on the other hand, relied on the counter-myth. In this respect, the Eritrean leadership was forced to silence the past in order to be consistent with the historical grounding of Eritrean nationalism on the war for independence. Any claim of *antiquitas* prior to Italian colonization would run counter to the entire edifice upon which the Eritrean nation-state had been legitimately constructed,<sup>114</sup> but the border under dispute was that defined according to the colonial treaties. The borders had crystallized by 1936, i.e. prior to the incorporation of Ethiopia into the East African Empire. The quagmire was that neither the colonial state in Eritrea, nor the modern sovereign state in Ethiopia had fixed borders throughout their existence. Paraphrasing Kolstø: 'the borders waxed and waned' over the decades of their political coexistence.<sup>115</sup>

While this is certainly the case when evaluated against Ethiopia's process of state formation and trajectories of state and nation building, Eritrea was born with the borders inherited from the colonial period. However, these borders in contrast with

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<sup>111</sup> Especially during the *Derg*'s Red Terror campaign.

<sup>112</sup> Kolstø, 2005, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>113</sup> Halliday and Molyneux, 1981, op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>114</sup> According to John Sorenson 'Eritrean nationalist discourse rarely projects a unified identity into antiquity. Instead, it emphasises a decisive transformation under Italian colonialism'. Sorenson, 1993, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>115</sup> Kolstø, 2005, op. cit., p. 22.

other post-colonial states were not immediately recognized upon departure of the colonial power. Firstly, Italy's reorganization of the East African Empire led to the incorporation, under the same territorial entity, of Eritrea and the Tigrinya-speaking communities south of the Mereb. During the short-lived Federation with Ethiopia, and during its later incorporation as a Province of the Ethiopian state, the border ceased to exist. Furthermore, as the insurgency escalated in Tigray and Eritrea, the movements expanded 'the liberated areas' under their effective territorial control. The borders were transformed into 'no-man's-land' depending on which of the opposing sides had the upper hand during the civil war. The opposing sides comprised not only the insurgent movements and the Derg, but also the insurgent movements' internal opposition, as highlighted by the hostilities between the EPLF and ELF, the TPLF and the ELF and the later tension between the EPLF and the TPLF.

As Triulzi summarized it, the borders changed status frequently since the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to Eritrea's independence. The border status shifted from mere internal-administrative marker, to a colonial border, to dissolution, to inter-state border during the one-decade Federation, becoming an internal border again, going through a phase of contested no-man's-land during the civil war and, finally, acquiring the status of a national border.<sup>116</sup>

Two points related to the waning of the border after its crystallization in 1936 are particularly relevant. Firstly, the implications of defeat and the period of Italian occupation are not readily acknowledged in Ethiopia; with the exception of references to the external aggression and accompanying patriotism.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, as Barnes notes: 'The Italian experience, while fleeting, was crucial for Ethiopia's post-war sovereignty'.<sup>118</sup> Secondly, the TPLF alliance with the EPLF in the latter's confrontation with the ELF had implications with regard to the administration of the 'liberated areas'. During the two-year war not only was the alliance between the two silenced or re-interpreted in light of the previous period of tension in the 1980s, but

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<sup>116</sup> Triulzi, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> Barnes, 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 513.

also the implications of this alliance on the TPLF and ELF confrontation, which contributed to the expulsion of ELF combatants from Eritrea.<sup>119</sup>

The use of historical myths to foment hatred and aggression is not unique to this dyad in the Horn of Africa. Indeed, the Balkans with the disintegration of Yugoslavia was infested with such myths.<sup>120</sup> After the end of the Cold War, militant nationalism re-emerged as a potent force fuelling armed conflicts that plagued both the Horn of Africa and the Balkans during the last decade of the twentieth century.

### **3.3.3 Conceptions and practices with regard to the boundaries**

Since Eritrea's formal independence and up to the outbreak of hostilities, the local conceptions of the boundaries between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the practices of borderland communities across borders had not substantially changed. The communities in the borderlands continued to conduct their everyday business as usual, but under improved conditions due to the end of the civil war. The communities continued to intermarry and visit relatives on both sides of the border, and to many the border was hardly noticed. Evidence collected especially in the Central Sector indicated that daily practices were based on decisions taken regardless of the border.<sup>121</sup>

In the Central Front when hostilities broke out, many ran and sought for hiding places regardless of the border, others were directed by the EDF to Eritrea. Behailu Abebe's research findings suggested that 'fleeing the area and panic was the first stage of reaction to the war'.<sup>122</sup> Some went to the nearest town in Ethiopia (Adigrat) and others sought refuge in nearby caves and localities removed from the frontline. Behailu's research showed the variety of coping mechanisms developed during

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<sup>119</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, 2005. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business'. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press. Notes from participant-observation at the 'One day Conference- Eritrean Initiative/ Reconciliation'. London, 21 May, 2005.

<sup>120</sup> Kolstø, 2005, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Tronvoll, K. March 2003. 'Identities in Conflict: An ethnography of war and the politics of identity in Ethiopia 1998-2000' *Department of Anthropology*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)/ University of London. Abbink, J. 2001. 'Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio- Eritrean War on the Local Population'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* LVI: 447-458.

<sup>122</sup> Behailu Abebe, 2004, op. cit., p. 406.

wartime conditions and the different experiences of those who were caught up in the middle of hostilities.<sup>123</sup>

The situation in this border area was different from the situation in other border areas, especially in the western and eastern sectors, where the majority of the residents did not identify with Tigrinya-speaking communities in the two states. In contrast, the norm in this part of Tigray, in villages around Zalambessa, was 'fluidity of identity and social boundary markers were invisible or irrelevant'.<sup>124</sup> Humera<sup>125</sup> (Western Front) did not fall within the border-disputed areas, as the line in this part of the border is clearly drawn along the Tekezze River. However, the town was shelled several times during the course of the war.<sup>126</sup> The citizens of this area did not escape the massive military recruitment campaign and were enlisted. As Hammond's research shows, the new-comers to the area, mainly Ethiopians who had been living as refugees in Sudan until the overthrow of the Derg regime, in order to be fully re-integrated faced similar pressure to other peripheral peoples. Although in Ethiopia conscription is not compulsory, 'voluntary' conscription was one of the central components of becoming a good citizen. With the war, the call to take up arms was articulated in the context of the much needed support around the national cause. These new-comers seldom escaped joining the local militia and/ or from carrying out their military 'duties'. The family's access to local critical resources (land and water) and local services (health and education) was dependent upon the head of household and male member's fulfilment of their 'duties' as Ethiopian citizens.<sup>127</sup>

At the onset of the war it was expected that those affected directly by the war were likely to be displaced not across state frontiers but within their state. Empirical evidence collected mainly from the Central Sector, near Zalambessa and the Irob area, shows that the movement of borderland communities reflected the predominant local conceptions and practices with regard to the border. When hostilities started, the borderland communities sought refuge regardless of the border. Both Eritrean citizens

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<sup>123</sup>ibid., p. 411.

<sup>124</sup> ibid., p. 422.

<sup>125</sup> Humera is located in Ethiopia's north-western border, in Western Tigray, near the border with Sudan and with Eritrea. The nearest village on the Eritrean side of the border is Om Hager.

<sup>126</sup>Hammond, L. C. 2004. *This Place will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

fled to Ethiopia and Ethiopian citizens to Eritrea. Their return to Ethiopia either during the course of or after the third round of fighting is consistent with other accounts<sup>128</sup> showing how the degree of animosity and hatred grew exponentially as the third round of fighting unfolded. For the first time, since the outbreak of hostilities, the Ethiopian citizens who had sought refuge in Eritrea, and waited for the end of hostilities to cross the border, started to fear reprisals from the Eritrean army, to an extent which had been absent during the previous rounds of fighting.<sup>129</sup>

In the case of Eritrean citizens and, particularly, the Kunama the growing sense of hatred within Eritrea towards the Ethiopian's armed forces' invasion and Eritrean officials' suspicions towards this group led them to fear for their safety and, like the previous group, cross the border to seek refuge and protection in Ethiopia.

As the war grew in intensity, and in particular after the second and third rounds of fighting, considerations of personal safety led various groups to seek alternative routes to return to Ethiopia. This transformation shows how local identities were supplanted by national ones.

These events illustrate two significant transformations shaped by the war:

- 1) At the outbreak of hostilities borderland communities sought refuge regardless of the states' borders and, under wartime conditions, did not feel significantly threatened by the 'other' state;
- 2) At the end of hostilities, and particularly in the course of the third round of fighting, citizens from borderland communities were forced by an increased fear of reprisals to move back to or seek refuge in the state which they identified as the guarantor of their security. Their increased treatment as members of the enemy state forced them to embrace the mutually exclusive path. The Eritrean citizens that identify themselves with the Kunama ethnic

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<sup>128</sup> Federica Guazzini's research on cyberspace shows that the escalation of the systematic campaign of hatred on the Eritrean part toward Ethiopian citizens in Eritrea coincided with the beginning of the Third Round of Fighting in May 2000. This shift came as retaliation for Ethiopia's invasion of Eritrea. Guazzini, 2004, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>129</sup> Interview Tigray Region, July 2005.

group were not the only group among borderland communities to seek refuge on the enemy state's soil. Ethiopian citizens from other borderland areas followed a similar path in order to escape hostilities.

In conclusion we can observe that the outbreak of hostilities led to different strategies of survival during wartime conditions. In the north-western and north-eastern part of the Ethiopian border, the displacement occurred mainly within borders. In the central sector the displacement was both within and across state borders showing that the decision to escape was taken regardless of the borders. In the central sector, the presence of the Eritrean Defence Force led many citizens to escape to Eritrea rather than to towns, villages and caves in Ethiopia. Up to the final round of fighting there was no displacement of Eritrean citizens across the borders with Ethiopia. The Kunama, during the third round of fighting, escaped to Ethiopia for fear of reprisals.

The conduct of the war impacted on the local conceptions of the boundaries that used to be predominantly based on their openness. The introduction of the Eritrean currency (*Nakfa*) had already started the process of transformation of the border. The trench lines built along the border imposed a physical marker of the border, which had an impact on local conceptions and practices. The boundaries became entrenched in notions of obstruction, obstacle and interdiction. In one of the first accounts of the conflict, Abbink rightly claimed that the war 'sealed the irreversible secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia'.<sup>130</sup> This process was effectively sealed with its transformation into the main theatre of the conflict and with the closure of the border in the aftermath of the cease-fire.

During the hostilities the existence of many websites and on-line forums for discussion allowed the mobilisation and involvement of a key external constituency of the two states: the diaspora.<sup>131</sup> Guazzini's research showed how a 'war of words' was waged over the internet. Not coincidentally, the escalation of the propaganda mirrored

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<sup>130</sup> Abbink, J. 1998. 'Briefing: The Eritrean- Ethiopian Border Dispute'. *African Affairs* 97, p. 562.

<sup>131</sup> The chapter follows Terrence Lyons' definition, i.e., 'what defines a diaspora is participation in activities designed to sustain linkages to the homeland'. Lyons, T. 2006. 'Diasporas and homeland

the intensity on the battlefield. During the third round when the Ethiopian armed forces invaded Eritrea, the Eritrean websites intensified a campaign of hatred against their Tigrinya counterparts south of the Mereb.<sup>132</sup> This participation had implications for the debate around the war's background conditions and what its aims should be. The degree and intensity of participation of the diaspora (both in financing the war effort<sup>133</sup> and in framing the debate around the war) should not be overlooked. Indeed, this is one of the key characteristics highlighted in the 'new wars literature' relevant for the understanding of this 'old' war.<sup>134</sup>

Lyons has developed reconciliation work with the Ethiopian diaspora and, at the time of writing, is developing a research project on the impact of conflict-generated diasporas on homeland conflicts.<sup>135</sup> The research findings show that members of the Ethiopian diaspora had different conceptions of what the space labelled Ethiopia should be. The three groups offered competing visions of the homeland.

- 1) One group emphasised the overarching unity of Ethiopians and interdependence among the Ethiopian people. To them, Ethiopia represented a glorious historical and territorial entity to which unity and loyalty was owed. For some, this conception of Ethiopia included the entire territory of the currently recognized state as well as the neighbouring state of Eritrea.
- 2) For another group the territorial space occupied by 'Ethiopia' included 'Oromia', the territory occupied by the Oromo people who awaited their legitimate self-determination. To them, Ethiopia merely represented a geographic concept rather than a source of positive identity based on voluntary

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conflict' in Kahler, M., and, Barbara F. Walter, (ed.) *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 113.

<sup>132</sup>Guazzini, 2004, op.cit. Guazzini, 2001, op. cit., p. 566.

<sup>133</sup> The diaspora contribution to financing the war is discussed in chapter 5 on the section on the war induced taxation increase.

<sup>134</sup>As discussed in the first chapter, the 'new wars literature' seeks to demonstrate the role of diasporas, under the globalization of communications, in 'the funding, techniques and politics of wars'. Kaldor, M. 2005. 'Elaborating the 'New Wars' thesis' in Duyvesteyn, I., and, Angstrom, Jan (ed.) *Rethinking the nature of War*. London and N.Y.: Frank Cass, p. 211.

<sup>135</sup> Lyons, 2006, op. cit.

association. Thus, for the Oromo, Oromia rather than Ethiopia was their homeland, with clear territorial boundaries.

- 3) A third group shared the territorial definition of the homeland put forth by the first. However, this group shared the second group's resentment from oppression from successive despotic regimes from Northern Ethiopia toward the peoples of southern Ethiopia.<sup>136</sup>

The research findings of this Project, quite significantly, call attention to the fact that despite divergences the three conceptions had a common denominator: a vision of the homeland with territorial dimensions.

The conceptions of homeland for the first group seem very similar to what is commonly portrayed as the conceptions of the Ethiopian 'public opinion'. As Pausewang notes:

in the urban context (...) an educated, ethnically mixed and socially privileged majority stands for Pan- Ethiopian nationalism. They speak Amharic, the lingua franca of the Empire, and want to feel Ethiopians without ethnic distinctions. For them, ethnic differences are self-destructive, and Eritrean independence is an amputation which they cannot easily forgive.<sup>137</sup>

More significantly, Pausewang rightly claims that a majority of the urban elite rejected the independence of Eritrea in 1993. With the 1998-2000 war they have gradually accepted Eritrea's independence but in its aftermath still hold that the port of Assab should have remained within Ethiopia's sovereign territory.<sup>138</sup> However, a note of caution is required with regard to how far this conception reflects the majority's vision of what Ethiopia should be after Eritrea's independence.<sup>139</sup>

Without the creation of conditions for the borderland communities to adjust their practices across borders within the framework of peaceful inter-state relations,

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<sup>136</sup> Lyons, 2006, op. cit., pp. 124- 125.

<sup>137</sup> Pausewang, S. 2004. 'Aborted or nascent democracy? Structural reasons for the failure of democratisation in Ethiopia' in Sørbø, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, p. 146.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., pp. 144-145.

the divergent conceptions of the various Ethiopian constituencies will remain either anachronistic or meaningless. Eritrea's continuity as a sovereign state remains largely independent from these conceptions, but the destinies of the citizens on both sides of the border remain tragically affected by them. For the borderland communities the war and the closure of the border led to a change of practices that, in turn, impacted upon the conceptions with regard to the border and, more significantly, with regard to the 'other'.

Paradoxically, for the 'urban elite' and for constituencies within the diaspora the war and its aftermath provided the opportunity to voice resentment on the fait accompli of Eritrea's independence and on its implications for Ethiopia.

Indeed, the analysis in this closing section shows that the war was a watershed for the conceptions of Ethiopia and Eritrea, after the latter's independence. The change of practices of borderland communities in the Central Sector clearly conditioned the transformation of conceptions with regard to the borders, and crystallized the different national identities of Tigrinya-speaking communities north and south of the Mereb. The diaspora conceptions of homeland and the 'urban elite dominant opinions' seem to converge on resentment over what Ethiopia became after Eritrea's independence.

Indeed, the empirical evidence confirms that the war was about the disputed boundary in its relation to national identity.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The chapter is critical in understanding how the conduct of the war led to a transformation of the importance attached to each of the causes of the war. Furthermore, the conduct of the war led to the transformation of the war aims on various levels.

Although depicted initially from Eritrea as a conflict between Eritrea and the Northern Region of Ethiopia - Tigray, the war was conducted between the armed forces of the two sovereign states. The first and second rounds of fighting followed

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. 142- 146.

tactics more germane to World War I trench warfare- style, yet both belligerents had access to high- tech weapons. The third round of fighting displayed characteristics of World War II, such as the coordination between aerial bombardment and the troops' mobility. Throughout the three major rounds of fighting both belligerents provided support to each others' opposition armed movements in neighbouring countries; a common feature in other cases of contemporary armed conflicts, as highlighted in the 'new wars line of enquiry' and discussed in chapter 1. Although the war was a conventional war between the armed forces of two sovereign states, there were two other features common to contemporary armed conflicts, as portrayed in the 'new wars literature': the initial support from the diaspora constituencies to the war financing effort, and the diaspora's participation in the debate around the war through on-line forums and websites. The diaspora conceptions of the homeland reflected the divergences within Ethiopia's executive with regard to the war aims.

The outbreak of hostilities, and the intensity of the violence on the battle fronts during the two-year war, raised the question of nationalities. With the national question at the forefront, the re-definition of citizens of both states ensued. The right of Eritreans living in Ethiopia to dual-citizenship ceased and the war justified their expulsion under unlawful conditions. The Ethiopians from the border areas seeking refuge in Eritrea during the war increasingly faced discriminatory treatment to the point of fearing for their own safety, and were forced to return to Ethiopia during the final round of fighting.

From the outbreak of hostilities until the cease- fire was finally signed, significant changes occurred at various levels.

Badme, from a barren strip of land, was transformed into a second Adwa, i.e., new symbolic meanings from an enduring site of memory were attached to Badme. Furthermore, the victory in the final offensive marked the end of a major war of national identity.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Clapham, C. 2003. 'Guerre et construction de l'État dans la Corne de l'Afrique' in Hassner, P., et, Roland Marchal, (ed.) *Guerres et sociétés : États et violence après la Guerre Froide*. Paris: Éditions Karthala.

The support to each other's armed opposition groups was only possible via the use of the territory of third countries, especially Sudan and Somalia.

The extent to which the war represents the beginning of a new cycle of state formation and consolidation of supremacy in the region of the Horn<sup>141</sup> needs to be considered in greater detail and it will be the focus of chapters 5 and 6.

The observations in this chapter show that the outcomes of the war in its various dimensions can only be understood at the junctures of key decision making moments during the conduct of the war, both on the political and military fronts. On the political front, it was argued, the US-Rwanda cease-fire/ peace proposal after the first round of fighting was a missed opportunity for Eritrea. The OAU-US cease-fire proposal, after the second round and prior to the final round, was a missed opportunity for Ethiopia. Each missed opportunity for peace was followed by a tragic increase in the number of casualties.

On the military front, key decisions during the war already showed major disagreements and diverging paths in the core of the decision making bodies of the dominant factions in the two regimes. With hindsight, for Ethiopia, two key moments impacted upon subsequent political events: the battle of Tsorona, in the second round of fighting, and the decision that prevented Ethiopian forces to advance towards Assab. In Eritrea, both the events that precipitated the escalation of the crisis, and the decision for Eritrean forces to withdraw from Barentu in the third round of fighting, were key sources of disagreement, which affected the course of events both during the war and in its aftermath. This will be the focus of the next chapter on the outcomes of the war. Once the fog of war dissipates, the time is ripe to render the war decision-makers accountable for their decisions, even in states where civil society is prevented from participating in the key debates that shape its destiny.

The prevalence of repressive state apparatus and authoritarian regimes in the two countries prevents any initiatives of reconciliation emanating from the civilian constituencies directly affected by the war: the borderland communities and the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

Ethiopians and Eritreans with links to both countries. Without the opening up of space for civil society to participate in the ‘healing of the recent past’ not only will the borders remain closed but the development of the two countries will be deflected from its original aim: to foster peace and stability, both domestically and in the region, through cooperation in mutually advantageous terms.

## **Chapter 4: Outcomes of the 1998-2000 war: From Brothers War to Border War**

### **4.1 Introduction**

It has been almost a decade since the opposing sides signed the peace agreement. At the time of writing no progress has been achieved in the normalization of relations between the two countries. The relations between the neighbouring states are still punctuated by animosity.

Chapter 4 postulates that the war aims changed as the war unfolded. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the outcomes of the war in its various dimensions. The period of analysis draws upon the events after the Algiers Peace Agreement up to the events that followed the May 2005 elections in Ethiopia. However, other significant events, such as Eritrea and Ethiopia's contending approaches to the 2006 Somali crisis, will be examined in the epilogue. The purpose of chapter 4 is to provide an analysis of the outcomes of the war, against the backdrop of the preceding chapters. It will, however, reverse the order of the analysis of the various dimensions. The territorial dimension will be treated first; reproducing the prominence attributed to territory during the course of the war, and in the way the war was brought to an end. The second section will examine the political and military outcomes of the war. The third section offers an analysis of the economic and social outcomes of the war. The closing section will reflect upon the regional implications of the war.

### **4.2 Why Territory matters: territorial outcomes**

#### **4.2.1 Outcomes of the Peace Agreement**

While the Africa Union had been charged with the settlement of the peace negotiations, the United Nations was assigned the provision of the peacekeeping input. The United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) had the mandate and the means to resolve a conflict between two sovereign states. The war between the armed forces of the sovereign states led to the establishment of a 'classic'

UN interposition force.<sup>1</sup> The Peace Agreement<sup>2</sup> resulted in the creation of two significant Commissions: a Boundary Commission (EEBC), article 4 (2) and a Claims Commission (EECC), article 5 (1). The Commissions' tasks were to delimit and demarcate the border (EEBC) and consider compensation claims by both sides (EECC), respectively.

The Peacekeeping Operation was established to monitor a 25-kilometer-wide Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) along the 1,000 km border separating the two countries. The initial effort of the UNMEE to define the TSZ in accordance with the orientations provided by the Algiers Peace Agreement signatories was met with difficulties. In the Agreement it was convened that the line would correspond to the one before the events of 6 May 1998. Initially, the good-will line, which was unconditionally accepted by Eritrea, left Irob land inside the TSZ. Ethiopia's failure to provide a map of the borderline with precise coordinates led the UNMEE to include large swathes of territory which had been previously administered by Ethiopia, within the Temporary Security Zone. After realising this inaccuracy, Ethiopia complained and urged UNMEE to redraw the line, placing it further north. UNMEE was later able to provide an operational map that already included Irob land within Ethiopia's territorial jurisdiction. This redrawing of the line according to Ethiopia's later coordinates led Eritrea to protest and to claim that Ethiopia had not withdrawn from 'occupied territory'. Eventually, this misunderstanding raised Eritrea's suspicions in relation to UNMEE's impartiality in the dealings with both states.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the TSZ was formally declared in mid-April 2001.<sup>4</sup>

UNMEE also had the responsibility of chairing the meetings of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC), to which both parties agreed to assign senior rank military officers. In addition, the UNMEE was charged with monitoring and

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<sup>1</sup> MacQueen, N. 2002. *United Nations Peacekeeping in Africa since 1960*. London: Pearson Education, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Algiers Peace Agreement 12 December, 2000. 'Agreement between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea, [http://www.issafrica.org/AF/profiles/eritrea/paxethioerit.pdf?link\\_id=&slink\\_id=3172&link\\_type=12&slink\\_type=13&tmpl\\_id=3](http://www.issafrica.org/AF/profiles/eritrea/paxethioerit.pdf?link_id=&slink_id=3172&link_type=12&slink_type=13&tmpl_id=3)'.

<sup>3</sup> Péninou, J.-L. juillet 2000. 'Les Ambitions cachées d' Addis- Abeba : Ethiopie- Erythrée, une paix en trompe l'oeil'. *Le Monde Diplomatique* URL <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/07/PENINOU/14025>.

<sup>4</sup> MacQueen, 2002, op. cit., p. 230.

implementing the activities of the Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC), for land mine clearance. The MACC role was fundamental to creating the conditions for the re-settlement of the borderland communities, displaced by the war, and for the future demarcation of the border.

The creation and the deployment of an interposition force between two sovereign states seemed a straightforward task when compared with ongoing Peace Keeping Operations in other contemporary armed conflicts. The combatants' status and the issues related to the definition of Prisoners of War and their treatment posed far less ubiquitous challenges than any other ongoing conflict in Africa or elsewhere. However, since the signing of the peace agreement both parties used all means at their disposal to hamper the normalisation of relations. Indeed, both parties purposefully placed unexpected constraints on the workings of the set of institutions and legal dispositions they had agreed upon in Algiers. This became particularly notorious with regard to the legal decision on the disputed areas along the frontier.

The creation of the independent Boundary Commission to decide on the border's delimitation and demarcation (EEBC) was set up on the premise that the final decision on the disputed border areas would be final and binding. The EEBC finally announced its decision on 13 April 2002. After the initial euphoria and claims of outstanding victory by both parties, ambiguities contributed to an exacerbation of suspicion and animosity between the parties. The key problem was the ambiguity with which the award of Badme was approached. The EEBC only mentioned Badme twice and both parties manipulated this initial ambiguity to claim that the town had been awarded to itself. Badme is the place where the incident which had triggered the crisis had happened. In the end, the contentious situation surrounding Badme took precedence over the extensive areas where agreement could have been reached, and which offered promising areas for incremental measures towards a rapprochement between the parties. This initial resistance led both parties to submit their own observations and evidence to contest the EEBC April 2002 Decision. After revision of the processes submitted by the parties, the EEBC announced on 21 March 2003 the final and binding decision to recognize Eritrea's legitimate sovereignty over Badme on the basis of the Colonial Treaty and, especially, on the basis of the juridical line

which had crystallized in 1935, prior to Italy's invasion and forcible occupation of Ethiopia.

The creation of a Claims Commission implied that the parties recognized the centrality of territory in the outbreak of hostilities. In fact, as Cooper notes, reparations represent a key component of wars over territory.<sup>5</sup> The EECC had the responsibility of delivering the ruling on the application of *jus ad bellum* and the law of Human Rights on the conduct between belligerent parties. The most significant EECC decision, on *jus ad bellum*, was announced on 19 December 2005. The EECC recognized that Eritrea's resort to force to settle the border dispute had been unlawful, and as a consequence it recognized that Ethiopia had resorted to force legitimately in self-defence.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Eritrea acted in violation of *jus ad bellum*. According to the customary practice with regard to the International Law of Armed Conflict and the Use of Force, the legitimacy of the use of the means of coercion to settle disputes related to demands of due jurisdiction over contested land has been outlawed from international society, particularly since the Second World War.<sup>7</sup>

In the stalemate between Ethiopia and Eritrea the absence of any enforcement mechanism and the inability to implement the EEBC decision on the ground highlighted how the devices purported to consolidate the peace agreement were becoming a hindrance to the rapprochement between the parties. Ethiopia and

Eritrea's diverging approaches and resistance to the legitimate institutions set up to bring about the normalisation of relations reflected their unwillingness to reach a consensus on the means to overcome the stalemate. The rupture of formal relations between the two regimes has persisted, and at key junctures the rhetoric of animosity and of mutual suspicions raised the prospects of an escalation of the crisis into armed hostilities.

#### **4.2.2 The Temporary Security Zone and contested territorial boundary**

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<sup>5</sup> Cooper, R. 2004. *Breaking of nations : order and chaos in the twenty-first century* New York Atlantic Monthly Press, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission December 19, 2005. 'Partial Award Ethiopia's Claims 1-8 *Jus ad bellum* between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea, <http://www.pca-cpa.org/ENGLISH/RPC/#EECC%20Awards> '.

The establishment of international devices and actors intended to implement and guarantee the peace process transformed the porous borders. Indeed, the establishment of the TSZ was the key to the consolidation of a frontier. The absence of natural resources combined with the difficulty in overcoming the stalemate around the EEBC decision leads us to look more carefully at other dimensions of the problem. As the stalemate around the demarcation of the three contested sectors persisted, detailed scrutiny of the several components of the relation between a state and its territory became paramount.

UNMEE played a central role in the consolidation of the border, indeed the TSZ was, perhaps, leading to the fossilization of the frontier. The agents and institutions of the states initially relied on UNMEE's patrolling missions to maintain security in the aftermath of the Algiers Peace Agreement. Eritrea as the vanquished state had to accept the terms of the victorious party, which led to the implementation of a 25 kilometres buffer zone within its territory.

As the stalemate persisted, Eritrea became suspicious of the international community's standards in relation to both countries. From Asmara's standpoint, Addis Ababa's continuous failure to accept the EEBC decision on Badme proved how international law was primarily subordinated to *realpolitik*.

The emplacement of displaced communities near the border and within the TSZ seems to have been used by both governments as the means to create buffer mechanisms, which mark the division between Eritrean and Ethiopian sovereign territory.<sup>8</sup> However, the frontier remained infested with landmines. UNMACC offered an alarming estimate of their extent.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Mayall, J. 1999. 'Sovereignty, Nationalism and Self- Determination'. *Political Studies* 47, p. 489.

<sup>8</sup> The resettlement of both displaced people and refugees either near the border (Ethiopia's case) or in the TSZ (Eritrea's case) seems to suggest that both states follow this strategy to create buffer mechanisms in the borderland. In these two states, the resettlement and emplacement of displaced communities of refugees near the disputed border precedes the extension of the states' required institutions to mark the borders. The use of returned refugees to keep the borders is part of a process of extending state institutions in the borderlands. Hammond, L. C. 2004. *This Place will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

<sup>9</sup> In Eritrea the MACC detected an estimate of approximately 1, 500 000 to 1, 650,000 mines and 300, 000 unexploded ordinances. Ethiopia is contaminated with 2, 000, 000 mines. IRIN 28 April 2005.

The Commission's decision to award Badme to Eritrea fuelled the mistrust and intransigence between the parties. Badme, as the trigger of the conflict, became the symbol of the entire outcome of the war. As things stand, however, the demarcation of the border, especially the control of Badme, appears as an intractable problem. As long as the border remains contested the potential of a relapse into conflict should not be discarded.

Interestingly enough, the media coverage of the 15 May 2005 elections reported the registration of voters in Badme, as part of the north-western zone of the Tigray state,<sup>10</sup> therefore within Ethiopian sovereign territory. The registration of voters in Badme for the Ethiopian elections in 2005 provided some indication of how the situation was likely to remain hostage to both parties' intransigence. Ethiopia's move was a device to overcome the ambiguous citizenship of the Badme residents in the aftermath of the contested decision of the EEBC, and to impose its territorial jurisdiction in defiance of the EEBC Decision. However, the members of the EU Electoral Observation Mission to Tigray rejected the votes cast in Badme and in other disputed areas as null, due to the pending contention between Ethiopia and Eritrea with regard to the EEBC 2002 Delimitation Decision.<sup>11</sup> This significant measure highlighted that, in stark contrast to Eritrea's claims, the international community had not favoured Ethiopia in handling the persisting stalemate between the signatories of the Algiers Peace Agreement.

#### **4.2.3 Borderland Communities**

The June 18<sup>th</sup> ceasefire and the subsequent peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia on 12 December 2000 ended the war. However, a humanitarian crisis caused by the combination of armed conflict and drought was only later assessed and recognized by the international donor community. The ceasefire did not mean that war-displaced people and especially borderland communities could safely return to their homes.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Eritrea- Ethiopia: Four injured by landmines along border'. These figures related to the legacy of both the civil and inter state wars.

<sup>11</sup> BBC Monitoring Service 22 January 2005. 'Eritrea: Ethiopia proves its defiance, registers voters in Badme'.

Ethiopian and Eritrean troops destroyed almost everything in their path, including grain reserves, livestock, homes, equipment, and infrastructure. In addition, both Eritrean and Ethiopian troops laid landmines in areas of conflict, further compromising the safety of returning populations. The displaced people and expellees living inside the TSZ,<sup>12</sup> and especially those living in the contested areas, bore the brunt of the traces of the war and of the closure of the border. In the aftermath of the war the total number of Eritreans in need of emergency assistance was estimated to have reached 1,665,000 or a staggering 47.5 per cent of the population.<sup>13</sup> The Eritrean government, UN agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) sources stated that 1.5 million people, about 40 per cent of the country's population of 3.5 million, were affected by either the war (1 million) or the drought (500,000).<sup>14</sup>

If we look at specific groups, especially the ones in the borderlands, and in particular pastoralists, it becomes clear how the pending territorial outcome of the war still hampers the normalisation of life.

Pastoralists on both sides of the border were adversely affected by the 1998-2000 war and by its aftermath. Their livelihood practices were disrupted and the

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<sup>11</sup> Interviews in Ethiopia, July-August 2005.

<sup>12</sup> As Donnan et al. claim governments often dislike foreign scholars, or national scholars from their own metropolitan centres, looking around disputed borders, especially if the governments fear security breaches. Donnan, H., and Wilson, Thomas M. 1999. *Borders, Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State*. Oxford & N.Y: Berg, p. 14. While conducting fieldwork in Eritrea in July- August 2004, despite having successfully secured all the logistical support and necessary institutional arrangements to visit an IDP camp in Senafe, neither the University of Asmara nor the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission were in a position to provide me with the required official authorisation from the state. Indeed, without this permission not one of the NGOs or UN agencies working on the TSZ would be able to provide logistical support. But the constraints on the movements of non-nationals are not limited to researchers. During an extended period even the movements of the UNMEE patrolling missions were severely limited by the government, especially on the Keren - Barentu road, and have further deteriorated at the time of writing. IRIN, 'ERITREA: Restrictions on movement of peacekeepers persist, UN says', NAIROBI, 16 Mar 2004. In several interviews with members of International Organizations it was clear that no permission was granted to travel North of Afabet. Interview, Asmara August 2004. IOs and NGO international staff were required to apply for permission to travel beyond 140 km from the capital. At the time of writing any journey outside the capital involves applying for an official authorisation at least ten days in advance of the intended departure date from the capital. The campus of the University of Asmara has been closed and the ERRC has been extinguished.

<sup>13</sup> Refugees International, 'Eritrea: More Than 1.5 Million People at Risk' , 07/27/2000, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/716/?mission=1639>

seasonal migration across the boundary was severely restrained by the mines left behind by both armed forces along the frontier and by the creation of the TSZ, within Eritrea, and the closure of the border. The loss of cross border mobility has hampered pastoralists from securing access to critical grazing and water resources, as well as to key traditional markets where there is a high demand on livestock.<sup>15</sup>

### **Kunama and other Gash Barka borderland communities**

According to Gash Barka residents the restrictions of movements across the border with Ethiopia, particularly of nomadic herders, antedated the war.<sup>16</sup> However the war and its aftermath further disrupted livelihood practices. The seasonal migration across the border in search of fertile grazing land and water resources was hampered by the closure of the border and by the mines left behind as a legacy of the hostilities.<sup>17</sup> The seasonal migration for both nomadic pastoralists and agro-pastoralists is an important survival strategy for all the production systems in the region; this is the response developed by borderland communities to critical shortages of pasture and water.

For Eritrean pastoralists from the western lowlands, particularly the Tigre-speaking Beni-Amer and the Cushitic-speaking Hdareb the closure of the border left few alternatives concerning the need of pastures for their livestock; the environmental degradation in Eastern Sudan means that the seasonal movements across this part of the border is not sustainable.<sup>18</sup> The loss of cross border mobility for pastoralists along the frontier was particularly disruptive of pastoralists' livelihoods on both sides of the border.<sup>19</sup>

The Kunama from Gash Barka in Eritrea were among the worst affected. Many of the Kunama left in 2000 when the Ethiopian army withdrew from Eritrea. As of late December 2003, there were 4,141 Kunama refugees in Ethiopia, living in

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<sup>14</sup> Refugees International, 'Eritrea: After Shooting Stops, Massive Humanitarian Aid', 21/06/ 2000, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/713/>

<sup>15</sup> White, P. 2005. 'Sovereignty and Starvation' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> Iyob, R. 2000. 'The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38: 659-682.

<sup>17</sup> PENHA-NUEYS 2002. 'Eritrean Pastoralism in 2002- New Challenges and the Need to Raise Awareness about Pastoralist Livelihoods'.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> White, 2005, op. cit., p. 224.

the temporary Wa’ala Nihibi camp, only 20 kilometres from the Eritrean border. The temporary camp is located in a barren desert area of the western zone in Tigray.<sup>20</sup> Alexander Naty challenges the view that the Kunama were or still are particularly loyal to the Ethiopian state.<sup>21</sup> In the aftermath of the war the Eritrean government’s suspicion of this group reasserted itself. Naty argues that the Kunama suffered both at the hands of Ethiopian and Eritreans state authorities.<sup>22</sup> Their resentment towards the Eritrean government contrary to the predominant rhetoric is not based on the legacy of the war for independence but on the forceful dispossession of their land, which was allocated to returnees from Sudan and to other groups from the Eritrean highlands.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Alexander Naty argues that the Ethiopian government’s use of Kunama grievances and support for the Eritrean Kunama Democratic Movement (EKDM) during the 1998-2000 war, among other Eritrean opposition groups, is mainly geared towards destabilising the trajectory of nation building in Eritrea.<sup>24</sup> In this sense the Kunama’s position within Eritrea remains fragile and this borderland community was particularly affected by the war and by its aftermath. The Kunama like other borderland communities remain divided from their kinsmen across the border. This is neither unique to this ethnic group or to the borderland communities along the frontier between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

## Irob

Ethiopia Irob was one of the Ethiopian border territories invaded by Eritrean forces.<sup>25</sup> Irob land was occupied by the Eritrean forces from 31 May 1998 until June 2000 and prior to this date had been administered by Ethiopia.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Refugees International, ‘Forgotten People: The Kunama of Eritrea and Ethiopia’, 18/02/2004, <http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/939/>.

<sup>21</sup> Naty, A. 2001. ‘Memories of the Kunama of Eritrea towards Italian Colonialism’. *Africa: Rivista dell’Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente* LVI, p. 580.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 581.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 587.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 588-89.

<sup>25</sup> One member of the Programme ‘Indigenous Soil and Water Conservation in Africa (ISWC)’ was conducting research in Eastern Tigray, just south of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, at the end of May 1998, Ann Waters-Bayer, ‘Conflict causes suffering among the Irob people’, Field Trip Report From Northern Tigray, Mon, 03Aug1998, [http://www.geocities.com/~dagmawi/News/News\\_Aug6\\_Tigrai.html](http://www.geocities.com/~dagmawi/News/News_Aug6_Tigrai.html).

<sup>26</sup> Interviews in Ethiopia, July 2005.

35,000 displaced people were based in Adigrat during the major offensives. The northern part of Irob land was occupied by the Eritrean Defence Force. Young Irobs were conscripted by force into the Eritrean army. The Eritrean armed forces were said to have been in Irob land (Ethiopia) to update their records on men and women of an age to be called up for military service. At the time the elders had a village meeting to decide whether they should authorise the recruitment of members of the Irob community into the Eritrean military. They decided not to let any young person leave the village for the obligatory military service until the border was settled and their citizenship finally defined. Despite the lack of any mechanisms to articulate the interests of the local communities they resisted compliance with the Eritrean demands until a final settlement was reached.<sup>27</sup>

The ones who remained in Ethiopia were threatened more by the demands for conscription than by the occupation of their land by the Eritrean Defence Force. With the third round of fighting the ones who had sought refuge in Eritrea felt compelled to return to Ethiopia for security reasons. The Eritrean Defence Force's occupation of the area was resented because of the destruction and looting of property and the disrespect of places of religious practice, such as churches. A sense of security was recovered when the Eritrean troops were finally dislodged by the Ethiopian army. However, communities in the central sector still resent the persisting militarization of the border. The frontier has been transformed into a garrison area and the continuous presence of soldiers in the region was a transformation wrought about by the war with significant social implications for the borderland communities in this sector.

For the Irob- Saho it was only during the conduct of the war that the implications of Eritrea's Independence were acutely perceived. The initial difficulty in establishing the good will line raised Irob's awareness of the implications of the TSZ and their loyalty was expressed toward the state that had administered the area prior to the outbreak of hostilities, i.e., Ethiopia. However, the initial ambiguity with

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<sup>27</sup> Interviews in Eritrea July 2004 and in Ethiopia July 2005. Péninou, J.-L. Décembre 2001. 'Tensions régionales et guerre contre le terrorisme: Un redéploiement stratégique dans la Corne de L'Afrique'. *Le Monde Diplomatique* <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2001/12/PENINOU/15940>.

regard to the creation of the TSZ created resentment towards the Ethiopian government for having mishandled the defence of Irob's interests.<sup>28</sup>

## Afar

The conduct of the war seems to have led to a rapprochement between Afar insurgent movements and the EPRDF/TPLF. However, in the aftermath of the war the closure of the border became particularly disruptive to Afar borderland communities, especially to those based in Zone 2, which directly shares borders with Eritrea. Indeed, the government in Ethiopia has not ensured the monopoly of coercion in this zone of the Afar Regional State and non-residents in the area are discouraged from travelling to this zone.

In addition, with the outbreak of hostilities and in the aftermath of the war the main nerve of the transport traffic was displaced from the Addis Ababa-Assab road to the Addis Ababa-Djibouti road. While the disruption of traffic to the Assab port did not directly affect the Afar as they hardly benefited from the traffic to Assab,<sup>29</sup> the intensity of traffic along the road to the Djibouti port was accompanied by increasing tension between the Afar and the Ise.<sup>30</sup> According to Markakis, the Afar and Ise clans' conflict antedated the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. As in other regions in post-1991 Ethiopia, the Federal government defined the regions' boundaries without precise coordinates with regard to the administrative territorial jurisdiction of each region. The emergence of internal boundary disputes between regional states of the Ethiopian Federation was left for the regional authorities to settle.<sup>31</sup> In this respect, the Afar loss of land was two-fold. To the north they lost Assab to Eritrea, to the south they lost land to the Ethiopian Somali region to the Ise. Although this was not an ethnic conflict at the onset, as the confrontation opposed one Somali clan to several Afar clans over access to grazing land and water, the politicization of ethnicity in post-1991 Ethiopia contributed to the saliency of the ethnic dimension of the conflict.

<sup>28</sup> Abbink, J. 2001. 'Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio- Eritrean War on the Local Population'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l' Africa e l' Oriente* LVI, p. 457.

<sup>29</sup> Bryden, M. January 1996. 'Situation report on Region 2 (Afar National Regional State)'. Addis Abeba: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue\\_web/AFAR1A.htm](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/AFAR1A.htm).

<sup>30</sup> Markakis, J. 2003. 'Anatomy of a Conflict: Afar and Ise Ethiopia'. *Review of African Political Economy* 96: 445-453.

Indeed, as Markakis claims: 'The role of the ethnic factor is illustrated by the intervention of the Ugugumo on the Afar side, undoubtedly motivated by ethnic solidarity'.<sup>32</sup>

The major clash between Afar and Ise pastoralists occurred in the Afar Region's Zone 3 during 2002. The casualties of this forceful encounter led to the closing of the road between Addis Ababa and Djibouti. While the Afar favoured the return to the status quo ante, the Ise favoured a referendum to delimit the internal boundaries between the two Regions (Afar and Somali). The EPRDF policy in the aftermath of the war with Eritrea was to lower barriers between regions and decrease the saliency previously attributed to ethnic groups.<sup>33</sup> The government's main concern in the region was related to the maintenance of undisrupted flow of traffic along the Addis Ababa- Djibouti road. The military presence along the stretch of the road that goes through the Afar region's zone had increased and the army was ordered to enforce the state's authority if any armed civilians came near the road and refused to lay down their arms.<sup>34</sup> Rather than fostering mechanisms of conflict resolution, the EPRDF policy remained one of minimal interference as long as the conflict did not escalate and/or impact on the movement of goods along the major transport route to the Djibouti port.

The EPRDF/TPLF capitalized on Afar resentment for the loss of Assab port and mobilized their support for the war effort. The outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea allowed the Afar to pursue their aim of recovering lost territory, namely the Assab port. In this respect, the war led to a rapprochement between the Afar insurgent movements and the ruling party in Ethiopia. After the war, insurgency continued in the Ethiopian Afar region, particularly in Zone 2. The Afar in this zone resented the closure of the border, as their daily practices were disrupted. The Afar used to move across the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea through zone 2 on their way to the major livestock market in Djibouti. Their livelihood and practices were disrupted by the closure of the border and they are now forced to travel further south

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 448-50.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 453.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 452.

in Ethiopia to reach Djibouti through the main road that links the Ethiopian capital to this neighbouring country.

For the Afar, prior to the war, the border was conceived just as an imaginary line; with the war, and particularly in its aftermath, the border is now perceived as a fortress.<sup>35</sup>

The civil war against the *Derg* and the inter-state war have left borderland communities in the Northern frontier particularly exposed and affected by armed conflict. However, the border war led to the closure of the border. Even during the civil war the borderland communities continued to move across the areas controlled by the state's forces and by the insurgent movements. During the civil war the hostilities and check- points restrained the movements of civilians across the provincial territorial jurisdictions but did not hamper or totally obstruct the movement of peoples and goods. Indeed, the closure of the border in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war has imposed a decisive shift in the conceptions and practices of the borderland communities in this sector; to a scale which the previous regimes failed to achieve.

Furthermore, the closure of the border disrupted borderland communities' practices, namely the previous pattern of access to preferred markets regardless of the borders. As Markakis highlights, this practice was not exclusive to the Northern frontier with Eritrea. Indeed, prior to the war the markets for borderland communities, namely pastoralists, in other regions, were respectively:

The markets for the Ogaden in Ethiopia are in northern Somalia, for the Ethiopian Afar in Djibouti, for the Eritrean Beni Amer in eastern Sudan.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to these, the markets for the Tigray region in Ethiopia used to be in southern Eritrea and those in the Eritrean capital. The markets for Eritrea were in Northern Ethiopia, mainly in Tigray. In addition, the markets for north-western Ethiopia (mainly Tigray region and north western Amhara region) were in south-

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<sup>35</sup> Interview in Addis Ababa, July 2005.

western Eritrea and in eastern Sudan. The closure of the border forced exporters and grain producers to travel further, and enhanced the costs of transport to reach the markets in eastern Sudan.

The conflicts over grazing land and water have long permeated the relations between Ethiopian Tigrayans and Ethiopian Afars. Indeed, during the final years of the TPLF insurgency and their hold of territory in the Tigray province, the leadership had decided to give legitimacy to the Abagore, a traditional institution used by the two groups to resolve the conflicts arising over the access to critical resources: water and land. Despite the introduction of this measure by the TPLF, violent struggles between the Tigrayans and the Afar had not declined prior to the war with Eritrea.<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.2.4 The territorial boundary and *ius solis* and *ius sanguinis* principles of Citizenship**

In Ethiopia prior to the implementation of the ethnic-based Federal model the rules governing the acquisition of citizenship dated from 1930 and were based on a combination of the *ius solis* principle (law of the soil) and on the *ius sanguinis* principle (law of the blood). According to the *ius solis* principle citizenship is derived from birth in the territory of the country.<sup>38</sup> The *ius sanguinis* principle is based upon descent from a national of the country in question. The interpretation of the two principles meant that Ethiopian law regarding citizenship granted both *ius solis* — those born in Ethiopia were Ethiopian — and *ius sanguinis* — those born to two Ethiopian parents were Ethiopian.<sup>39</sup>

The state did not allow dual nationality. It should be noted that Ethiopia considered Eritrea as a ‘lost Province’ during Italian colonialism (1890-1941) and British Administration (1941-1952); as a result, any Eritrean entering Ethiopia and wishing to acquire Ethiopian citizenship was entitled to do so. With the Federation (1952- 1962) and, especially, with its dissolution Eritrean nationality was

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<sup>36</sup> Markakis, J. 1998. *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: PRIO and SAGE Publications, p. 173.

<sup>37</sup> Young, J. 1998. ‘Regionalism and Democracy in Ethiopia’. *Third World Quarterly* 19, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> Koser, K. 2007. *International migration : a very short introduction*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, p. 22.

relinquished. All citizens in Eritrea or those of Eritrean origin residing in Ethiopia acquired Ethiopian citizenship. Indeed, Eritrean nationality ceased to exist. Eritreans who fled during the war for independence (1961-1991) were registered upon arrival in host countries as Ethiopians.<sup>40</sup>

With Eritrea's independence and the EPRDF's own conception of Ethiopian statehood and nationhood the situation changed significantly with serious international and domestic implications.

The EPRDF conceptions of statehood and nationhood had ill-considered implications for the international and 'domestic' nationalities of those ethnic groups who straddle state borders.

At the level of the criteria for Ethiopian nationality, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) continued the earlier practice of not recognising claimants to dual 'international' nationality. Ethiopian nationality was mutually exclusive of other 'international' nationalities. At the level of the domestic criteria for Ethiopian citizenship, the state defined citizenship according to the ethnic identity. This conception, in practice, created a dual identity: an international Ethiopian national identity and a domestic Ethiopian 'national' identity subordinated to the ambiguous definition of 'Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' promulgated in Article 39 of the 1995 Constitution. The domestic Ethiopian 'national' identity was defined through the ethnic identity, which was also mutually exclusive. The TGE rendered the definition of the Ethiopian citizens' ethnic identity obligatory. This rule, again, had serious implications for various groups within Ethiopia. For children of mixed parentage it was compulsory to choose between ethnic identities and to keep only the identification with the ethnic group of one of the parents.<sup>41</sup> For those urban residents who related to a Pan-Ethiopian identity, it forced upon them an externally imposed identification with an ethnic group. Abbink suggests that:

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<sup>39</sup> Terrazas, A. M. 2007. 'Beyond Regional Circularity: The Emergence of an Ethiopian Diaspora'. Washington, DC: Migration Information Source, <http://www.migrationinformation.org>.

<sup>40</sup> Koser, K. 2003. 'Mobilizing New African Diasporas: An Eritrean Case Study' in Koser, K. (ed.) *New African Diasporas*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, p. 112.

(...) people were forced to make an often impossible choice as to their ethnic identity and mother-tongue in the educational system.<sup>42</sup>

However, for those Ethiopians of Eritrean origins the rules governing the acquisition of Eritrean or maintenance of Ethiopian citizenship were not clearly defined. The rules for acquiring citizenship and, especially, the rules governing the citizenship of Ethiopians of mixed parentage (Ethiopian and Eritrean) and/or of those who chose to vote in the 1993 Eritrean referendum for independence remained ambiguous. At the level of the criteria for acquiring citizenship, in practice, this group of citizens enjoyed dual nationality, i.e., Ethiopian and Eritrean.<sup>43</sup> During this period, those Ethiopian citizens who qualified to acquire Eritrean citizenship and who decided to keep their residence in Ethiopia (rather than going back to Eritrea) registered to vote in the referendum and were awarded Eritrean identity cards. Until the outbreak of hostilities, this group could leave and enter Ethiopia without bureaucratic requisites of visa applications or foreign currency payment upon departure.<sup>44</sup> In addition, according to Iyob, many of those who voted in the 1993 UN-referendum for Eritrea's independence also voted in all Ethiopian elections.<sup>45</sup> The Ethiopian law had only clearly stated that those who decided to take on the citizenship of the successor state had to relinquish the nationality of the predecessor state, i.e., Ethiopian nationality.<sup>46</sup> In addition, it should be noted that when they voted in 1993, Eritrea's status as a sovereign state was still dependent upon the outcome of the referendum. By voting, this group of Ethiopian citizens of Eritrean origin did not formally relinquish Ethiopian citizenship. The Provisional Government of Eritrea's (PGE) citizenship rules further contributed to the ambiguity of the nationality of those who had voted in the referendum.

The citizenship rules defined in the first Proclamation of citizenship by the PGE in 1992 aimed to embrace a population dispersed territorially, attributing

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<sup>41</sup> Abbink, J. 1998. 'New Configurations of Ethiopian Ethnicity: The Challenge of the South, To the memory of Jacques Bureau 1947- 1998'. *Northeast African Studies* 5, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 664.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 671.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 18, p. 680.

<sup>46</sup> Human Rights Watch January 2003. 'The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue (June 1998- April 2002)'. vol.15, No.3 (A): HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ethioerit0103/ethioerit0103.pdf>, p. 7.

Eritrean nationality via matrilineal and/ or patriarchal descent (*ius sanguinis*) or naturalisation. Those who registered to vote for the Referendum (both within Eritrea and abroad) were issued with identity cards, which ascribed them the right to vote for or against independence.<sup>47</sup> The criteria for acquiring Eritrean citizenship were birth, naturalisation and/or adoption. Indeed, ‘any person born to a father or mother of Eritrean origin in Eritrea or abroad’ was entitled to become an Eritrean citizen and to acquire voting rights, regardless of the country of residence.<sup>48</sup> This conception of nationhood granted equal rights to those living in Eritrea and outside. If the host country allowed dual nationality, the Eritrean conception of nationhood posed no problems. However, this definition had the potential to create an ambiguous status for those who qualified to acquire Eritrean citizenship but who had acquired the citizenship of states in which only a single nationality was permitted. The PGE’s conception created a Pan- Eritrean identity with a transnational component. However, as Iyob highlights:

After Independence, Eritrea failed to establish legal terms of reference to legitimise transnational citizenry and protect them under international law.<sup>49</sup>

The outbreak of hostilities in 1998 led to the expulsion of 60,000- 75,000 Ethiopians of Eritrean origin and Eritreans from Ethiopia.<sup>50</sup> The Ethiopian government’s expulsion of Eritreans and/or of Ethiopians of Eritrean origin was not unprecedented. In 1991 the Provisional Government of Eritrea expelled 50,000 Ethiopians residing in Eritrea encompassing traders, workers in the port of Assab, industry and services workers and Ethiopian state’s agents, such as army personnel and administrators.<sup>51</sup>

However, the Ethiopian government’s largely arbitrary expulsions had major implications both with regards to the state’s new defined criteria for acquiring Ethiopian citizenship and for the group of citizens who was unduly caught up in the

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<sup>47</sup> ibid., p. 663.

<sup>48</sup> Iyob, 2000, op.cit., p. 671.

<sup>49</sup> ibid., p. 664.

<sup>50</sup> Koser, 2003, op.cit., p. 112.

<sup>51</sup> Abbink, J. 1998. 'Briefing: The Eritrean- Ethiopian Border Dispute'. *African Affairs* 97, p. 560.

process.<sup>52</sup> The Ethiopian state unilaterally outlawed the earlier practice of accepting the dual nationality of those Ethiopians of Eritrean origins on the basis that the decision to vote in the referendum had been an affirmation of Eritrean nationality. For those citizens expelled from Ethiopia on the basis of this claim their legitimate right to choose was denied. The mutually exclusive Ethiopian and Eritrean nationalities were imposed upon this group of Ethiopian citizens regardless of their preferences and, more significantly, of their rights and without due process of the law. As one Ethiopian of mixed parentage notes: 'Before the recent war I wasn't even conscious that I was Eritrean'.<sup>53</sup>

In the aftermath of the war, Ethiopia had to redefine the rules governing the acquisition of citizenship which applied to its diaspora. Although dual nationality is not permitted, since 2002 the government has attributed Ethiopian Origin Identity cards to Ethiopians who hold another citizenship.<sup>54</sup> In 2003, the government's revision of the earlier rules governing citizenship resulted in Proclamation No.378/2003 on Ethiopian Nationality. The previous proclamation on Ethiopian nationality dated from 1930 and had been amended in 1933.<sup>55</sup> The 2003 proclamation aimed to address and update the rules governing the acquisition of Ethiopian citizenship. This much needed revisionist stance, however, neither implied a rectification of the situation of those expelled during the war, nor was it retroactive. One year after the new proclamation on nationality had come to effect, the Security Immigration and Refugee Affairs Authority issued the Directive on Residence for Eritrean Nationals in Ethiopia.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.3 Political and military outcome

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<sup>52</sup> Amnesty International 21 May 1999. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Human Rights issues in a year of armed conflict'. AI Index: AFR 04/03/99. ; Human Rights Watch, 2003, op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> Interview in London, September 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Terrazas, 2007, op.cit. In practice, the cards entitle the holder to the same rights as Ethiopians with exclusive nationality and residence in Ethiopia, except for the right to vote.

<sup>55</sup> Barnes, C. 2006. 'Ethiopia: A Sociopolitical Assessment': Writenet/ UNHCR. Since the EPRDF had came to power the official position, although introducing slight changes to the 1930 Proclamation, was not binding. The official position with regard to Ethiopian Nationality enshrined in the 1995 Federal Constitution permitted those born of both or either national parents to acquire citizenship (*ius sanguinis*). This position also permitted foreign nationals to acquire citizenship.

<sup>56</sup> Barnes, 2006, op.cit., p. 39.

### 4.3.1 Political Outcome

We need to look at the domestic implications of external combat. When Tekeste Negash and Tronvoll wrote 'Brothers at War'<sup>57</sup> they could only look at the extension of fighting at the sub-state level, internally, through each government's assistance to its opponent's armed opposition movements. In the aftermath of the war, it became necessary to look at the domestic repercussions of external combat, especially in the understanding of national politics and the impact on both the internal and external legitimacy of the two ruling parties. Interestingly, the war impacted adversely on both political leaderships. President Issaias, like many other African nationalist leaders, started with a great stock of legitimacy derived from the war for independence.<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister Meles was forced from the onset to include other groups in the ruling coalition. This strategy was forged in order to compensate for the TPLF's reduced legitimacy in the wider society and among significant constituencies. In addition to this reduced domestic legitimacy, post-1991 Ethiopia seemed to reflect a wider continental trend defined by Chabal as a period of 'popular challenge'. During this period various segments of African societies voiced claims for greater representation, ultimately leading to the call for multi-party democracy.<sup>59</sup> In the aftermath of the war Meles Zenawi's legitimacy decreased within the TPLF but the Prime Minister was able to efficiently rely on the support within the EPRDF, and among other groups in society unleashed by the 1998- 2000 war. This happened during the final stage of the war when the Prime Minister played the victory card successfully in launching the final offensive against Eritrean armed forces during the May 2000 elections. The coincidence of these two major events lends credence to the claim that this strategy was followed to boost the EPRDF's support base throughout the country.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Tekeste Negash & Tronvoll, K. 2000. *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean- Ethiopian War*. Oxford and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press.

<sup>58</sup> Patrick Chabal, refers to this first period in the history of political legitimacy in the post-colonial order as the post-nationalist period, during which the legitimacy of the African regimes stemmed from their nationalist antecedents. Chabal, P. 1992. *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation*. London: Macmillan, p. 138.

<sup>59</sup> ibid., p. 138-39.

<sup>60</sup> Pausewang, S., Tronvoll, Kjetil, Lovise Aalen 2002. 'Ethiopia since the Derg: A Decade of Democratic Pretension and Performance'. London & N.Y: Zed Books.

In this section, we highlight how President Issaias's legitimacy decreased with the war. The Algiers Peace Agreement had been signed only in December 2000, and the end of the war showed its effects on the leadership of the core groups at the helm of the states. In both cases, while there were differences over policy and ideology among the leadership, of equal importance was a contest over power.

In Eritrea, in 2001 a group of fifteen, composed mainly of party leadership veterans, was publicly charged with committing crimes against the nation's security and sovereignty.<sup>61</sup> In Eritrea signs of growing discontent and more authoritarian tendencies were indicated by this decision to arrest the signatories of the letter, which contained strong criticism of Issaias Afewerki. One of them, the Minister of Defence, was forced to stay abroad in order not to join his co-signatories in prison.

The imprisonment of the group of politicians that openly criticized the President for delaying both the constitution's implementation and the conduct of elections, revealed a fundamental split within the ruling party. In the aftermath of the border war two axes emerged within the ruling party and society. One was marked by a split between civilian politicians and army leaders. The other axis delineated a growing inter-generational divide between those who fought during the liberation struggle (or the three decade long civil war) and those who fought during the border war. Furthermore, in Eritrea the situation of the media demonstrates the authoritarian nature of the regime. The focus of the media coverage of the war sheds light on similarities between the international and domestic policies of the countries. In Eritrea if one reads the official newspaper in English, Eritrea Profile, the same themes dominated before and after the war. Before the war Sudan's threat tended to dominate. After the war there were copious accusations against Ethiopia.

What is happening in Eritrea is not unique. We can learn from the experiences in Eastern Europe, especially from the lesson that authoritarian/ totalitarian regimes rather than changing because of external pressures, tended to implode. The same might happen in Eritrea.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Connell, D. 2001. 'Inside the EPLF: The Origins of the 'People's Party' & its Role in the Liberation of Eritrea'. *Review of African Political Economy* 89: 345-364.

<sup>62</sup> Roland Marchal, Interview in London, 30/06/04.

In Eritrea, it may well be the case that the closing of public political space, the shutdown of the private press, the arrest and indefinite detention of key figures from the liberation struggle, and the imposition of a coercive regime on the population will raise serious challenges to the ruling party's ability to remain at the helm of the state. Indeed, with the decrease of the legitimacy of the ruling party, both internally and externally, opposition is likely to increase. In fact, from 18-22 January 2005 Khartoum was again the stage for a meeting of Eritrean opposition forces. They set up an alliance called the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA). The secretariat was composed of seven members.<sup>63</sup> This umbrella organization aimed to bring together Eritrean opposition forces. EDA acknowledged the Sana'a Cooperation Grouping (which included: Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen) and reiterated the common goal shared by this grouping and the EDA: the removal of the current Eritrean regime of the PFDJ.<sup>64</sup>

The war brought national identity and loyalty to the state to the surface in Ethiopia. Given the post- 1991 prominence of sub-national ethnicity, this re-emergence of Ethiopian nationalism came as an unexpected outcome.

In 2001, the TPLF Central Committee split. The seeds for the crisis in the TPLF were sown during the 1998-2000 war.<sup>65</sup> In the case of Ethiopia, core elements who had been advocates of Tigrayan nationalism were dismissed from the ruling coalition. Among them, the regional representative for Tigray, the party's number two, and one of the founding leaders of the TPLF.<sup>66</sup>

The war allowed Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to rally support around the ruling party; this was epiphenomenal rather than a trend and ceased in the aftermath of the war. It certainly had an impact on the May 14, 2000 Elections, but as the May

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<sup>63</sup> Hussein Khalifah; Ahmed Nasir; Ibrahim Mohammed Ali; Tewelde Gebreselassie; Abdelaziz Khiyar; Ali- Kernelios Osman; Hamid Turki.

<sup>64</sup> 'Eritrean Opposition groups set up new alliance', Sudan Tribune, Monday January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005. [http://www.sudantribune.com/article\\_impr.php3?id\\_article=7687](http://www.sudantribune.com/article_impr.php3?id_article=7687).

<sup>65</sup> Medhane Tadesse and, Y., John 2003. 'TPLF: Reform or Decline?' *Review of African Political Economy* 97: 389-403. Dismissal of Ato Seeye Abraha Ex- Defence Ministe. Deki Alula( doc. Accessible) <http://www.dekialula.com/articles/casesiye1.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Gebru Asrat and Ato Seeye Abraha were prominent figures within the TPLF who were dismissed after the 2001 split in the TPLF.

15, 2005 elections showed, the aftermath of the war and the combination of both domestic and foreign policies of the EPRDF/ TPLF eroded the short- lived widespread legitimacy of the ruling party as the bearer of the Ethiopian polity tradition of national unity in the face of external aggression.

This is not a novel pattern to Ethiopian politics. Internal contention was suspended in order to concentrate effort in containing and defending the country and its territorial integrity against what was perceived as external aggression.

#### **4.3.2 Military Outcome**

The World Bank had planned to disburse US\$ 60 million at the onset of the Demobilization and Reintegration Project for Eritrea to support the demobilization of 60,000 troops out of a total of 300,000 armed forces in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war, i.e., 10 per cent of the population. As of 2006 only 23.6 per cent of the total Fund had been disbursed.<sup>67</sup> The government has suspended demobilization since the due starting date in October 2001. As a consequence the World Bank, other international organizations<sup>68</sup> and bilateral donors have not contributed with further funding in support of the long expected demobilization.<sup>69</sup> Following on from this, Eritrea *ante bellum* levels of military expenditure changed. Prior to the war the military expenditure as a percentage of GDP also included the government self-funding of the demobilization process. In Ethiopia's case, as discussed in chapter 2, the data should also be interpreted as a mere indicator, as the hidden economic burden of military activities is not accounted for.<sup>70</sup> The comparison of the two countries military expenditure prior to the war is misleading for these reasons. Despite this qualification,

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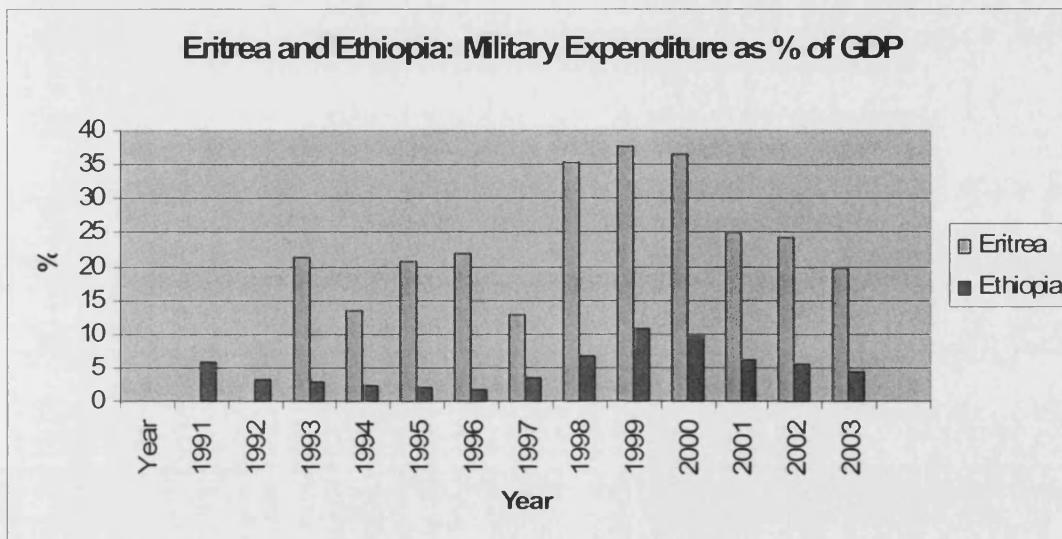
<sup>67</sup> World Bank August 2006. 'Country Brief: Eritrea, Development Progress 2006': World Bank, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/ERITREAEXT/0,,menuPK:351396~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:351386,00.html>.

<sup>68</sup> UNDP-Eritrea supported the National Commission for Demobilization and Reintegration in Eritrea (NCDRE). As of November 2006, the agency of the IO claims to have supported the demobilization of 104,400 soldiers. In this respect any progress in the demobilization from the 1998-2000 war armed forces is neutralized by the continuous compulsory national military service, which lasts officially for two years but in reality fails to discharge draftees within the legally defined period. UNDP November 2006. 'Project Fact Sheet, Project Title: Technical Assistance to Demobilize Soldiers': UNDP Eritrea, <http://www.er.undp.org/recovery/docs/pj-demob-06-fs.pdf>.

<sup>69</sup> US Department of State October 2006 'Background Note: Eritrea': US Department of State, Bureau of African Affairs, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm>.

as figure 2 shows Eritrea's military expenditure in comparison to its population remained disproportionately high. The graph also shows that both countries reached a peak during the hostilities and while peace negotiations were underway. This feature is associated with the costs of war and the armaments purchases. Although there are no definitive figures of the cost of war to both countries, SIPRI states that the cost was over US\$ 300 million for both countries.<sup>71</sup>

**Figure 2 Eritrea and Ethiopia Military Expenditure as % of GDP 1991- 2003<sup>72</sup>**



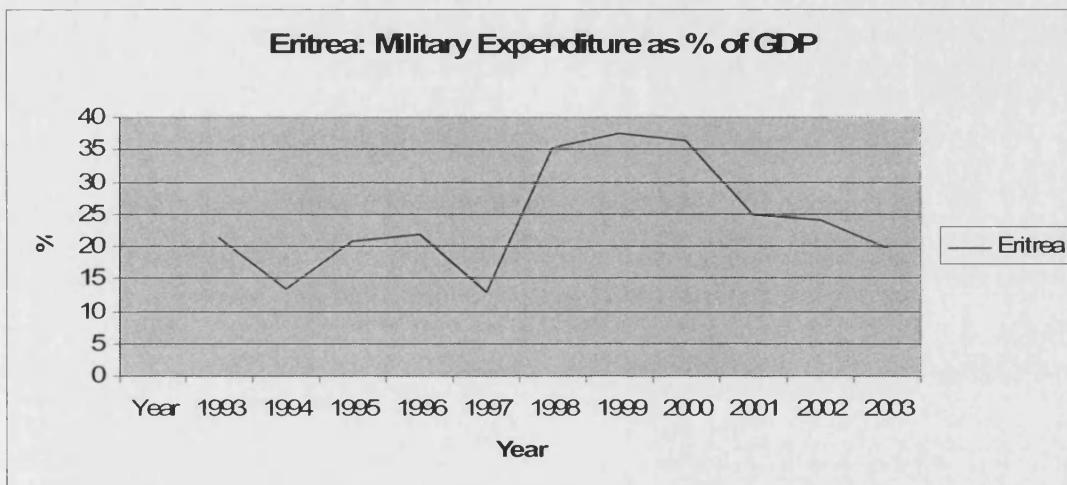
The graphs (figures 3 and 4) on the evolution of military expenditure as a percentage of GDP in the two countries clearly confirm the peak during the war. Despite a decrease in the aftermath of the war, both the graph for Eritrea and Ethiopia show that the war had a negative impact in the continuous militarization of the two countries and essential resources continue to be channelled to the military sector. Indeed, in the aftermath of the war the military expenditure as a percentage of GDP has not decreased to *ante bellum* levels. Prior to the 1998-2000 war Ethiopia was undergoing a reduction of military expenditure; this trend was particularly compromised by the border war.

<sup>70</sup> SIPRI 1999. *SIPRI Yearbook 1999 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 274.

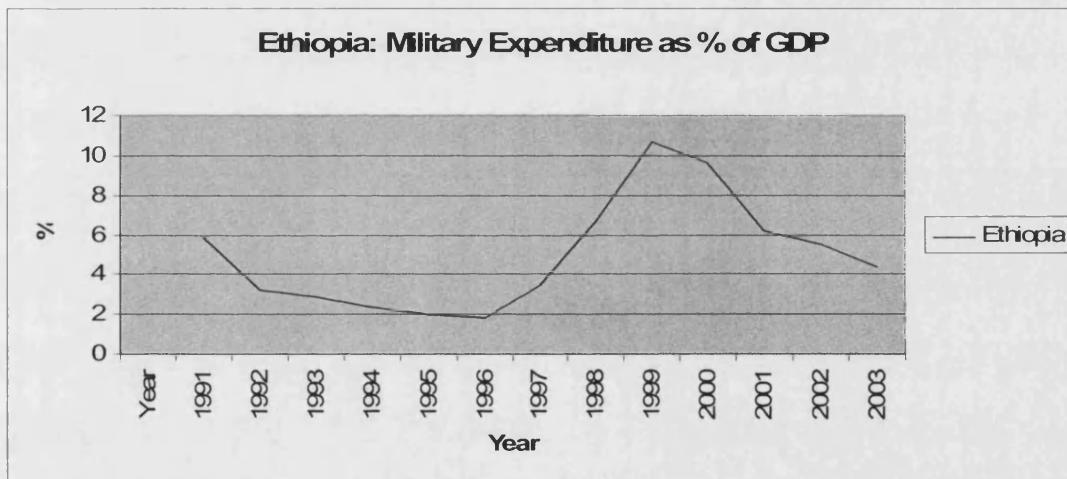
<sup>71</sup> --- 2000. *SIPRI Yearbook 2000 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 295.

<sup>72</sup> The graphs were conceived by the author on the basis of the available data published by SIPRI. For the data refer to Table 1 in appendix 2.

**Figure 3 Eritrea Military Expenditure as % of GDP<sup>73</sup>**



**Figure 4 Ethiopia Military Expenditure as % of GDP<sup>74</sup>**



Furthermore in Eritrea the military recruitment and compulsory military service has continued unabated and the persecution and consequences for draft-dodgers were amplified in the aftermath of the war, as chapter 5 will discuss in further detail.

According to a study conducted by Tadesse Berhe et al. in the Northern Region of Ethiopia along the border, Tigray, the war engaged the armed forces of the two countries and the civilians comparatively to other contemporary armed conflicts

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> For the data refer to Table 1 in Appendix 2.

were not directly targeted during hostilities.<sup>75</sup> In spite of the lack of widespread local disintegration and widespread sexual violence the war and its aftermath transformed the region's social and economic landscape. The convergence of a very large army and the accompanying influx of Commercial Sexual Workers (CSW) impacted upon social relations. In addition, this transformation was coupled with a growing problem of orphans and street children. Economically the region was also further affected by the increase of the military's presence in contrast to earlier periods. The profitable trade route through Tigray, from Maychew, to Adigrat and then across the border to Eritrea was halted by the closure of the border. On its place, the state's extension and its authorities acquired a predominantly military character. In this sense, the aftermath of the war disrupted the flourishing movement of goods and people across the border since the overthrow of the *Derg* and instead led to a militarization of the frontier with an impact to the region.

As one interviewee explained to this author:

The borderland communities suffered the consequences of the war. The war disrupted their lives and the soil is not totally cleared of mines. Prior to the war they were not aware of the border, they weren't even conscious about its existence. The war and its aftermath transformed this region into a garrison area; with all the problems that followed from the presence of large contingents of soldiers, to the problem of HIV/AIDS.<sup>76</sup>

Chapter 5 will examine in further detail the relationship between the war and the extension of the states' institutions to peripheral areas along the border.

#### **4.4 Economic and social outcomes**

As discussed in chapter 2, at the time of Eritrea's Independence, Ethiopia did not consider any alternative routes of transit to the sea. The pitfalls of dependency on one sea outlet were not at the forefront of the ruling party's concerns at that point.

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<sup>75</sup> Tadesse Berhe, H. G., &, de Waal, Alex , 2005. 'War and HIV Prevalence: Evidence from Tigray, Ethiopia'. *African Security Review* 14: 107-114.

<sup>76</sup> Interview in Ethiopia, 8/08/05.

This section will first consider the alternative and supplementary corridors to Assab and will then analyse the irregular movement of goods and people (irregular migrants) to Berbera and Bossaso in the aftermath of the war.<sup>77</sup>

With the outbreak of hostilities one of the immediate outcomes was the cessation of freight movements to the Eritrean port, the diversion of vessels with cargo for Ethiopia to the Djibouti port and the termination of Ethiopian Airlines flights to Assab. Indeed, the Eritrea Ethiopia Claims Commission was asked to decide on Ethiopia's claim on the illegal appropriation by the Eritrean state agents of Ethiopia's goods. The EECC concluded that Eritrea's decision to halt cargo movements was pursued according to international law and common practice between belligerent parties during the twentieth century. On these grounds, the EECC dismissed Ethiopia's claim.<sup>78</sup>

Even if this measure did not constitute a breach to international law, it was very similar to a previous incident which had created tension and resentment between the insurgent movements in the mid-1980s. Indeed, most of the cargo stranded at the Assab port consisted of development assistance and humanitarian aid.<sup>79</sup> In the mid-1980s due to disagreements between the EPLF and the TPLF, the former decided to halt the movement of development assistance and humanitarian aid coming from Sudan to Tigray, via EPLF controlled territories. Between mid-1985 and early 1988, the EPLF and TPLF suspended cooperation and ceased formal communication. What happened in 1998 bore similarities to what had happened in the mid-1980s.<sup>80</sup>

During the war all movement of goods and humanitarian aid to Ethiopia was channelled either via the Djibouti port or (to a lesser extent) via the Berbera port.

### **Addis Ababa- Djibouti corridor**

<sup>77</sup> These routes antedated the closure of the border with Eritrea and have, in fact, been used since the pre-colonial period. Its accrued prominence resulted, in part, from the disintegration of the Somalia state in 1991. The closure of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea contributed to an increase in the movement of both people and goods along these routes.

<sup>78</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission 19 Dec., 2005. 'Final Award - Ports - Ethiopia's Claim 6 between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea': The Hague.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Duffield, M., & Prendergast, John 1994. *Without troops & tanks : the emergency relief desk and the cross border operation into Eritrea and Tigray*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press. Chapter 2 on the background and causes of the war provides further details.

The Addis Ababa – Djibouti corridor comprises three routes: 1) the railway which links the Djibouti port to the capital via Dire Dawa along 781 kilometres;<sup>81</sup> 2) the road which links the port to the Ethiopian capital via Galafi along 910 kilometres, this road meets the Assab-Addis Ababa road and carries the bulk of the traffic along the corridor 3) the road via Dwenle, which runs parallel to the railway until Dire Dawa, and has a total length of 844 kilometres.<sup>82</sup>

From the beginning of the war with Eritrea, Ethiopia's annual cargo traffic to the Djibouti port grew from 1.7 million tonnes in 1997, to 3.1 million tonnes in 1998. By 2002 Ethiopia's traffic freight movements via Djibouti reached 4.8 million tonnes per year. Ethiopia's cargo accounts for 83 per cent of the total cargo traffic at the port.<sup>83</sup>

Local conflicts in the southern stretch of the road that goes through the Afar Region led to its closure in the spring of 2002. The local conflict was originally related to disputes over the delimitation of territorial boundaries between Ethiopia's Afar Region (Region 2) and the Somali Region (Region 5). In addition, access to pasture and water (namely to the Awash River) had opposed Afar pastoralists to Ise pastoralists,<sup>84</sup> from the Somali Region. The definition of Regions along ethnic lines further reinforced the ethnic saliency of the conflict between pastoralists in this stretch of the Djibouti corridor.<sup>85</sup> The conflict escalated into such intensity that the Federal authorities were forced to close the road. This incident disrupted the traffic along the Djibouti corridor and increased the ruling party's efforts to diversify transit routes to the sea.

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<sup>81</sup> The railway was inaugurated in 1897 when Djibouti was a French colony.

<sup>82</sup> Cabanius, P. 23-27 June 2003. 'Improvement of Transit Systems in the Horn of Africa, Sixth Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions'. New York UNCTAD, <http://www.unctad.org/templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3633&lang=1>, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> The Reporter (Addis Ababa) Jan 21, 2006. 'Ethiopia's Search for a Port'. [http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article\\_2006\\_01\\_21\\_3058.html](http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article_2006_01_21_3058.html).

<sup>84</sup> The Ise are the second clan in widest proportion, after the Ogadeni, in Ethiopia's Somali Region. The Ise have moved freely among their kin across Ethiopia's borders with Somalia and Djibouti.

<sup>85</sup> Markakis, 2003, op. cit.

Indeed, in July 2002 one of the first visits of the new Somaliland President, President Ryale, was to the Ethiopian capital. One of the major issues on the table was Ethiopia's use of the Berbera port.<sup>86</sup>

### **Addis Ababa-Berbera corridor**

By 1997, 65 per cent of the trade through the Berbera port was destined for Ethiopia. During the war with Eritrea, in early 1999 the EU started to use the Berbera port for the transhipment of humanitarian aid to Ethiopia.<sup>87</sup> However, the Berbera corridor was not perceived as an alternative route either to the Assab or to the Djibouti routes. The Berbera corridor is indeed an additional transit route to the sea.

The Berbera corridor has a length of 854 kilometres. It proceeds via Hargeisa (160 kilometres), reaches the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland in Togwajale (230 kilometres), continues to Jigjiga<sup>88</sup> in Ethiopia's Somali Region (336 kilometres), from there it continues via Harare, Dire Dawa (472 kilometres) and finally reaches Addis Ababa (854 kilometres). On the Ethiopian side the Dire Dawa-Jigjiga stretch is being rebuilt with EU funding, and the repair work of the stretch which links Jigjiga to Togwajale will follow.<sup>89</sup>

However, formal demand along the corridor is still relatively low and this corridor potential is linked with increases in the export of livestock. The disintegration of the Somali state and Somaliland's unilateral declaration of

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<sup>86</sup> President Egal passed away in May 2002 and Ryale succeeded him in office. Although Somaliland's aim is to provide Ethiopia with a more competitive port service than Djibouti, from an Ethiopian standpoint the transit via Berbera comes as an additional corridor to the Djibouti one, and not as an alternative port. After the war with Eritrea, it seems unlikely that Ethiopia will rely on an exclusive transit point to the sea for the bulk of its international trade and other cargo.

Yusuf Abdi Gabobe July 27, 2002. 'Editorial: Somaliland: Transit Shipment Corridor To Ethiopia?' *The Somaliland Times*. <http://www.somalilandtimes.net/Archive/Archive/00002800.htm>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Jigjiga became the capital of the Somali Region of Ethiopia (Region V) in 1995. The capital of the Ogaden used to be Godey. Hagmann, T. 2005. 'Beyond Clannishness and colonialism: understanding political disorder in Ethiopia's Somali Region, 1991- 2004'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, p. 527.

<sup>89</sup> Cabanius, 2003, op. cit., p. 3. In addition, the EU selected Louis Berger SAS and Afro-Consult to assess the feasibility of upgrading the port and transportation links supporting it, including the Berbera Corridor Highway, the Berbera and Hargeisa Airports and the Ethiopia-Somaliland border crossing facilities. Retrievable 8/03/07 <http://www.louisberger.com/berger/world/2005q2/mnindex.php>.

Independence may explain, in part, why formal demand is characterized as low. Indeed, Peter D. Little claimed that:

The absence or presence of a state in Somalia has not had a major effect on cross-border trade because i) it is an unofficial business and ii) the previous political regime so mismanaged the economy that the exchange rate instability actually increased volatility and risks for herders and traders.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, cross- border livestock trade between Somalia (Somaliland included) and contiguous neighbouring countries (mainly Ethiopia and Kenya) is the most legitimate trade sector.<sup>91</sup> The cross- border livestock trade has been lucrative to Eastern Ethiopia.

But the disintegration of Somalia's state did not compromise cross- border trade between eastern Ethiopia (Ethiopia's Somali Region) and Somaliland. In addition to the movements prior to 1991, Ethiopia redirected its exports from southern Somalia and the capital to the Bossaso and Berbera ports. The bulk of Ethiopia's exports to Somalia consisted of small stock and camels. Ethiopia's exports' major destination became the Middle Eastern markets. According to available estimates, 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the small stock exported via the Berbera port comes from Ethiopia. Significantly, cross-border commerce in livestock earns \$ 12.6 to \$ 15 million annually for eastern Ethiopia.<sup>92</sup> As the data seem to indicate, the exports of livestock from eastern Ethiopia to the Middle Eastern Markets mainly via the Berbera port has been of paramount importance to Ethiopia's Somali Region.

Another outcome of the closure of the border with Eritrea and of the loss of free access to the Assab port has been the increase in unofficial trade to the Djibouti port.<sup>93</sup> The unofficial movement of people (mainly irregular migration) and goods to the Djibouti port, to the Berbera (Somaliland-Somalia) and Bossaso (Puntland/Somalia) ports has further increased since the closure of the border with Eritrea.

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<sup>90</sup> Little, P. D. 2001. 'The Global Dimensions of Cross- Border Trade in the Somalia Borderlands' in Ahmed, A.G.M. (ed.) *Globalisation, Democracy, and Development in Africa: Future Prospects*. Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), p. 198.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>93</sup> Markakis, 2003, op. cit., p. 448.

With regard to the movement of goods, informal trade has increased substantively. As Markakis claims, the closure of the border with Eritrea on the one hand, and the porosity of the borders with Djibouti and Somalia, on the other hand, meant that:

Contraband, an old trade, now acquired new dimensions (...). A veritable common market emerged along the eastern and southern sections of the Ethiopian periphery, where people and goods move freely without benefit of passports, visas or customs checks. The few customs post that exist are easily evaded. Contraband trade flourished, bringing manufactured goods from many parts of the world, especially China, through the ports of Djibouti, Berbera in Somaliland and Bossasso in Puntland.<sup>94</sup>

According to Markakis the Ise, who can move freely across the borders of the three states among their kin were the first to benefit from this increase in the informal movement of goods. One of the main posts along the Addis Ababa- Djibouti road is Gadamaitu. The Ise work closely with other Ethiopian 'highlanders, many of them Tigrayans who operate in the same towns'.<sup>95</sup> Anecdotal evidence has it that the military stationed in the town to control the illicit trade have also benefited from the increased informal/ unofficial movement of goods.<sup>96</sup>

With regard to the increase in the informal movement of peoples the increase has been mainly directed to the Bossaso port, and to the Berbera port to a lesser extent. Indeed, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports the increased movement of people across borders. The origins of the irregular workers vary, but the majority come from North East Ethiopia, a small number from the Tigray Region (Maychew) and a more limited proportion from the southern zones of Bale and Arsi in the Oromya Region. The final destination of the irregular migrant workers is Saudi Arabia. Their trip involves crossing from Ethiopia, through Somaliland to reach the Bossaso port (Puntland) and then crossing the Red Sea to the

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<sup>94</sup> Markakis, J. 2003. 'Anatomy of a Conflict: Afar and Ise Ethiopia'. *Review of African Political Economy* 96, p. 448.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

Arabian Peninsula.<sup>97</sup> The successful journey normally encompasses the irregular movement of people across Ethiopia, the two northern regions of Somalia, Yemen and finally Saudi Arabia. However, the increasing number of failed cases and the proportions of Ethiopian citizens stranded in the Bossaso port have raised concerns about the organization of the irregular movement of migrant workers along this route. Normally, the migrant workers are approached in the Ethiopian capital by a ‘broker’ responsible for the organisation of the transport to the port in Puntland/ Somalia. The irregular migrants are usually requested to pay considerable amounts to guarantee their safe arrival in Somalia without detection by the state’s agents in Ethiopia, Somaliland and Puntland. However, increasing cases of irregular workers’ failure to arrive safely at their coastal destination before reaching the Arabian Peninsula have been reported. According to the IOM report the irregular migrant workers are abandoned in the desert between Burro (Somaliland) and Bossaso (Puntland), with their money and identity cards having been stolen by the informal transport operators. The IOM conducted in-depth interviews with Ethiopian irregular migrants stranded in Bossaso. These accounts add to the numerous under-reported cases of abuse, robbery of all possessions, including identification documents, and other infringements of the irregular migrants’ basic human rights by the network of smugglers involved in the transit from Ethiopia to the Bossaso port. This increase in the movement of irregular migrants from Ethiopia is a source of concern because of the dangers and misdemeanours of the operators behind this flourishing illicit enterprise. This is a thriving smuggling business conducted at the expense of those who are misled by the false appeals and copious promises of the smugglers. Indeed, the IOM reported that:

The pattern indicates a well-organized smuggling network beginning from Addis Ababa running up to Burro (Somaliland). There are also indications that the police and law enforcement officers might be aware of the operations and might even benefit from it through bribes.<sup>98</sup>

This evidence suggests that the closure of the border with Eritrea, coupled with the disintegration of the Somali state, the Addis-Ababa-Assab route has been replaced by

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<sup>97</sup> Yitna Getachew Yitna November 2006. 'Field Mission Report: Stranded Ethiopian Migrants in Bossasso, North East Somalia/ Puntland'. MRF Nairobi: International Organization for Migration, pp. 7-13.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

the Addis Ababa-Bossaso route. This is indeed an indirect consequence of the war. This route is sought after by aspirant irregular migrant workers on their way to Saudi Arabia.<sup>99</sup>

In the aftermath of the war with Eritrea the Afars in zones 4 and zone 2 were deprived of access to Eritrea's and Djibouti's markets. Due to the closure of the border and the creation of the Temporary Security Zone the Afar practice of moving freely across borders has been disrupted. In addition, the Afar used to straddle the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea on their way to markets in Djibouti. Both traders and pastoralists used to follow this route for practical reasons to avoid travelling far greater distances. Since the closure of the border, pastoralists from the Afar Region's zone 2 have needed to travel far greater distances to reach the markets within the region, Yallo (Zone 4) and Chifra (Zone 1) markets.<sup>100</sup>

### **Addis Ababa-Port Sudan corridor**

Although the distance from Port Sudan to the Ethiopian capital totals 1881 kilometres,<sup>101</sup> the shorter distance from Ethiopia's Northern Regions offer interesting comparative advantages to traffic of exports and imports from and towards these regions.

This corridor offers comparative advantages as a supplementary route to the sea (or indeed it could well serve as an alternative to the Assab and Djibouti ports) for grain producers' exports from northern and north-western Ethiopia (mainly the Tigray region and north-western Amhara region) to the Sudanese market, and to exports via port Sudan to other markets.<sup>102</sup> This route also offers comparative advantages for food imports into Northern Ethiopia, for reasons of geographical distance when compared to the routes to the Djibouti or to the Berbera ports. Indeed, the total length of the road

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>100</sup> Philpott, J., ; Asnake Abera, ; Kassaye Hadgu, February 2005. 'Livelihoods/ Emergency Assessment in Afar Region'. Oxfam GB: Oxfam International, p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> The Reporter Jan 21, 2006. 'Ethiopia's Search for a Port' *The Reporter*. Addis Ababa, [http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article\\_2006\\_01\\_21\\_3058.html](http://www.ports.co.za/didyouknow/article_2006_01_21_3058.html).

<sup>102</sup> The TPLF owned company retaining de facto monopoly of agricultural commodities exports from Humera, the Guna Trading House (thereafter referred to as Guna), in 2002 used Port Sudan for the first time to export sesame to Turkish markets. Hammond, L. February 2003. 'Obstacles to Regional Trade in the Horn of Africa: Borders, Markets and Production': USAID/OFDA, [http://pdf.dec.org/pdf\\_docs/Pnacs368.pdf](http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/Pnacs368.pdf), p. 26.

from Humera<sup>103</sup> (in North western Tigray) to Port Sudan is 880 kilometres. The only route from Humera to Sudan, it reaches the border between Ethiopia and Sudan at Lugdi. The road then proceeds via Gedaref (180 kilometres) and then continues to Port Sudan (700 kilometres). However, if a bridge were to be built across the Tekezze River at Hamdayat (the distance from Humera to this village is 130 kilometres) the total distance from Humera to Port Sudan would be reduced to a total of 728 kilometres.<sup>104</sup>

Hammond's research findings on prospects and constraints for cross-border trade between Sudan - Ethiopia - Eritrea in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war suggest that:

Ethiopian traders believe that Port Sudan is an attractive alternative or supplement to Djibouti because of the lower transport costs, as well as the fact that port charges are favourable.<sup>105</sup>

#### 4.5 Regional Outcome

In this section we look at the regional level to bring to the fore the shift of the regional alignments before and after the war.

The section raises the question of how, in the Eritrean case, one can explain the succession of wars: with Yemen over the Hanish Islands; unreported disputes in the border with Sudan; and finally the interstate war with Ethiopia. The explanation is to be found at three levels of analysis. The first is to do with the international context that Eritrea as a new state had to face. The impact of globalisation on the state had implications for sovereignty, not with regard to national political autonomy, but with regard to national political economy.<sup>106</sup> Following on from this, as chapter 2 has

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<sup>103</sup> Humera is located within the Mazega fertile area. This fertile land comprises north-western Ethiopia, south-western Eritrea and eastern Sudan. The area has been an important producing area of sorghum (for local and regional markets) and of sesame (for exports to extra-regional markets) since the mid- 1960s. L. Hammond further highlights that 'Commercial agriculture has historically stimulated significant regional trade and labour opportunities for migrant workers coming from food-insecure parts of all three countries'. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>106</sup> Mayall, J. 2000. *World Politics: Progress and its limits*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 77.

shown, the economic rivalry between Eritrea and its southern neighbour appears at first sight as anachronistic. In the current juncture of world politics, Mayall contends that 'self-determination is more likely to be interpreted as the right to compete in the deregulated market for inward investment'.<sup>107</sup> However, ultimately neither Eritrea nor Ethiopia applied this approach strictly in their bilateral economic relations. While Eritrean economic actors competed in Tigray with Ethiopian economic actors for access to markets and commodities, Ethiopia decided to enact a set of protectionist measures to protect its actors and nascent industries in Tigray from competition from its northern neighbour. In addition, these measures were played out against the particularly deep structure of politics and the political economy within the Horn of Africa.

Eritrea's creation occurred under particular circumstances and its successful resistance<sup>108</sup> to any interference in its internal affairs led to its isolation on the international stage. The persistence of militarism, among the leading members of the PFDJ government meant that the belief in the inevitability of war prevailed. The transition of the ex-guerrilla fighters into state builders had not been completed and the search for external as well as internal enemies continued. Both neighbouring states and national citizens who did not fully support the regime were promptly classified as enemies of the state.

Eritrea's government became increasingly contested and isolated, and so was its leadership. However, it is important to highlight that President Issaias Afewerki was never placed under similar pressure to that of Robert Mugabe. It seems plausible to argue that the 'war on terror' reduced US willingness to openly antagonise Issaias Afewerki due to Eritrea's strategic location.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, as Rita Abrahamsen and Ray Bush argue, Eritrea had been a keen regional candidate to replace Turkey as a safe haven for US new foreign policy in the Middle East. Donald Rumsfeld, US Defence

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>108</sup> Almost all of the expatriates interviewed in Asmara argued how Eritrea's resistance to any external influence in its internal affairs has been counterproductive for the country. A complete list with the names and posts of those interviewed was annexed for the purposes of the examination. Otherwise, the anonymous status of all those interviewed is fully respected by the author.

<sup>109</sup> Kaplan, R. D. April 2003 'A Tale of Two Colonies'. *The Atlantic Monthly*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200304/kaplan>.

Secretary, visited Asmara in December 2002<sup>110</sup> and General Tommy Franks, commander in chief of the US military's Central Command (USCENTCOM) was also a frequent visitor both before and after 9/11. Eritrea also sent its military commanders, namely the Minister of Defence Sebhat Ephrem, to Washington and employed the services of Washington lobbying firm Greenberg Traurig (at an estimated \$ 50,000 a month) to stress the importance of Eritrea's geo-strategic position for the war on terror.<sup>111</sup> However, this state of affairs was substantially eroded in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war with Ethiopia and, more recently, with Eritrea's support for the Somali militant Islamist movement, the Islamic Courts Union, and for the defecting members of the Transitional Federal Institutions in 2006 and 2007.<sup>112</sup>

Despite mediation of both the UN and the AU, the prospects for the consolidation of peace remain uncertain, with both parties failing to agree over the control of Badme. The territorial dispute still remains open, and it is not possible to ascertain whether the strong conditions imposed by international donors will be effective in preventing a resumption of the conflict, or whether the US 'war on terror' will shift the agenda for the Horn of Africa states as it did during the Cold War.<sup>113</sup>

The pattern of continuous insurgency against various regimes and the ousting of regimes by force have meant that at one point or another the previous enemies of the state become part of the ruling party and have to face the daunting challenge of reconciliation and accommodation with past opposing sides.

Several examples of warfare and its aftermath suggest that mutual suspicion between different insurgent movements, ruling parties and ethnic groups is in part understood against this background; which characterizes the domestic and regional security architecture of the states in the region. Depending on with which of the

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<sup>110</sup> Garamone, J. 10 December 2002. 'Eritrea Could Teach U.S. Much to Combat Terror'. *US Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service*, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=42407>.

<sup>111</sup> Abrahamsen, R., and, Bush, Ray 2003. 'War & the Forgotten Continent'. *Review of African Political Economy* No. 96, p. 182. ; Committee to Protect Journalists 2002. 'Attacks on the Press in 2002: Eritrea', <http://www.cpj.org/attacks02/africa02/eritrea.html>!.

<sup>112</sup> The fell out between Asmara and Washington in the course of Somalia's 2006 crisis will be discussed in the Epilogue.

<sup>113</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies 2002. 'Ethiopia- Eritrea shaky peace, domestic challenges' *Strategic Survey 2001/2002*: Oxford University Press, pp. 340-43.

opposing sides a movement decided to align itself (either the ruling party or insurgency movement) its prospects of access to critical resources distributed by the state will vary. The destinies of regions and ethnic groups are conditioned by its representatives' mobilization, sympathy and/or identification with opposing sides in the manifold conflicts.

After the 1977-78 war the *Derg* nurtured suspicion towards the Somali communities of the Ogaden. They were inevitably suspected of either having harboured the WSLF or of having sided with the Somali army.<sup>114</sup>

In addition, the *Derg* was also suspicious of the Tigrinya- speaking communities in Tigray and Eritrea for their alleged support for the TPLF and EPLF respectively.

In addition to the Somali and Tigrinya-speaking communities, the *Derg* was also suspicious of, and followed, more often than not, a forceful approach to, Afar pastoralists because of their long-standing livestock trade with the Eritreans.<sup>115</sup> After the overthrow of the *Derg*, mutual suspicions were reversed.

The Eritrean state became suspicious of the Kunama's loyalty to the Eritrean state. The Kunama were often accused of having sided with the *Derg* against the secession insurgencies of the ELF, and then of the EPLF. The Kunama are thus perceived as having opposed the current ruling party's long-standing insurgency to fulfil Eritrea's self-determination claim.<sup>116</sup> Although, Kunama were also mobilized and fought on behalf of the EPLF against the *Derg*, suspicion, and this perception of Kunama loyalty to the Ethiopian state, has not been dropped. Indeed, the aftermath of the war has revived this prejudice and has led to increased marginalisation and suspicion.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Samatar, A. I. 2004. 'Ethiopian federalism: autonomy versus control in the Somali region'. *Third World Quarterly* 25: 1131-1154.

<sup>115</sup> Young, J. 1997. *Peasant revolution in Ethiopia : the Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975-1991*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 149.

<sup>116</sup> Alexander Naty 2002. 'Environment, Society and the State in Western Eritrea'. *Africa* 72: 569- 597.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

In Ethiopia, several segments of society (diaspora, urban communities and rural communities) nurtured resentment and suspicion of the TPLF for its support for the EPLF separatist insurgency and secessionist aim. For several groups, and not only Ahmara or Oromo who identified with the previous regime, the TPLF, through their alliance with the EPLF to overthrow the *Derg*, contributed to the dismemberment/loss of a part of the Ethiopian state.

In the Somali Region of Ethiopia the divide between highlanders and lowlanders still tends to permeate the relations between pastoralists and the Federal and Regional agents of the state. The EPRDF/TPLF, despite the contributions of communities from the Somali region both to the war effort in the frontline and with 'patriotic contributions to the troops' during the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea, are still suspected of providing support to regional insurgent movements, namely the ONLF and to other movements crossing from Somalia. According to Samatar, the Somali clan elders claim that:

(...) An item in the SPDF 's programme states that the 1977-78 Somali-Ethiopian war was an illegitimate and irredentist Somali attack. (...) The public surmised that this was EPRDF propaganda and not a single Somali had joined the Mengistu army to fight the Western Somali Liberation Front and the Somali army. Furthermore, they pointed out that a similar item condemning the TPLF's support for Eritrea's war of liberation should be inserted into the TPLF party programme.<sup>118</sup>

The *Derg*'s creation and support of an Afar insurgent movement, the *Ugugumo*, fuelled tension, violent conflict and suspicion between Tigrayans and Afar. The *Derg*'s support for this group envisaged preventing the TPLF from extending its control to the eastern part of the Tigray Province, particularly to the area within Tigray mainly inhabited by Afar (Dalol/currently Zone 2 within the Afar Region). On the other hand, the *Derg* was suspicious of other Afar political movements and Afar pastoralist communities for their trade in livestock with the Eritreans. In post- 1991 Ethiopia, Afar clans and particularly the ALF, ARDUF and the *Ugugumo*, were still on a collision route with the two states because of the loss of considerable portions of Afar land to Eritrea and to other regions within Ethiopia, mainly Tigray Region

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<sup>118</sup> Samatar, 2004, op.cit., pp. 1147- 148.

(Region 1) and Ethiopia's Somali Region (Region 5). On the Eritrean side, the main insurgent movement, which articulates its grievances and dissention towards the state around an Afar ethnic identity, is the Afar Red Sea Democratic Front (ARSDF). However, this movement was set up in late 1998 with Ethiopia's support and in the context of the ongoing armed conflict between the two countries.<sup>119</sup>

The relations between the Ethiopian state and different communities have been predominantly based on an authoritarian culture.

The handicap of Ethiopian politics continues to be its resistance to political accommodation, the lack of compromise and negotiation.<sup>120</sup> This pattern of pervasive domestic and regional insurgency by nurturing suspicion between opposing sides, supporters and/or sympathisers further exacerbates the authoritarian culture of the state in its relations with communities at the periphery.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

President Issaias Afewerki was determined to establish the borders of Eritrea as an independent state in a turbulent region. Eritrea's geographical map became the favourite emblem of the country. The lines that draw the borders of the country are filled with the blood of the 'martyrs' of the recent war.

Evidence shows that Eritrea's economic position was much better at independence than in the aftermath of the war. In the case of Ethiopia, the sense of national unity generated by the call to arms to defend the country from external aggression did not eliminate internal dissention and conflict. Commanders and political decision-makers must understand the nature of war in which they are intervening, or considering intervening; to avoid making mistakes that ultimately could cost lives and unnecessarily prolong the conflict.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Abbink, J. 2003. 'Ethiopia- Eritrea: Proxy Wars and Prospects of Peace in the Horn of Africa'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21, p. 413.

<sup>120</sup> Clapham, C. 2006. 'Ethiopia' in Clapham, C., Herbst, J., and, Greg Mills, (ed.) *Big African States*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, p. 20.

<sup>121</sup> Duyvesteyn, I.a.A., Jan 2005. 'Rethinking the nature of War'. London and N.Y.: Frank Cass, p. 3.

The UNMEE presence and patrolling of the 25 kilometres buffer zone, along the 1,000 kilometres border, has not only guaranteed the non escalation of incidents in the borderlands, but also the fossilization of the border. In this sense, the characteristic porosity of the border has been modified. The establishment of a TSZ has led to the transformation of the disputed boundary into a *de facto* frontier between the two countries.

Unless the territorial dispute is brought to an end, implying an agreement over delimitation and the beginning of the implementation of the border demarcation, the current stalemate will persist. So far the EEBC has failed in its central task of ending the border dispute between the parties. The peace process is at a critical stage because of continuous intransigence between the parties. The current situation could lead to the escalation of minor incidents at the border to a fully-fledged conflict, as happened in 1998.

The delimitation and demarcation of the borders need not remain hostage to the intransigence of both parties. The delimitation and demarcation will inevitably happen, otherwise the border will remain a fortress and the movements of goods and people will remain frozen.

It is the political leaderships' responsibility to find a consensual solution out of the quagmire of the ill-delimited and demarcated borders. It goes without saying that the agreement on this crucial matter is paramount to restoring the indispensable element of political trust in order to renegotiate the rules of citizenship, the rules of access to both countries markets and products and, finally, to renegotiate the rules of access to the Eritrean ports of Assab and Massawa.

The greatest tragedy of nationalism lies in the paradox of providing a sense of belonging in mutually exclusive terms. What is one to do with those caught in the middle of the irreconcilable state trajectories; caught in this paradox? As one interviewee, of mixed parentage, starkly comments:

‘I’m both Eritrean and Ethiopian. Should I be cut in half?’<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Interview in London, July 2006.

## **Chapter 5: War and state making/remaking in Eritrea and Ethiopia**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will argue that the relationship between war and the process of state formation is central to the understanding of contemporary projects of state and nation building. However the process of state formation of the two countries needs to be understood within the broader dynamics of state consolidation in Africa.<sup>1</sup> As the evidence collected will show there are no short-cut answers.

The chapter is based on the premise that the relationship between war making, state making and, finally, nationalism are central to understanding state trajectories towards consolidation or, in the other extreme, towards state disintegration. Although the argument places the sources of state and nation building activities in the domestic realm, the international implications<sup>2</sup> of the two projects should not be overlooked.

The first part of the chapter will consider domestic and international features of the state and nation building projects in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The relationship between war and the state needs to be considered separately in the two cases because of three fundamental differences between these states' trajectories.

1) the different historical circumstances of the emergence of the state (the Ethiopian process which successfully resisted colonialism - except for the 1936-1941 Italian occupation - and the legacy of both Italian colonialism and British administration in the case of Eritrea);

2) the differential longevity of the process of state formation in Ethiopia and its newness in Eritrea with clear implications with regard to the legacies of previous conceptions and trajectories of statehood and, finally;

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<sup>1</sup> The case study allows testing some of the central theoretical propositions advanced by Herbst on his scholarly work on the process of state formation in Africa. Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

<sup>2</sup> The regional implications of state building and different conceptions of statehood will be further discussed in chapter 6.

3) The divergent conceptions of statehood and nationhood and the trajectories of the two states after the overthrow of the *Derg* and Eritrea's independence.

Finally, the second part will analyse the three state-making activities induced by war: taxation, conscription and extension of the state institutions to the entire territory under the jurisdiction of the state. Herbst claims that the three activities identified by Tilly (with regard to the process of state formation in Europe) serve as indicators of the consolidation of state power.<sup>3</sup> This will lead the chapter into the examination of the question whether the 1998- 2000 war has reinforced the trajectories of the states towards consolidation or disintegration.

## **5.2 Conceptions and trajectories of state and nation building**

The first part of the chapter looks specifically at the trajectories of the nation-state in the two countries and seeks to understand how the aims of achieving and defending domestic and international sovereignty were pursued.

The confrontation between Ethiopia and Eritrea needs to be understood in the context of structural differences in terms of how each state was conceptualized, after 1991, as a nation-state.

### **5.2.1 The trajectories of state and nation building in Eritrea and Ethiopia**

The creation of Ethiopia as a nation-state during the nineteenth century (and early twentieth century) was characterised by an inherently expansionist dynamic and through subordination and incorporation of the periphery into the northern highlands historic core.<sup>4</sup> This territorial expansion coincided with the rise into eminence of the Shoan core.<sup>5</sup> The peripheral groups from contiguous southern and western regions,

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<sup>3</sup> Herbst, 2000, op.cit., p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Clapham, C. 2006. 'Ethiopia' in Clapham, C., Herbst, J., and, Greg Mills, (ed.) *Big African States*.

Johannesburg: Wits University Press, p. 19; Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Aida Mengistu, 2006. 'Nationalism and Identity in Ethiopia and Eritrea: Building Multiethnic States' in Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges to Good Governance*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Clapham, C. 1972. 'Ethiopia and Somalia'. *Adelphi Paper : Special Issue on African Conflicts* 364, p. 2. The Shoan core refers to the former central Ethiopian province. The political system was

which had few links with the core, tended to resist the centralizing pressures for state building. The process of contention between the centralizing forces and the peripheral *loci* of power (centrifugal forces)<sup>6</sup> is central to understanding state formation in the developing world.<sup>7</sup> Clapham in the 1970s already emphasised the tension which permeated the Ethiopian state between the centripetal pull of Ethiopian nationalism, assimilation and administrative control, and the centrifugal pull of neighbouring countries over the Ethiopian state's periphery.<sup>8</sup> Clapham argues that the outcome was determined by the strategies followed by the groups in the midway between the periphery and the core.<sup>9</sup>

Herbst contends that wars of territorial conquest were central to the formation of particular types of states in Europe because they created '(...) a life and death imperative to raise taxes, enlist men as soldiers, and develop the necessary infrastructure to fight and win battles against rapacious neighbours'.<sup>10</sup> Lewis claims that the Ethiopian political unit was based on conquest, however '(...) power of the centre over the periphery waxed and waned over the centuries'.<sup>11</sup> Ethiopia was faced both by external threats to its territorial integrity and by insurgencies of varying strengths which challenged not only the state's monopoly of the means of coercion but also managed to control territory far from the capital.

The recognition of Ethiopia's modern sovereign boundaries by the colonial powers came in the aftermath of Ethiopia's successful victory at Adwa (1896) over the invading army of Italy. The Ethiopian state withstood the test of successfully

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dominated by representatives of this province, which contributed with 60 per cent to 70 per cent of high-ranking central government officials, the imperial family and the seat of government in the capital. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Bradbury, D. 1996. 'Towards an understanding of the fate of modern pastoralists: Starting with the state'. *Nomadic Peoples* 38, p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Clapham, 1972, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 3-4. With hindsight, this analysis already identified the contours of the post- 1991 context and is still applicable. Indeed, the Ethiopian groups in the midway between the core and the periphery played a crucial role in the secession of Eritrea after the overthrow of the *Derg* in 1991. The alliance between the TPLF and the EPLF was crucial for Eritrea's prompt international recognition as a sovereign state. Pool, D. 1998. 'The Eritrean People's Liberation Front' in Clapham, C. (ed.) *African Guerrillas*. Fountain & Indiana: James Currey. p. 19. This contention, however, does not diminish the legitimacy of Eritrea's claim for self-determination and/or the significance of the victorious outcome of the war for independence.

<sup>10</sup> Herbst, 2000, *op.cit.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, I. M. 1980. *A modern history of the Somali : nation and state in the Horn of Africa* London & N.Y.: Longman, p. 249.

resisting the Italian external threat to its territorial integrity. This victory was revived at key junctures to mobilise the citizens around the nationalist appeal to defend the state's sovereignty.

The tension between the centripetal and the centrifugal pulls was played out when the Italian colonial power invaded Ethiopia in 1935 at a key juncture when the centre was perceived as weak and vulnerable.<sup>12</sup> Until this crisis, the unity of the nation was assumed and largely unquestioned; McClellan contends that this juncture exposed the fragility of the loyalty of various groups at the periphery to the Empire. As a consequence, McClellan argues that the myth of Adwa was shattered.<sup>13</sup> McClellan claims that during the war Ethiopians did what was necessary to survive and this strategy forced difficult choices, leading many to shift sides depending upon their particular circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

The war divided the country, and in its aftermath it was paramount to control factionalism.<sup>15</sup> After the Italians were ousted in 1941, the national question occupied centre stage in Ethiopia. The Emperor promulgated two national holidays in a tribute to the Patriots and to mark the restoration of the state: 19 February was established as Martyrs Day and 5 May as Liberation Day.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Public Monuments were built to commemorate episodes of the resistance war and national heroes.<sup>17</sup>

McClellan's interpretation of the war runs counter to the official interpretation and to the nationalist narrative to be found in Ethiopian textbooks from this period. The patriotic indoctrination of the future generations implied highlighting the war as a great national effort to end the drama of foreign occupation. The shifting allegiances of many Ethiopians during the war and the peripheral groups' different allegiances during the Italian occupation were silenced from the nationalist narrative.<sup>18</sup> As Barnes

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<sup>12</sup> McClellan, C. 1996. 'Observations on the Ethiopian Nation, Its Nationalism, and the Italo- Ethiopian War'. *Northeast African Studies* 3, p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> ibid., p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> ibid., p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> ibid., p. 85. Martyrs Day paid a tribute to the slaughter of thousands in the capital after a failed attempt of assassination of the Italian Governor Graziani in 1937. The Liberation Day was the day of the Emperor's return to the country.

<sup>17</sup> ibid., p. 66. These Monuments included the statue to Abuna Petros, Sidist Kilo and Arat kilo.

<sup>18</sup> McClellan, 1996, op.cit., p. 61 and p. 66.

claims the regime was 'tinged with an amnesiac and aggressive chauvinism that did not admit the complexity of this recent history'.<sup>19</sup>

As an outcome of the defeat against the Italian troops, Emperor Haile Selassie concentrated efforts on the implementation and reinforcement of the nationalist project.<sup>20</sup> Building a centralized modern government to pursue 'Greater Ethiopia's' national interests (domestic and international) was central to this project.<sup>21</sup> Within this process 'amharization' of the society occupied centre-stage and access to education, work and power were dependent upon assimilation into the core's dominant ethos.<sup>22</sup> The restoration of the imperial prestige was pursued by 'firming up external sovereignty' especially with regard to the status of the former Italian colony: Eritrea; which was first incorporated as part of the Federation and, then, as one of Ethiopia's Provinces. However, Barnes highlights that the unfinished modern project of domestic sovereignty was fatally neglected; the revolutionary regime would exploit this weakness and upon take-over of power defined domestic sovereignty as one of the central features of its state building project.<sup>23</sup>

One of the initial concerns of the revolutionary regime was the 'nationalities question'. The debate around the nationalities question had emerged within the Students' movement in the 1960s and flared up divisions both within the movement and the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) or *Derg*. Gilkes claims that the splits arose among Ethiopian student exiles in Europe and in North America but their divisions were only played out domestically when they returned to Ethiopia in the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> The debate over the national question, indeed, mirrored the conflicting nature of the centre-periphery relations in a multi-ethnic centralised state.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Barnes, C. 2003. 'Sovereignty, Identity and Modernity: Understanding Ethiopia'. *African Affairs* 102, p. 513.

<sup>20</sup> Barnes, C., and, Thomas Osmond, Octobre 2005. 'L' Après État- Nation en Éthiopie: Changement de forme plus que d'habitudes?' *Politique Africaine* 99, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Barnes, 2003, op.cit., p. 513.

<sup>24</sup> Gilkes, P. 1983. 'Centralism and the Ethiopian PMAC' in Lewis, I.M. (ed.) *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa*. London: Ithaca Press, footnote 1, p. 209.

<sup>25</sup> Triulzi, A. 1983. 'Competing views of national identity in Ethiopia' in Lewis, I.M. (ed.) *Ibid.* London: Ithaca Press, p. 115.

The PMAC in its April 1976 National Democratic Revolution Programme (NDRP) formally accorded each nationality full-right to self-government, regional autonomy in internal affairs, and recognized the multi-linguistic character of the Ethiopian polity.<sup>26</sup> This was a significant departure from the imperial regime's Amharic only-policy and led to recognition of language rights to other ethno-linguistic groups (termed nationalities).<sup>27</sup> Indeed, both the PMAC and Ethiopia Revolutionary Information Centre (ERIC) used Stalin's definition of a nation.<sup>28</sup> The degree of autonomy and the question whether secession would be permissible, or not, provoked a heated debate; which ultimately resulted in the view from the Political Office for Mass Organization Affairs (POMOA)<sup>29</sup> prevailing. The POMOA firmly opposed secession and, instead, favoured regional autonomy.<sup>30</sup> The idea of the Institute for Ethiopian Nationalities (IFEN) emerged from this debate. In addition, the *Derg* pledged for the cultural emancipation of ethnic groups and implemented a mass literacy campaign in local languages.<sup>31</sup> In the 1980s, the IFEN conducted a study on the territorial distribution of languages in Ethiopia. The study concluded that out of the 580 *woreda* (districts) only 30 *woreda* were mono-linguistic, only 5 per cent of the districts were homogenous with regard to language.<sup>32</sup> Most of the districts were multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic. As a consequence, the project of using language as the criterion for administrative divisions was postponed indefinitely because of the concerns over this measure's potential to fuel conflicts.<sup>33</sup>

The *Derg*'s approach to the national question confirmed that although not ignored, the policies to address it were not implemented; ultimately, sub-nationalities were placed under the umbrella of 'reactionary narrow nationalism', which was

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<sup>26</sup> Education, as the next section will discuss in further detail, played a central role in these processes. Gilkes, 1983, op.cit., p. 196.

<sup>27</sup> McNab, C. December 1990. 'Language Policy and Language Practice: Implementing Multilingual Literacy Education in Ethiopia'. *African Studies Review* 33, p. 66.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>29</sup> The POMOA was the body in charge of political education in 1976-1979.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>31</sup> Vaughan, S. 2007. 'Le fédéralisme ethnique et la démocratisation depuis 1991' in Prunier, G. (ed.) *L'Ethiopie contemporaine*. Addis Ababa & Paris: CFEE/ Karthala, p.373. The mass literacy campaign was implemented in the context of the National Work Campaign (*zemacha*) wherein students from schools and institutes of higher education were sent to the countryside to participate in the campaign against illiteracy. McNab, 1990, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376.

portrayed as a threat to the Ethiopian progressive party.<sup>34</sup> The *Derg*, despite its rhetoric of recognizing regional self-government, in continuity with the legacy from the imperial regime, pursued not only the process of nationalisation but also that of centralisation of government.<sup>35</sup>

The strategy that followed post-1991 to address the tension between national and sub-national identities should be understood against the backdrop of these earlier projects. The ethnic-based Federal model implemented by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) was inspired by the Soviet Constitution and purported a unique conception of the Ethiopian state. The trajectory of state and nation building should be understood as part of the TGE project of remaking the Ethiopian state.<sup>36</sup> However, continuities with the previous regime policy on the nationalities question should not be overlooked.

The post-1991 Ethiopian constitutional model led to the redrawing of the administrative territorial subdivisions of the country on an explicitly ethnic principle. However, as the section on Education will show, the linguistic criteria were, indeed, paramount within this project. Ultimately, the Constitution recognized the right to self-determination, including a right to secession.

In Eritrea, the PFDJ/ EPLF conception rested on forging homogeneity through the consolidation of a sense of ‘Eritreaness’ that would embrace and supplant all other sub-national identities.

Along with the Eritrean definition of nationalism in terms of colonial territoriality,<sup>37</sup> the PFDJ also implemented its own conception of Eritrean statehood which led to a redrawing of the administrative units. However, in contradistinction to the EPRDF’s ethnic-based Federal model (which ascribed saliency to sub-national identities and led to the redrawing of the domestic boundaries between regions along ethnic lines), the PFDJ restructuring of the administrative units was aimed at diffusing

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<sup>34</sup> Gilkes, 1983, op.cit., p. 208.

<sup>35</sup> Barnes and Osmond, 2005, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Keller, E. J. 2005. ‘Making and Remaking State and Nation in Ethiopia’ in Larémont, R.R. (ed.) *Borders, nationalism, and the African state*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>37</sup> Clapham, 2006, op.cit., p. 235.

sub-national identities and at subordinating these to the national one. The regional boundaries were redrawn to form the new administrative units (*zobas*) which cut across old regional units. As Conrad highlights, the PFDJ state-building project was aimed at '(...) erasing regional identities, i.e. loyalty to one's region (*awraja*) and the village (*adi*)'.<sup>38</sup>

The creation of multi-ethnic administrative regions was pursued in order to prevent the emergence of territorially based ethnic opposition.<sup>39</sup> However, as Conrad claims, this attempt to erase regional identities created resentment and seems to have '(...) contributed to a growing disengagement from the national project and reinforced deep-seated local and regional affiliations'.<sup>40</sup> However, in order to understand the potential divisive role of regionalism for domestic politics since Eritrea's independence, the legacy of the 1973 crisis should not be overlooked. After the merger of two of the splintering factions of the ELF, the People's Party 1 & 2, Issaias Afewerki assumed command. In 1973 the leadership was faced with opposition from within its ranks: from the *menqa* faction (ultra-leftist former university students) and *yamin* (right wing). During the crisis within the ranks of the future EPLF (which was allegedly only officially formed at the First Congress in 1977), one of the dissenting factions led by Solomon Woldemariam claimed to represent the fighters from the Akele Guzai province and was aimed at overcoming the lack of representation of this province within the new leadership (which was dominated by fighters originally from Hamasien).<sup>41</sup> This regionally-based grievance was on a clear collision route with the leadership's focus on the need to overcome any ethnic and/or regional-based divisions. The current Eritrean President is originally from Hamasien region. President Issaias Afewerki, among others, had fiercely opposed ethnic, regional and/or religious based affiliations and, instead, focused on the subordination of all sub-nationalities to the overarching cause of Eritrea's plight for self-determination

<sup>38</sup> Conrad, B. 2006. 'Out of the 'memory hole': Alternative narratives of the Eritrean revolution in the diaspora'. *Afrika Spectrum* 4, footnote 23, p. 261.

<sup>39</sup> Fouad Makki 1996. 'Nationalism, State Formation and the Public Sphere: Eritrea 1991- 96'. *Review of African Political Economy* 23, p. 484.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p.261. Historically some regions within Eritrea, such as Akele Guzai, had closer links to Tigray, than with other *kebesa* within Eritrea, such as the districts of Seraye and Hamasien. According to Alemseged Abbay the trans- Mereb ties (i.e. across the river which separates Eritrea from Tigray) were still alluded to after Eritrea's independence. Alemseged Abbay 1997. 'The Trans- Mereb Past in the Present'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, pp. 324-25.

and independence. The decision to eliminate by force the opposition factions during the 1973 crisis is still a controversial matter which resonates in Eritrean politics since Independence.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the disappearance of the Akele Guzai province with the creation of the new administrative units (*zoba*) was not the outcome of a mere coincidence.

These contradictory conceptions of statehood divided the leaderships of both states and their intransigence coupled with their divergent orientations influenced their foreign policies. Asmara exchanged accusations with Addis Ababa stating that the Ethiopian ruling party was determined to undermine its survival as a sovereign state. For Eritrea the legitimacy of the thirty-year war for independence was based on the colonial treaties signed between Ethiopia and Italy. Affirming that ideological basis remained important for the Eritrean leadership and, in the absence of democracy, nationalism became the major defence against ethnic, language and/or region-based sub-nationalism.

Although the post-1991 Ethiopian and Eritrean conceptions of statehood had domestic sources, their implementation had significant international implications and was pursued in the regional arena.<sup>43</sup>

### **5.2.2 Monopoly of Education: language, history and national identity formation**

The divergent trajectories of the two states' nation building projects becomes even more salient when we turn to the analysis of the educational systems in relation to the states' aim of achieving domestic sovereignty. This section looks first at the legacies from the colonial period in the Eritrean educational system and, finally, at the PFDJ's

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<sup>41</sup> Pool, D. 2001. *From guerrillas to government : the Eritrean People's Liberation Front*. Oxford & Athens: J. Currey & Ohio University Press, footnote 24, p. 76.

<sup>42</sup> Although the information on the 1973 crisis is sparse all Eritrea scholars allude to its significance both to understanding the formation of the EPLF and domestic politics since Eritrea's independence. Iyob, R. 1995. *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, resistance, nationalism 1941-1993*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 116- 117; Pool 2001, op.cit., p. 76 and p. 86. Connell, D. 2001. 'Inside the EPLF: The Origins of the 'People's Party' & its Role in the Liberation of Eritrea'. *Review of African Political Economy* 89, pp. 352-53. Connell, D. 2005. 'A Conversation with Petros Solomon and Berhane Gebreghzabher, August 2, 2001' in Connell, D. (ed.) *Conversations with Eritrean Political Prisoners*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, pp. 85- 90.

policy with regard to Education and, specifically, to language. The analysis of the educational systems elucidates the divergent nationalist projects of the two governments. Finally, this section will reflect upon the transformation wrought about by the EPRDF ethnic- based Federal model with regard to the politicisation of language.

### **Education in Eritrea**

In the Eritrean case, according to Jacquin-Berdal, whilst the Italian colonial authorities left a minimal form of education, the numerous missions of various Christian denominations may have contributed to the creation of a sense of 'Eritrean-ness'. The learning of history played an important role in this respect. The textbooks used by Catholic missions in Eritrea depicted it as a cohesive entity. Moreover, Eritreans educated in the missions acquired a unitary conception of Eritrea and of its particular history, distinct from other countries in the region. These textbooks contained maps of Eritrea which provided the necessary visual support to the formation of an imagined community.<sup>44</sup>

The period of British Administration (1941-1952) triggered the politicisation of Eritreans around a nationalist project. According to the same author the British Administration enhanced the educational system and established political parties.

The importance of the educational legacy from this period was raised during an interview, in August 2004, while conducting fieldwork in Asmara. The British Administration left an important legacy in the educational system. Under the British Administration, at the primary school level, all the course books were in Tigrinya. From this period remains a great wealth of literature in Tigrinya. Most of the books were subsequently burnt but some remain as part of private collections.<sup>45</sup> Alongside Tigrinya, Arabic text-books were obtained from Egypt and the Sudan. However, Arabic was never so widespread as to substantiate claims that it was a second official

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<sup>43</sup>Chapter 6 analyses in further detail the divergent conceptions of statehood and their implications not only to the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but also with other regional actors.

<sup>44</sup>Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2000. 'State and War in the Formation of Eritrean National Identity' in Vandersluis, S.O. (ed.) *The State and Identity Construction in International Relations*. London: MacMillan Press, p. 59.

language.<sup>46</sup> Paradoxically, it was the British later project to partition Eritrea that unified the new political elite in the preservation of Eritrea's territorial integrity.<sup>47</sup>

With the incorporation of Eritrea as the Fourteenth Governorate of the Empire of Ethiopia, Amharic became the dominant medium of instruction in Eritrea.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the civil war with Ethiopia the EPLF developed an underground primary level education system which transmitted to the fighters and local communities in the newly liberated territories the idea of an Eritrean nation.<sup>49</sup>

After independence, the national educational policy is based on the use of mother languages as the medium of instruction in all public schools. Tekle M. Woldemikael carried a study of the government policy in this area from 1991 to 1996. This study is even more important, as to date there has been no census with precise percentages of speakers for each of the 9 languages. The mother-tongue policy has been a form of social engineering that emphasizes: '(...) one state, one nation, and many languages'.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the mother language, all elementary school students are required to take Tigrinya and/ or Arabic. Beyond the primary school level the main medium of instruction in all schools is English. These additional requirements show that in practice three languages tend to dominate: Arabic, Tigrinya and English. Indeed, these are the state's working languages.

The government-controlled newspapers fully reproduce this policy orientation. *Haddas Eritra* is published in Tigrinya, Eritrea *al-Haditha* is published in Arabic and

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<sup>45</sup> Interview in Asmara, 2/08/04. This is a field in need of further research but it remains beyond the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>46</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, 2000, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>48</sup> Interestingly enough, during fieldwork in August 2004 in Asmara, several people anecdotally mentioned that if caught listening to Amharic music they had to pay a fine of 5 *Nakfa*. This measure, quite significantly, had been implemented in the aftermath of the 1998-2000 war to create a further marker between Ethiopians and Eritreans, reviving earlier resistance to the 'Amharization' project implemented by the Emperor Haile Selassie.

<sup>49</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, 2000, op.cit., p. 65.

<sup>50</sup> Tekle M. Woldemikael 2003 (April). 'Language, Education, and Public Policy in Eritrea'. *African Studies Review* 46, p. 122.

Eritrea Profile is published in English. However, at the level of government-controlled radio programmes the PFDJ seems to be committed to the policy of one Eritrea, many languages. Minority ethnic groups have a number of programmes in their native languages.<sup>51</sup> The extent to which this is a counter-reaction to the effects of Ethiopia's own focus on 'nationalities' on Eritrean minorities located in the borderlands, is difficult to determine.<sup>52</sup>

Tekle Woldemikael claims that in many cases there is grass-roots resistance to the policy of use of the mother tongue in Eritrean schools. This has to do with the economic and political rewards wrought by the knowledge of regional and international languages such as Arabic and English.<sup>53</sup> Since English, Tigrinya and Arabic are widely used in official communication, a person knowing all or a combination of these languages has an advantage in gaining economic and political opportunities in the modern sector of Eritrean society. Those who command languages spoken only by minority ethnic groups are unlikely to have equal access to the state. Interestingly enough one can function effectively in the lower official circles of the Eritrean government knowing only Tigrinya. The same might not happen if an Eritrean speaks only Arabic and/ or English. Indeed, Tigrinya is the language of military training and communication.

According to the author, the government is fully aware that Arabic, as an international language and as the language of neighbouring countries, may eclipse Tigrinya, which is only a regional language.<sup>54</sup>

In Eritrea the work of the Eritrean Research and Documentation Centre (ERDC) is fundamental to educational and historical development. The goal is to develop the sources to create a national archive and further support it in the future with the creation of a national library. Richard Greenfield claims that: '(...) without

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<sup>51</sup> Interviews in Asmara, July-August 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Ethiopia's ethnic- based Federal model led to the creation of radio programmes in local languages. This was particular significant for Afar and Kunama divided between the two countries. This is another area for future research with borderland communities, which, however, lies beyond the scope of the present dissertation because of the constraints to field work discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>53</sup> Tekle M. Woldemikael, 2003, op.cit., p. 135.

<sup>54</sup> ibid., p. 134.

these tools proper interpretation of history and politics will be difficult'.<sup>55</sup> The ERDC in Asmara holds a valuable collection of documents from the period of the war for independence. The ERDC is closely linked to the ruling party. This in turn, further confirms Jacquin-Berdal contention that the EPLF, after its victory in 1991, imposed its own definition of Eritrean national identity '(...) one in which the war for independence had become the founding myth'.<sup>56</sup> The teaching and learning of languages and history seem to confirm the state's monopoly of the educational system and its central role in the PFDJ state and nation building project.

The PFDJ has also attempted to maintain monopoly of education among the diaspora. According to Conrad, the teaching of history, culture and mother-tongue to children in the diaspora mirrors the government's policy of inculcating through the educational system its own version of the nationalist narrative.<sup>57</sup>

During the border war any divergence from the PJDF narrative of the war for independence and the historical obligation to defend this hard-won achievement was viewed as an act of treason; Conrad suggests that this perception was shared both domestically and among the diaspora communities.<sup>58</sup> This should be understood against the backdrop of the government's trend to conflate 'the identity of the nationalist movement and its political manifestation, the PFDJ' to a point that they 'are near indistinguishable from that of the state'.<sup>59</sup>

The PFDJ regime interpretation of the war for independence was already contested prior to the 1998-2000 war. While the PFDJ had defined the 20<sup>th</sup> June as a public holiday to pay tribute to the Martyrs of the state of Eritrea, the former ELF (RC) celebrate Martyr's Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> December.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Shaebia Interview by Yoseph Takle (Asmara University) with Professor Richard Greenfield. 'Eritrea is in a Strong position on the Border ruling'. Voice of Eritrea. 25/01/05.

[http://www.hornofafrica.de/english/1\\_jan2005\\_eng/jan25-1\\_eri.htm](http://www.hornofafrica.de/english/1_jan2005_eng/jan25-1_eri.htm)

<sup>56</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2000, op.cit. , p. 67.

<sup>57</sup> Conrad, 2006, op.cit., footnote 18, p. 257. The PFDJ narrative of the liberation war is purported as the official one and excludes any dissenting narrative or diverse interpretations of the war for independence.

<sup>58</sup> Conrad, 2006, op.cit., footnote 5, p. 251.

<sup>59</sup> Dorman, S. R. 2005. 'Narratives of nationalism in Eritrea: research and revisionism'. *Nations and Nationalism* 11, p. 207.

The defeat in the border war led to the public voicing of discontent with regard to the PFDJ military and diplomatic conduct of the war. Quite significantly, the aftermath of the war led many to question the regime's legitimacy and 'opened a Pandora's box of interpretations of the past'.<sup>61</sup>

## **Education in Ethiopia**

As the section on the trajectory of state building in Ethiopia has shown, Language and History occupied centre-stage in the different regimes' policy for Education.

The first Population Census was conducted in May 1984, under the auspices of the *Derg*, and the second in 1994 under the auspices of the TGE. The third Population Census for most of the country reportedly started in May 2007, while that of the Somali and Afar regional states was scheduled to take place in November 2007.<sup>62</sup> The 1984 Population Census was the first effort to collect data on language affiliation in Ethiopia.

The *Derg*'s departure from the imperial regime Amharic only-policy was marked with the launching of the literacy campaign in 15 languages in 1979.<sup>63</sup> English was maintained as a second language of government, for external communications, and for secondary and higher education. The National Literacy Campaign was conducted in the three major languages, i.e., Amharic- Oromo and Tigrinya and in 12 other minor languages. During the preparation stage of the literacy campaign the languages which qualified were all transcribed to the *Geez* script (the basis of Amharic and Tigrinya). The post-revolutionary change in language policy was curtailed by several problems and did not foster a radical change in teaching methodologies.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Amharic remained the undisputable national *lingua franca* during the imperial and socialist regimes.

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<sup>60</sup> Conrad, 2006, op.cit., footnote 22, p. 260.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>62</sup> Fekadu Beshah 22 May 2007. 'Ethiopia: Commission to Purchase Satellite Equipment for Upcoming Census' *Addis Fortune*. Addis Ababa, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200705220692.html>.

<sup>63</sup> McNab, 1990, op.cit., p. 66.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 67-73.

In April 1994, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia proclaimed its Education and Training Policy (EETP) with regard to languages:

Cognisant of the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning in mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education will be given in nationality languages.<sup>65</sup>

As a result, at present primary education is offered in twelve languages.<sup>66</sup> This policy was fiercely criticised on the grounds that it would erode unity and contribute to the dismemberment of the country. As Tekeste Negash notes ambiguities on the divisions between the central and the regional departments dealing with Education were pronounced and undermined the implementation of the policy by local authorities.<sup>67</sup>

The saliency of language became relevant for domestic politics. The TGE restructured the provincial boundaries of the state according to ethnic and linguistic criteria.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately languages became the predominant criteria because ethnic geography is not consolidated territorially. Indeed, the EPRDF re-drawing of domestic boundaries was based on the broad distribution of languages, rather than on ethnicity.<sup>69</sup> (...) Federalism in Ethiopia, therefore, might well be termed 'linguistic' rather than 'ethnic'.<sup>70</sup>

This policy posed problems to citizens who identified with a certain ethnic group but who neither spoke the mother-language associated with that group, nor lived in the region where the ethnic group with whom they identified was concentrated. Cohen remarks that in Ethiopia language and ethnicity are unreliable markers of identity<sup>71</sup> because of the overlapping borders, the mingling between ethnic groups and the linguistic diversity of the country. Moreover, in Ethiopia people of

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<sup>65</sup> Tekeste Negash 1996. *Rethinking Education in Ethiopia*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p. 97.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>69</sup> Cohen, G. 2006. 'The Development of Regional and Local Languages in Ethiopia's Federal System' in Turton, D. (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 171.

<sup>70</sup> Cohen, 2006, op.cit., p. 172.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

various origins have adopted Amharic, as their own language, regardless of their ethnic background.<sup>72</sup>

According to Assefa Fisseha the second phase of the EPRDF project for state and nation building began with the outbreak of hostilities with Eritrea and led to a shift from diversity into unity and from decentralization into a more centralized federal system.<sup>73</sup> The combined unexpected outburst of nationalism (and patriotism) and '(...) the need to run an efficient military campaign led to the re-channelling of resources and manpower to the centre'.<sup>74</sup> As a consequence, the motto of earlier regimes of Ethiopia's unity in face of external aggression re-emerged from the chains of the ethnic-based Federal model.

### **5.3 War making and making/ remaking State and Nation in Eritrea and Ethiopia**

This section will look into the three key activities of the state associated with war highlighted by Tilly: taxation, conscription and extension of the state institutions – administration to the entire territory. The section will reflect upon how the war related to these activities, and whether in its aftermath the war-induced effects relapsed to the ante bellum situation or, on the contrary, contributed to the consolidation of state power. As discussed in chapter 1, the state- building ramifications of conflict in relation to the war nationalist appeal should not be overlooked.<sup>75</sup>

This section argues that there is a strong relationship between war and the formative period of statehood. The data seem to suggest that for Eritrea the war was the second act of the process of national identity formation. The three-decade civil war served as a catalyst for nation-building and the two-and-a-half-year inter-state war was caused by Eritrea's profound territorial conception of nationalism. However,

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<sup>72</sup> Cohen, 2006, op.cit., p. 172.

<sup>73</sup> Assefa Fisseha 2006. 'Theory Versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism' in Turton, D. (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 147.

<sup>74</sup> ibid., p. 147.

<sup>75</sup> Herbst, J. 2003. 'State and War in Africa' in Paul, T.V., Ikenberry, G. John, Hall, John A. (ed.) *The Nation- State in question*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 176.

the analysis of the relationship between the border war and state making in Eritrea confirms the law of diminishing return of war, as this section will show.

### 5.3.1 Taxation in Eritrea and in Ethiopia

The role played by diaspora in the homeland's politics is a significant transformation within current world politics and this section will analyse how the mobilisation of this key constituency was critical for the Eritrean state extraction activities.

#### Taxation in Eritrea

In the initial period of the war, the available evidence confirms one of the central processes identified by Tilly, i.e., the war increased the ability of the Eritrean state to extract funds from this transnational constituency: the diaspora.<sup>76</sup> When the war broke out in 1998, the state promptly and efficiently mobilised the Eritrean diaspora. The Eritrean state intensified its effort to raise funds from the diaspora via taxation and via the issuing of bonds and grants. There is not an overall estimate of the total revenues raised among the different diaspora communities and even the size of the Eritrean diaspora is likely to be underestimated.<sup>77</sup> However, scholarship on different Eritrean diaspora communities confirms that the diaspora contributions were critical to financing the 1998-2000 war.

The diaspora already contributed with 2 per cent of their annual income for the EPLF during the war for independence.<sup>78</sup> As Bernal notes, this strategy was actively continued after independence by the EPLF/PFDJ.<sup>79</sup> The contributions were voluntary and Eritreans did not resent the state's demand, but also perceived it as a sign of their own national commitment to the Eritrean state.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the diaspora remittances represented an annual movement of US\$ 250-350 million.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Koser, K. 2003. 'Mobilizing New African Diasporas: An Eritrean Case Study' in Koser, K. (ed.) *New African Diasporas*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

<sup>77</sup> Koser, 2003, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>78</sup> Bernal, V. February 2004. 'Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era'. *Cultural Anthropology* 19, p. 11.

<sup>79</sup> ibid., p. 18.

<sup>80</sup> ibid. Koser, 2003, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>81</sup> Bernal, 2004, op. cit., p. 19.

Plaut claims that the Eritrean government was able to raise an estimated US\$150 millions from Eritreans living abroad in defence of the nation.<sup>82</sup> Bernal's study findings are illuminating of both the government's capacity to mobilise the diaspora and the diaspora's readiness to contribute financially to the defence of the nation. In June 1998, Eritreans in Denmark (Copenhagen) pledged a one-off payment of US\$ 1,000 per household. In Saudi Arabia (Riyadh) the pledge comprised one month's salary. In Canada (Edmonton) at a single meeting the Eritrean diaspora community raised US\$ 2,600. In the US the St. Louis community pledged US\$ 55,000 at a meeting. According to Bernal, the Eritrean government set up a national defence bank account and the donations 'flowed in'.<sup>83</sup>

Koser reached similar conclusions with regard to the diaspora's critical role in financing the war. Eritreans in the UK were asked to contribute additionally with an extra £1 GBP per day (US\$ 2) plus with a one-off payment of £500 GBP (US\$ 1000) in 1999. In Berlin, Eritreans were asked for an amount of 30 DEM (US\$ 21) per month and a one- off payment of 1000 DEM (US\$ 688).<sup>84</sup>

Hepner's study shows how in the US, the Chicago community raised nearly US\$1 million for the Eritrean government's Defence budget.<sup>85</sup> From Hepner's study it also emerged that although formally voluntary, failure to contribute to the state's demands tended to create obstacles for participation in Eritrea's domestic economy, such as buying or selling property.<sup>86</sup>

According to Styan, the level of bonds issued to the diaspora reached 3.1 per cent of GDP in 1999 and grants amounted to 3.2 per cent of GDP in 2000.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Plaut, M. 2005. 'The Conflict and its aftermath' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 109.

<sup>83</sup> Bernal, 2004, op. cit. , p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> Koser, 2003, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> Hepner, T. R. 2003. 'Religion, Nationalism, and Transnational Civil Society in the Eritrean diaspora'. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10, footnote 14, p. 290.

<sup>86</sup> ibid., p. 290.

<sup>87</sup> Styan, D. 2005. 'Twisting Ethio- Eritrean Economic Ties: Misperceptions of War and the Misplaced priorities of Peace, 1997- 2002' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p.186. According to Koser, the Eritrean diaspora communities in North America, Europe and the Middle East by July 1999 had purchased an estimated US\$ 55 million worth of bonds. Koser, 2003, op. cit., p. 115.

The government's substantial requests for money were not developed in conjunction with a policy of granting the diaspora an opportunity to participate in domestic politics. Despite having paid the extra contributions demanded by the state, as Koser noted they had '(...) absolutely no say in any decisions about the conflict'.<sup>88</sup>

Social pressure both from the state and family members in the 'homeland' also seems to function as an efficient means of guaranteeing that the diaspora continues to meet the demands of the state and remains loyal to its country of origin. This loyalty becomes tangible in terms of payment of taxes to the state and of regular remittances to family members. Furthermore, Hepner suggests that the diaspora's contribution to the state served as an indicator of national commitment.<sup>89</sup>

This pattern was in continuity with the diaspora's previous contribution to financing the separatist insurgency against the *Derg*.<sup>90</sup> However, as the 1998- 2000 war increased in intensity, the willingness of this political constituency to contribute to the Eritrean state's war effort decreased<sup>91</sup> and criticism of the ruling party emerged.

Despite rising criticism of the PFDJ, the state nationalist appeal achieved its aim and the diaspora mobilised to protect Eritrea's hard-won independence. The readiness of this constituency to meet the demands of the state clearly indicates the complex relationship between globalization, transnationalism and nationalism. Criticism of the regime sharply increased, its legitimacy was compromised,<sup>92</sup> but loyalty to the state seems to be preserved by the majority. Although the projects of permanent return have been compromised by the increasingly authoritarian measures of the government, loyalty to the state does not seem to have waned.<sup>93</sup>

The Eritrean state policy on recognizing dual nationality contributes, in part, to the continued attractiveness of holding onto Eritrean citizenship for those who have

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<sup>88</sup> Koser 2003, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>89</sup> ibid., p. 290.

<sup>90</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, 2002, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>91</sup> Indeed, according to IMF estimates, private remittances totalled 2500 million Nakfa in 1997, decreasing to 1820 million Nakfa in 1998 and with a slight increase to 1960 million Nakfa in 1999. The decrease was registered despite the Eritrean state external agents' effort to mobilise contributions from this key constituency during the war. Styan, 2005, op. cit., footnote 15, p. 199.

<sup>92</sup> Koser, 2003, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>93</sup> Interviews in London, May 2007.

never lived in Eritrea and who may never do so.<sup>94</sup> As the next section on conscription will show, the situation for those living in Eritrea has undergone a significant transformation exacerbated by the 1998- 2000 war. To the domestic citizens, the attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship is subordinate to a different set of obligations and constraints; which the government is not in a position to impose upon Eritrean citizens who have acquired other citizenships.

### **Taxation in Ethiopia**

On the Ethiopian side, the links between the state and the diaspora followed a different trajectory. Those who acquired the nationality of other countries had to relinquish Ethiopian nationality. The criteria of exclusive Ethiopian citizenship created a different legal framework for those citizens of Ethiopian origin and/or whose descent could be traced from Ethiopian nationals.

When the crisis escalated into full-scale war, the government met the demand of increasing revenue to finance the war with an intensification of the pressure to raise revenues domestically. The financing of the war was met via domestic taxation and borrowing from domestic banks.<sup>95</sup>

The state exerted pressure on its citizens at the level of conscription and taxation. The patriotic contributions, as they were named, evolved along the rally to all ‘nationalities’/ethnic groups to contribute to the defence of the state’s territorial integrity in the face of external aggression.

In the rural areas, the communities were called upon to contribute with men to the Ethiopian National Defence Force, and with goods. The regional governments, on behalf of the Federal government, solicited funds from the public.

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<sup>94</sup> With Independence it was common for those who had spent most of their adult lives or who had been brought up in the diaspora to make plans of going back and (re-) starting their life in Eritrea. However, the government requirements of completion of the national military service to set up businesses (or for any other dealing with the state administration) and other constraints to any entrepreneurial undertakings in the private sector discouraged many from effectively settling in Eritrea. Interviews in London, May 2007.

<sup>95</sup> Styan, 2005, op. cit., p. 185.

In Ethiopia's Region 5 (Ethiopia's Somali Regional State), the regional authorities required each rural community to contribute with a specified number of livestock, mainly sheep.<sup>96</sup> This campaign was conducted at a time when the region was burdened by a severe and prolonged drought, which had devastating consequences for the livestock economy.<sup>97</sup>

In the urban areas all employees, especially those working for the state, were subordinated to a new tax, which was nominally voluntary, called 'Patriotic Contribution'.<sup>98</sup> Although the patriotic contributions were allegedly voluntary, both urban and rural communities had little space to resist the authorities' request.

### 5.3.2 Monopoly of coercive violence: conscription and patriotic education

Conscription has tended to occupy centre stage in the trajectories of state and nation building in the two countries.

In Eritrea allegations of threats from neighbouring countries have tended to dominate the official discourse. First, the threat of Sudan, and then the threat of Ethiopia provided the required justification to reorganize a national military, capable of defending national sovereignty. This led to a gradual expansion of military-building activities into the realm of state building. Callahan's research in the case of Burma shows that the building of a modern army should be understood as part of the project of creating the state.<sup>99</sup> However, this feature of state building was accompanied by intra-elite struggles over different visions of national defence. In Eritrea the state builders' dominant concern was to remake the citizenry. Conscription and Education were defined as two complementary means to achieve this end. Indeed, the compulsory military service and patriotic education were two central features, paraphrasing Callahan, of 'the project of creating a durable national state in the territory that the Italian had mapped into Eritrea a century earlier'.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Samatar, A. I. 2004. 'Ethiopian federalism: autonomy versus control in the Somali region'. *Third World Quarterly* 25, p. 1147.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1147.

<sup>98</sup> Stylian, 2005, op. cit., footnote 14, p. 199.

<sup>99</sup> Callahan, M. P. 2003. *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. 173.

<sup>100</sup> Callahan, 2003, op. cit., p. 173.

In Ethiopia during the *Derg* compulsory military service was introduced in 1983 by Proclamation no. 236. All men and women aged 18 to 30 were liable for a six months' military training and a two-year period of compulsory military service, with the obligation to remain in the reserves until the age of 50.<sup>101</sup> Eritrea's system after independence reproduced this measure.

In 1994 the government of Eritrea promulgated a national service proclamation,<sup>102</sup> which was mandatory (and still is at the time of writing) on all citizens between the ages 18 and 40. The national service proclamation mandates an eighteen month period of service. Six months of service consist of military training in a training camp in Eritrea's western lowland: in Sawa. After military training, the National Service trainees are dispatched to different parts of the country and serve for 12 months.

In Eritrea compulsory military service remains central to the organisation of society. The period although legally defined for eighteen months can be extended. In the aftermath of the war with Ethiopia, the compulsory military service was tightened. Indeed, national service has become full military service and has been extended indefinitely. Those who have completed national service, along with ex-combatants during the war for national independence, are subject to recall and reserve duties. There is no exemption for conscientious objectors. So far it is estimated that more than 200,000 Eritreans have gone through the national service, and conscription continues unabated.<sup>103</sup>

The state's continuous demand for extended conscription has contributed to the widening of the generational divide between those ex-combatants from the war for independence and those who fought in the 1998- 2000 war.<sup>104</sup> At the time of writing, those who fought in the border war are either still serving in the military or at

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<sup>101</sup> <http://wri-irg.org/co/rtba/ethiopia.htm>

<sup>102</sup> National Service Proclamation No. 82/95, October 23, 1995, Articles 8, 9, as cited in Global Report 2001.

<sup>103</sup> Eritrean Anti-Militarism Initiative.

[http://www.connection-ev.de/eritrea/HS\\_rechts.html#EAI\\_English](http://www.connection-ev.de/eritrea/HS_rechts.html#EAI_English)

<sup>104</sup> Reid, R. 2005. 'Caught in the headlights of history: Eritrea, the EPLF and the postwar nation state'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, p. 474.

civilian jobs on a pecuniary wage.<sup>105</sup> The national service conscripts tend to be engaged in development work within the *warsay-yikealo* initiative.<sup>106</sup> This initiative aims to bring together the *warsay* (those recruited to the new Eritrean army after Independence)<sup>107</sup> and *Yikealo* (the ex-combatants from the liberation war).<sup>108</sup> In addition, those undergoing the compulsory military service were used in PFDJ-linked corporations; this practice brought undeniable benefits to the party-owned corporations through the use of 'conscript workers' as cheap labour.<sup>109</sup> This policy and the open-ended military service have generated much political discontent among youth.<sup>110</sup>

From the government's perspective, Sawa should be understood as the military training centre *par excellence* and also as the 'national finishing school'.<sup>111</sup> The national military centre has contributed to the construction of a new myth of the Sawa Tigers, in distinction to the draft-dodgers portrayed as the 'Coca-Cola generation' for their lack of willingness to sacrifice for the nation and for their poor display of patriotism.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, in Eritrea, as Bascom notes 'sacrifice is considered normative in times of peace or war'.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the national military centre's role was critical to the passing on of the core values of the nation to the post-liberation war generation.<sup>114</sup> Others, on a more critical note, suggest that the focus on the military training of the generation with no direct experience of the liberation war was part and parcel of the President's attempt to silence any dissenting voices (both from within the Front and from without) and to create his own personal army.<sup>115</sup>

During field work in Asmara, in July 2004, the interviews conducted with those in the age-group targeted for compulsory military service, suggested that

<sup>105</sup> Dorman, 2005, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>107</sup> Conrad, 2006, op. cit., footnote 21, p. 260.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, footnote 32, p. 267.

<sup>109</sup> Dorman, S. R. 'Born Powerful? Post-Liberation Politics in Eritrea and Zimbabwe': University of Edinburgh, unpublished work, p. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Dorman, 2005, op. cit., p. 214.

<sup>111</sup> Reid, 2005, op. cit., p. 479.

<sup>112</sup> This label is the one used by President Issaias Afewerky to characterise the lack of patriotism displayed by those who have either evaded compulsory conscription and/or who have fled the country without fulfilling their military service obligations. Conrad, 2006, op. cit., footnote 32, p. 267.

<sup>113</sup> Bascom, 2005, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>114</sup> Reid, 2005, op. cit., p. 479.

<sup>115</sup> Interview in London, May 2007.

frustration at the open-ended military service predominates. The diverging perceptions towards the military component of National service reflect the tension between the youth and the leadership (mainly composed by ex-combatants from the war for independence close to the President) with regard to both the recent war and, in particular, with regard to the indefinite compulsory military service. The generational divide between the youth and the ex-combatants seems to be widening. This should come as no surprise to those who had experienced the effects of the *Derg*'s approach to conscription. In effect, as Luckman and Bekelle note 'the compulsory conscription law introduced in 1983 in Ethiopia drove many young men into exile as refugees or into the guerrilla movements'.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps it is not too surprising that the indefinite compulsory military service is diminishing the attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship. The many reported attempts, both failed and successful, of Eritreans to escape the country to avoid military service attest to increasing resistance towards the militarised state and the less appealing nature of Eritrean citizenship.<sup>117</sup>

Eritreans who fled the country were forcibly returned by Malta in 2002 and by Libya in July 2004.<sup>118</sup> According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) Malta forcibly deported over 220 Eritreans and the Libyan authorities were reported to have forcibly returned over 110 people.<sup>119</sup>

Those fleeing Eritrea were handled as 'illegal' migrants by Malta and were treated as part of the growing problem that Malta faces with irregular migration. This group of Eritrean citizens was eligible to apply for asylum status as they were escaping political and/or religious persecution in their country of origin; their inalienable right was denied without due process. According to CSW upon arrival in Eritrea they were detained in Adi Abeito prison, tortured and subsequently moved to

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<sup>116</sup> Cited in D. Jacquin- Berdal, 2002, op. cit., footnote 155, p. 126.

<sup>117</sup> This contention is based upon the empirical evidence provided by UNHCR with regard to the trends in the period 1996-2005 on Refugees and Asylum seekers from Eritrea. Refer to the graphs in the next section which substantiate this claim.

<sup>118</sup> From Malta: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/>

From Libya: Eritrea: Refugees Involuntarily Repatriated from Libya, Letter to President Issayas Afewerki, Human Rights Watch, August 3 2004.

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/08/03/eritre9178.htm>

<sup>119</sup> Hobson, A. 8 December 2004. 'Written evidence submitted by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (+ Annex 1) to Foreign Affairs Select Committee, House of Commons, UK': Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

the maximum-security prison in the Red Sea island of Nakhura.<sup>120</sup> Malta as one of the Contracting Parties to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was obligated by the ECHR and additional protocols to act in conformity with international standard procedures for granting asylum and conferring refugee status on this group of Eritrean citizens. Malta, more so than Libya, was expected to comply with the set of norms enshrined in the ECHR and in the additional Protocols. On other occasions, EU states have reportedly questioned Malta over its failure to apply international conventions and rules in its dealings with refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>121</sup> The creation of Frontex, the EU border security agency,<sup>122</sup> *per se*, is unlikely to prevail over the disagreements between EU member states on how to handle irregular migration and/or on how to share the burden of asylum seekers and refugees from Africa and other parts of the world. The political situation in Eritrea further enhances the need to discriminate on a case-by-case basis between irregular migrants, rather than treating all as part of illegal migration and depriving an ever-widening share of citizens originating from the 'South' of rights which are enshrined in international conventions and rules.

Libya's decision to deny asylum to a group of 80 Eritrean draft dodgers coincided with the author's field research in Eritrea in July-August 2004. At the time all were deported back to Eritrea. Tension was high and a local informant could not avoid letting slip one of the few critical comments on the present government that I was able to collect while in Asmara: 'I only wish that all the young people could escape the country'.<sup>123</sup> Another Eritrean drew my attention to the youth situation:

(...) I do know that with this government (...) look at the youth, because they do not have a future ... always fighting.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Bilefsky, D. June 12, 2007. 'EU nations refuse to split up refugee burden' *International Herald Tribune*, [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com). ; Kubosova, L. 6 July 2007. 'Malta turning into 'detention centre', warns minister' *EU Observer*. Malta, <http://euobserver.com>.

<sup>122</sup>FRONTEX is a recently created agency which has a legal mandate to coordinate the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border security and to proceed with the implementation of integrated border management in the EU borders. <http://www.frontex.europa.eu/>

<sup>123</sup> Interview in Asmara, July-August 2004.

<sup>124</sup> Interviews in Asmara, August 2004.

Several incidents point to a continued draft-dodging strategy. According to Amnesty International on 4 November 2004 thousands of people arrested on suspicion of evading military conscription and held at Adi Abeto army prison were thought to be at serious risk of torture and ill-treatment. Prisoners have reportedly been shot dead and many more were wounded following a disturbance at the prison.<sup>125</sup> In November 2004 Yemeni security forces arrested 10 Eritrean army deserters after they illegally entered Yemen from the Red Sea.<sup>126</sup> In February 2005 in Manda, in the eastern sector, 20 kilometres inside Ethiopian territory (on the road from the port of Assab to Ethiopia) the Ethiopian armed forces killed two Eritreans and imprisoned five. The Ethiopians alleged they belonged to the Eritrean armed forces. Bearing in mind the current tendency in Eritrea to escape from the compulsory military service the scenario tends to suggest that these were Eritrean citizens evading military service, rather than a breach of the peace settlement disposition. This situation was reported to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) leading to an increase in tension near the border.

The aftermath of the war and the continuous focus on militarization of the society have contributed to the state's ability to pursue conscription, however this orientation has significantly undermined the Eritrean government's legitimacy. While it may well be argued that the civil war had a positive impact in the consolidation of a sense of 'Eritreaness', the cost of the 1998-2000 war and the continuous militarism of the ruling party has undermined the legitimacy of the regime and perhaps decreases the attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship, especially for those within the age group of compulsory military service. As a consequence, national identity may start to unravel.

The available data on the number of asylum seekers and refugees both from Ethiopia and Eritrea further confirm the findings of scholarly studies which suggest

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<sup>125</sup>Amnesty International Urgent Action, 'Eritrea: Fear of torture / Incommunicado detention/Arbitrary killings: Thousands of people held at Adi Abeto army prison', AI Index: AFR 64/008/2004, 9 November 2004,<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR640082004?open&of=ENG-2AF>; see also: Eritrea: Army rounds up draft evaders / Connection e.V. releases booklet on Eritrea <http://www.wri-irg.org/pubs/upd-0412.htm#Eritrea: Army rounds up draft evaders>.

<sup>126</sup> Sanaa, Yemen, Nov. 13 (UPI). 'Eritrea army deserters seized in Yemen', Washington Times, November 13, 2004.

that as the governments have embarked upon a more authoritarian path, their legitimacy has decreased and their citizens have been forced to seek asylum abroad.<sup>127</sup>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) study on global trends with regard to new individual asylum applications during 2005-2006 lends credence to the claim that an ever widening range of Eritreans are fleeing the country. Quite significantly, the UNHCR reported that by nationality Eritreans ranked fourth with the highest number of new filled individual asylum claims during 2005-2006, with a total of 19,400 new claims.<sup>128</sup> Between June 2005 and June 2006, 2,500 Eritreans lodged individual asylum applications in the UK. Indeed, Eritrea is among the top ten asylum producing countries for the UK.<sup>129</sup> According to the UNHCR during 2005-2006 the majority of Eritrean asylum applications were lodged in Sudan (8,700), in the UK (2,700), in Ethiopia (2,700) and in Switzerland (1,200).<sup>130</sup>

As figure 5 will show the increase in the overall number of new asylum applicants from Eritrea should be understood not only in relation to the domestic constraints mentioned above, but also in relation to international and regional constraints.

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<sup>127</sup> Bascom, 2005, op. cit.; Conrad, 2006, op. cit.; Dorman, 2005, op. cit.; Hepner, 2003, op. cit.; Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu, 2005, op. cit.; Koser, 2003, op. cit.; Reid, 2005, op. cit.; Connell, 2005, op. cit.

<sup>128</sup> Leading countries of origin of new asylum applicants in 2005-2006: Somalia ranked first with 45,600; Iraq ranked second with 34,200; followed by Zimbabwe with 22,200; then Eritrea (19,400); immediately followed by China with 19,300 new claims and in the 6<sup>th</sup> position came Rwanda with 19,200 new individual claims. UNHCR June 2007. '2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum- Seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons': UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>, p. 10.

<sup>129</sup> The UK Refugees Council places the total number of Refugees and asylum seekers originating from Eritrea at 147,628. <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/supportourwork/whereonearth/topten/eritrea.htm>

<sup>130</sup> UNHCR, 2006, op. cit., p. 10.

Figure 5: Asylum applicants from Eritrea<sup>131</sup>

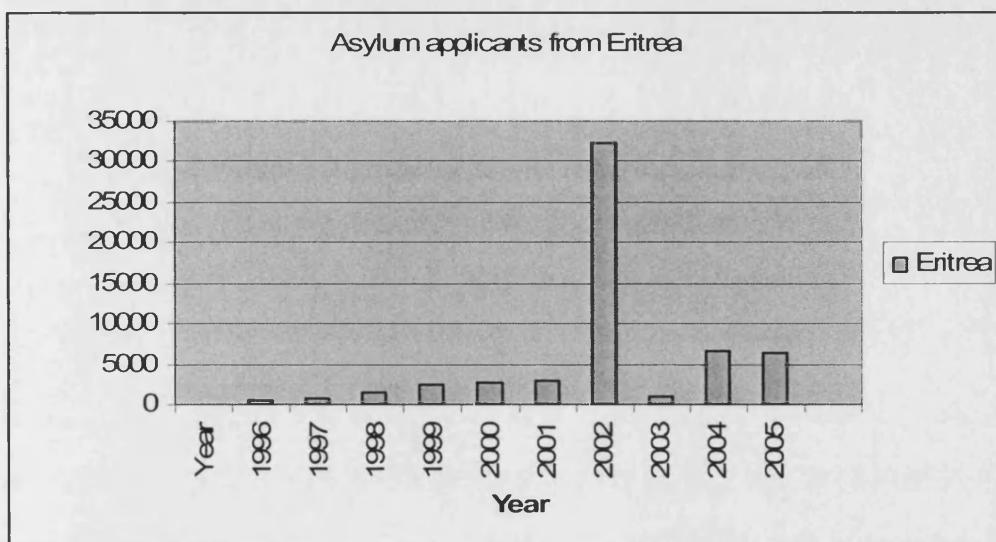


Figure 5 shows a steady increase during the war and up to 2001. The unexpected peak in 2002 is then followed by a significant decrease in 2003 and culminates in an increase in 2004 and 2005.<sup>132</sup> The peak in 2002 should be interpreted against the backdrop of the UNHCR's announcement that Eritreans living in Sudan would no longer receive *prima facie* refugee status after 31 December 2002 and that its long-standing programme for humanitarian assistance in eastern Sudan would be phased out.<sup>133</sup> Indeed, since the border war ended in 2000 only 29,000 of the Eritrean refugees in Sudan from the thirty-year war have returned to Eritrea; the remaining 270,000 decided not to return when the main repatriation was conducted in the 1990s.<sup>134</sup> Bascom suggests that:

This inaction cannot be ignored; both examples suggest that Eritreans in exile believe the risks and vulnerabilities associated with reintegration outweigh the perceived benefits of returning home.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>131</sup> UNHCR 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Eritrea'. *UNHCR* 324-325, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>, p. 325.

<sup>132</sup> All the graphs were conceived by the author on the basis of the available statistics published by UNHCR. For the data of figure 5 refer to Appendix 3, table 2.

<sup>133</sup> Bascom, J. June 2005. 'The long, 'Last Step'? Reintegration of Repatriates in Eritrea'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 18, p. 177.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

As the graph below further suggests the decrease in the number of Eritrean refugees in Sudan since 2002 is likely to have been conditioned by the UNHCR announcement. Since 2000 the number of Eritreans who have been conferred the status of refugees in Ethiopia has been steadily increasing. Indeed, the number of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia increased from 3,276 in 2000 to 10,700 in 2005.<sup>136</sup>

Figure 6: Refugees from Eritrea: Countries of Asylum<sup>137</sup>

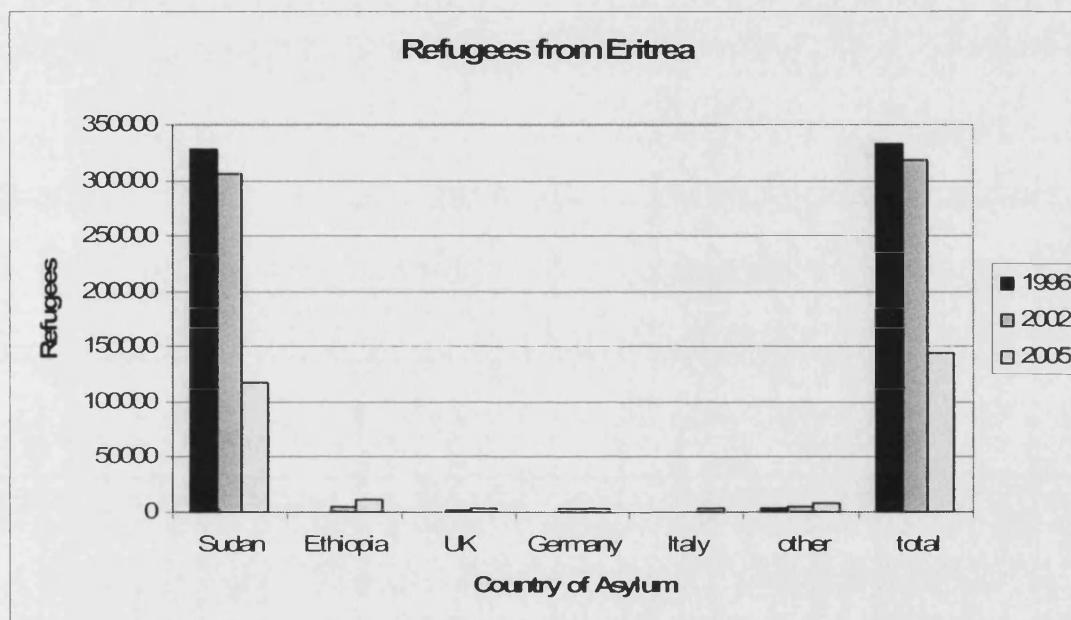


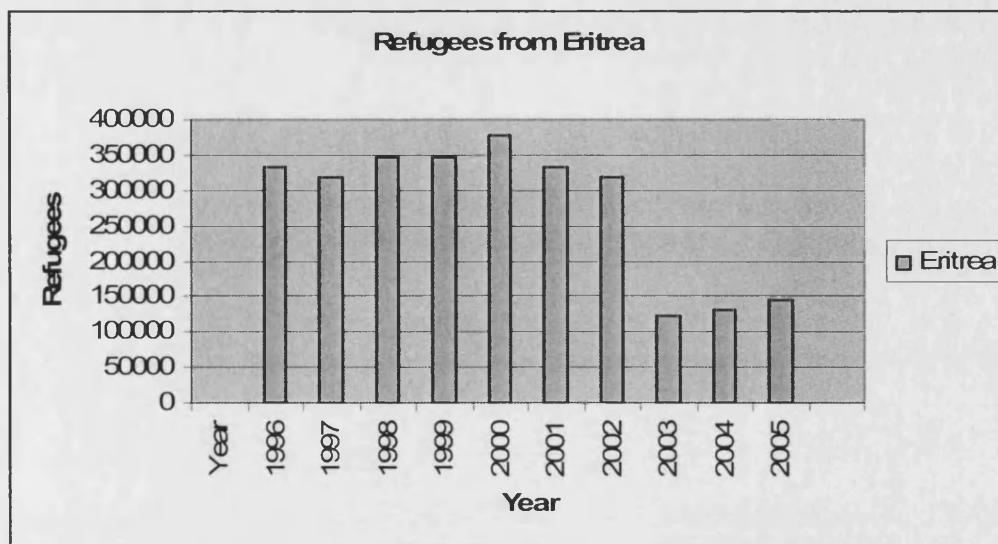
Figure 6<sup>138</sup> clearly shows that up to the 2002 UNHCR announcement the majority of Eritrean refugees were concentrated in Sudan (as an outcome of the thirty-year war for independence) and just a minority in other countries. The 1998-2000 war and particularly its aftermath did not hamper Eritreans from seeking refuge in Ethiopia rather than returning to Eritrea, as one might have expected. Figure 7, below, further confirms the increase of Eritrean refugees during the 1998-2000 war.

<sup>136</sup> For the years in the interval, the number of Eritreans conferred with refugee status in Ethiopia was : 4, 212 in 2001; 5,126 in 2002; 6,754 in 2003 and 8,719. UNHCR 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Ethiopia'. *UNHCR* 328-329, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>.

<sup>137</sup> --- 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Eritrea'. *UNHCR* 324-325, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>, pp. 324-25.

<sup>138</sup> For the precise data of figure 6 refer to table 3 in Appendix 3.

Figure 7: Refugees from Eritrea<sup>139</sup>

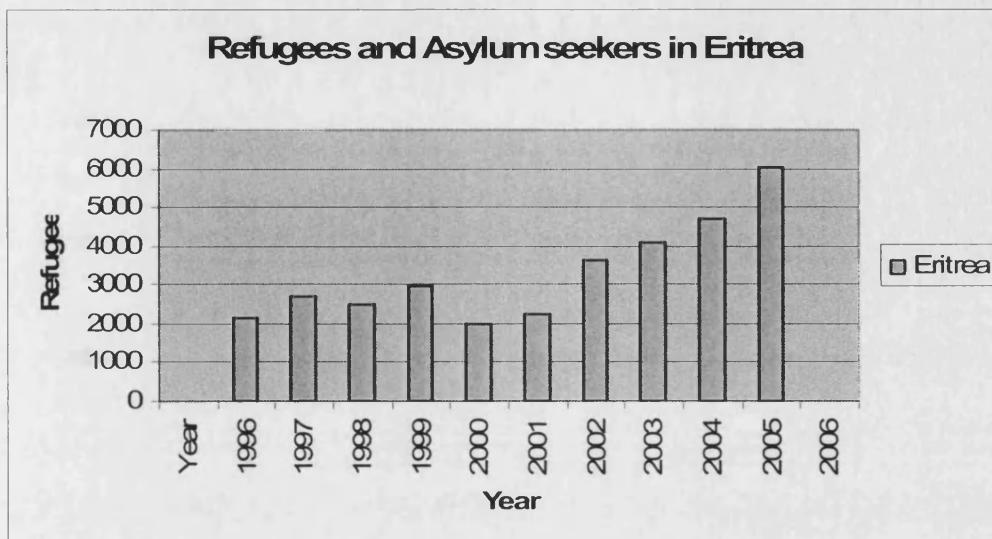


The graph on refugees from Eritrea shows that the significant decrease in the number of Eritrean refugees after the 2002 UNHCR announcement has not been sustained. The number of Eritrean refugees seems to be on the rise again since 2004.

In contrast to Eritrea, the available data on Ethiopia seem to suggest a decrease in the number of asylum seekers and refugees from Ethiopia since the overthrow of the *Derg*. However, the 1998-2000 border war, similarly to what happened in Eritrea, led to an increase in the number of refugees from Ethiopia. Moreover, the available data on the new Ethiopian asylum applicants in Eritrea (in particular in 2005, as discussed before) and on Ethiopian refugees in Kenya suggest that the May 2005 elections may have partially reversed the previous trend for the decrease of asylum seekers and refugees from Ethiopia. Quite significantly, in 2005, a significant shift occurred with regard to asylum applicants of Ethiopian origin in Eritrea as figure 8 suggests.

<sup>139</sup> For the data refer to appendix 3, table 4.

Figure 8: Refugees and Asylum seekers in Eritrea<sup>140</sup>



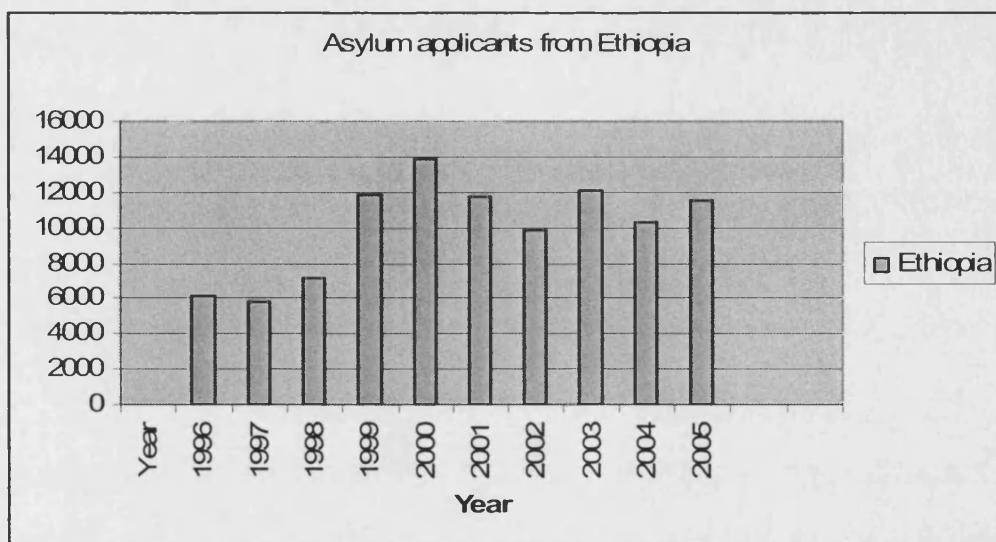
The increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Eritrea for the year 2005 is related to the increase of new individual applicants from Ethiopia. In 2002, only 5 asylum applicants from Ethiopia lodged their claims in Eritrea; in 2004 Ethiopian asylum applicants in Eritrea totalled 248 and in 2005 the number increased sharply to a total of 1,218 new claims.<sup>141</sup> The increase was sharp and the number lends credence to the claim that the reason behind this shift was related to the increasingly authoritarian path pursued by the EPRDF in the run-up to and in the aftermath of the May 2005 elections.

The graph on asylum applicants from Ethiopia, below, suggests that the 1998-2000 border war was behind the sharp increase in individual asylum applicants from Ethiopia in 1999.

<sup>140</sup> UNHCR 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Eritrea'. *UNHCR* 324-325, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>, for the original data refer to table 5 in Appendix 3.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p. 325.

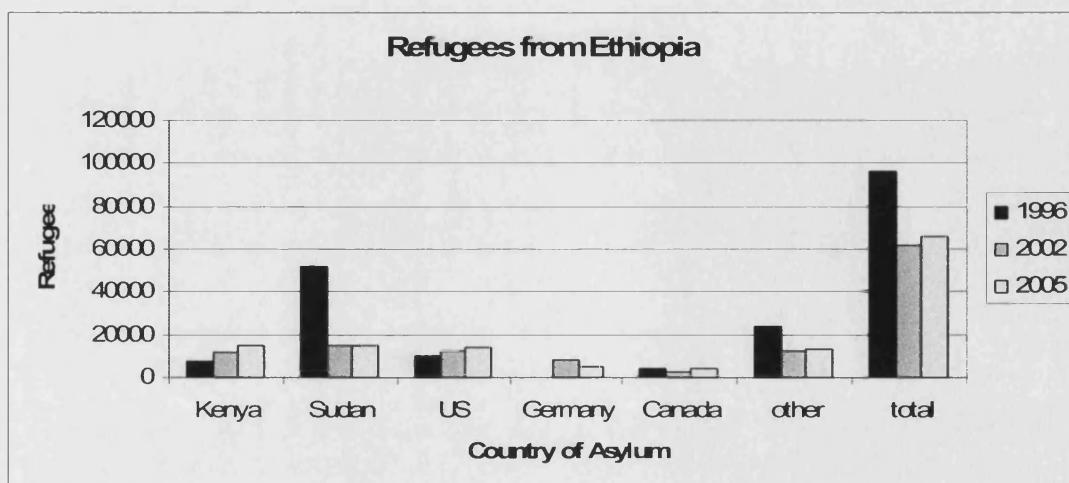
Figure 9: Asylum applicants from Ethiopia<sup>142</sup>



In 1998 the number of asylum applicants from Ethiopia was 7,204, in 1999 the total increased to 11,845 and in 2000 to 13,837. In the aftermath of the war the number decreased again with a rise in 2003 and in 2005.

The number of refugees from Ethiopia, as figure 10 suggests, has been increasing in Kenya particularly since 2001.

Figure 10: Refugees from Ethiopia: Country of Asylum<sup>143</sup>

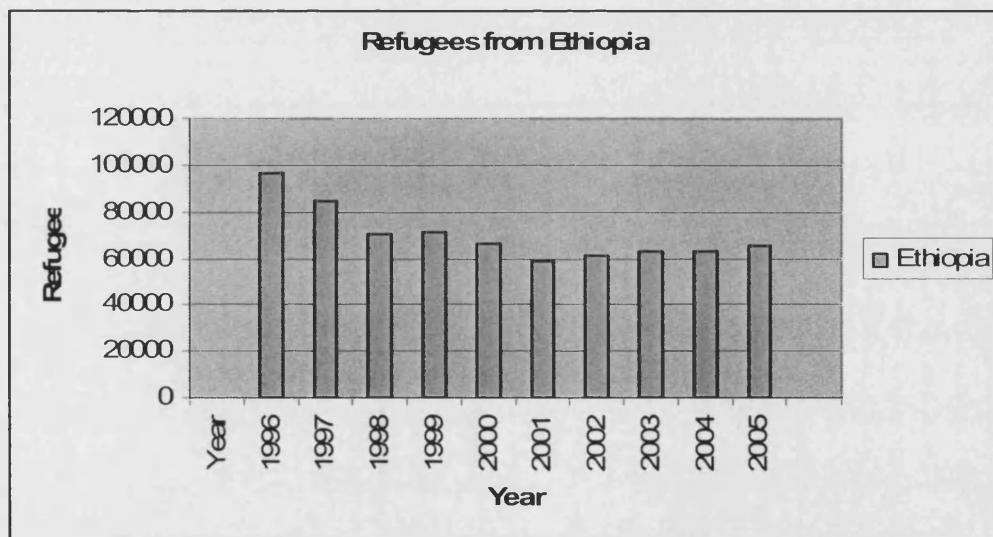


<sup>142</sup> For the original data refer to table 6 in appendix 3.

<sup>143</sup> For the original data refer to table 7 in appendix 3.

The graph shows some developments worth noting. The number of refugees and asylum seekers from Ethiopia in the southern contiguous neighbouring country (Kenya) has been steadily increasing since 1996 (4,053) up to 2002 (11,202); furthermore, in 2005 the increase was sharp reaching 14,862. Again, in May 2005 the authoritarian measures taken by the government during the election campaign and in the aftermath of the 2005 elections are likely to have been the major driving force behind this shift. The final graph, figure 11, shows the increase of refugees from Ethiopia during the two-year border war. In 1999 the total was 71,055 reverting partially the previous trend for the decrease of refugees from Ethiopia.

Figure 11: Refugees from Ethiopia<sup>144</sup>



In conclusion, the graphs for Eritrea and Ethiopia although with significant differences suggest a similar conclusion: as the PFDJ and the EPRDF increased authoritarian measures the proportion of asylum seekers and refugees originating from these two countries increased.

In Eritrea the return of refugees from the thirty- year war proceeded at a slower pace than in Ethiopia. The two-year border war with Ethiopia further undermined the prospects of return for many and the extended compulsory military service seem to have led to an ever-widening number of Eritreans fleeing the country.

The numbers more than anything else confirm the claim that as the PFDJ has tended to increase authoritarian measures its legitimacy has eroded and Eritreans are forcefully led to seek alternative strategies of survival in asylum countries because the current government, the PFDJ, through the set of specific obligations imposed upon its citizenry has deprived Eritreans of any political and civil rights. In this sense, the state making activities induced by the war have been undermined by the open-ended military service and by the climate of political repression. The data confirm that the two-year war has eroded significantly the wealth of legitimacy inherited from the war for independence.

With regard to Ethiopia, the more promising indicators of political liberalization since the EPRDF had assumed power related positively with the proportion of those refugees (from the civil war against the *Derg*) willing to return to Ethiopia. However, the authoritarian turn of the EPRDF since the May 2005 elections seems to have eroded its legitimacy more so than the two-year border war. This seems to stand in contrast to Eritrea. The data further confirm a contrasting outcome for both countries: while in Eritrea the two-year border war and the 2001 political crisis led to an erosion of the regime's legitimacy, in Ethiopia the two-year border war did not erode the EPRDF's legitimacy. However, the data suggest that the authoritarian path since the May 2005 elections has significantly eroded the ruling party's legitimacy and has created further loci of contention and insurgency to the EPRDF.

Finally, with regard to both taxation and conscription it may well be argued that the 1998-2000 war has undermined the legitimacy capital of the PFDJ. The increasing blurred line between the party and the state poses a further danger to state consolidation.

In Eritrea the national service has effectively led to the extension of the state's institutions and agents to the entire territory. The gains in this area, however, were (and at the time of writing still are) undermined by the stalemated peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the closure of the border in the aftermath of the war. Any attempts by the state to extend its military presence beyond the outer limits of the TSZ are in breach of the dispositions agreed by the parties in Algiers. The envisaged

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<sup>144</sup> For the final graph's data refer to table 11 in appendix 3.

dividends of National Service for the extension of the state's institutions within its entire territorial jurisdiction are thus neutralized by the aftermath of the war and the persistence of the stalemate on the border delimitation and demarcation. Paradoxically, the TSZ has been used by the PFDJ to enhance the link between identity documentation and movement restrictions both to its citizenry, IO employees and visitors. The internal checks on documentation and the requirement of authorisations to travel outside the capital serve two related purposes: the centralization of the state control over its citizenry and territory and the enforcement of the compulsory component of national military service. However, at the level of nation building the authoritarian measures of the PFDJ and the extended military service have generated discontent and opposition.

The widening of the generational divide seems to suggest that the PFDJ'S appeal to the ethos of the liberation war in order to advance its state-building project is likely to fade as the government enhances authoritarian measures and insists on the open- ended military service. As Coker noted, in relation to past attempts to re-invent the nation elsewhere, resistance was likely to increase to: '(...) a manufactured national history when it failed to inspire those who had inherited it, when it was more life denying than life affirming'.<sup>145</sup>

### **5.3.3 Extension of the state's institutions**

The state and nation building international features should be understood as part of one of the central activities of state making highlighted by Tilly: the extension of the state's institutions over its territory.

The persisting stalemate over the territorial boundary arguably has undermined the extension of the state's institutions to the entire territory; this has been particularly the case in Eritrea. As an outcome of the war, Eritrea had to abide by the creation of the TSZ within its territory monitored by UNMEE until demarcation of the borders had been completed. The government's attempt to settle by force the border dispute back in May 1998 backfired as the war and its aftermath have been

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<sup>145</sup> Coker, C. 1997. *Twilight of the West*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, p. 136.

further disruptive to the state's attempt to extend its authority over the territory. In this sense, in the Eritrean case, war making was disruptive of state making.

The legal dispositions agreed by the parties, as an outcome of the war, in the Algiers Peace Agreement undermined the state's attempts to maximize authority over territory. In addition, customary international law has outlawed forceful attempts to settle border disputes and/or acquire territory.<sup>146</sup> This is a significant difference in contemporary international society which was absent during the process of state formation in Europe. As a consequence on 19 December 2005 the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECA) delivered its ruling with regard to *jus ad bellum* recognizing that Ethiopia recurred to armed force in self-defence.

With the pervasive animosity between the parties and deterioration of the relations between the Eritrean government and UNMEE by mid-December 2005 an estimated 130,000 Ethiopian troops faced 250,000 Eritrean troops.<sup>147</sup> The tension along Ethiopia's northern border with Eritrea has increased. The April 2007 report of the UN Secretary General to the UN Security Council portrayed worrying trends, with the build up of troops and military equipment and armaments inside the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) in Eritrea and in the adjacent areas along the frontier on the Ethiopian side.<sup>148</sup> Any clash or incident along the border could have the potential to trigger a major confrontation.

With regard to the currency exchange mechanisms the chapter on the causes of the war has shown how failure to agree on the exchange modality and rates after Eritrea's introduction of its own currency increased rivalry and heightened tensions between the two executives. Furthermore, the introduction of the new currency led Ethiopia to redefine the terms of trade. These mechanisms should be understood both

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<sup>146</sup> As a result of the prevailing customary practice in international society the Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission delivered its ruling with regards to *jus ad bellum* recognizing that Ethiopia recurred to armed force in self-defence.

<sup>147</sup> Barnes, C. 2006. 'Ethiopia: A Sociopolitical Assessment': Writenet/ UNHCR, p. 19.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Security Council 30 April 2007. 'Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea: S/2007/250': UN Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep07.htm>.

as integral components of boundary politics<sup>149</sup> and as a form of boundary maintenance, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2.<sup>150</sup>

As discussed in chapter 4, the thesis findings further confirm that citizenship rules need to be understood as buffer institutions and as an integral component of boundary politics. Indeed, the war showed how the two political leaderships' divergent trajectories of nation building collided. In its aftermath, Ethiopia revised the outdated Proclamation on Ethiopian nationality and restored some rights to those citizens living in the diaspora who qualified for acquisition of Ethiopian citizenship in case they wished to relinquish their other nationality. Although the EPRDF did not change the earlier practice of recognizing only a single nationality it extended some rights to the diaspora in order to re-enforce the diaspora's links to the homeland. In this respect, the war led to revisionism of the earlier EPRDF nation building project with regard to its citizens within Ethiopia and to its transnational constituency. Although ethnicity continued to be critical for the participation in the political arena and for access to critical resources granted by the state, at the federal, regional and local (zones-woreda-kebele) levels, two significant shifts occurred: towards a more centralized federal system and to the forceful control of 'the manipulation of ethnic identity for parochial purposes'.<sup>151</sup> As an outcome of the war, the EPRDF was able momentarily to build upon the outburst of Ethiopian nationalism to justify the revision of its nation building project based on Diversity. Although not altogether abandoned the real steps towards the devolution and decentralization of power to the regional level were reversed and marred by the political crisis in the aftermath of the war. In this respect, the resurgence of nationalism in Ethiopia from the strains of the ethnic-based Federal model led to a resurgence of loyalty not to the regime but to the Ethiopian state.

In Eritrea, the war induced activities of nation building were undermined by its aftermath. Indeed, the PFDJ continuous focus on compulsory military service and the proliferation of cases of *incommunicado* detentions undermined the Eritreans

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<sup>149</sup> Herbst, 2000, p. 25.

<sup>150</sup> Clapham, C. 1999. 'Boundaries and States in the New African Order' in Bach, D.C. (ed.) *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Desintegration*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 55.

loyalty to the state, as a consequence of the PFDJ symbiosis between itself and the Eritrean state. The PFDJ nation-building project was marred by a resurgence of sub-national identities in opposition to the regime's redrawing of the domestic administrative territorial subdivisions of the state.

The war in relation to nation building activities had divergent outcomes for the two political leaderships: while in Ethiopia loyalty to the state overcame generalised opposition to the EPRDF, in Eritrea the strong identification between the PFDJ and the Eritrean state meant that those who opposed the regime were left with few options: to acquiesce to assimilation or in case of opposition either face repression or exit from the state.

#### **5.4 State consolidation or disintegration?**

With the outbreak of hostilities the war reinforced nationalist feelings; Jacquin-Berdal suggests this was one of the few unambiguous contributions of the war to the consolidation of statehood.<sup>152</sup> However, the conduct of the war (particularly on the Eritrean side) and its aftermath have undermined the legitimacy of the two governments, as the previous section discussed.

The 1998-2000 war, the increasingly authoritarian stance of the government and its emphasis on extended compulsory military service eroded the national legitimacy of the PFDJ as the embodiment of Eritrea's hard won independence. Perseverance on this path is likely to render Eritrean citizenship less, rather than more attractive.

In Ethiopia it was not a case of state building because state survival was not at stake. After the ousting of the *Derg* the challenge was to re-make the state. Although Ethiopia's definition after Eritrea's secession was not at the forefront of the EPRDF's

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<sup>151</sup> Assefa Fisseha 2006. 'Theory Versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism' in Turton, D. (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 147.

<sup>152</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2005. 'Introduction: The Eritreo- Ethiopian war' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. xix.

concerns, the war forced the redefinition of Ethiopia as a country (its landlocked status was finally realised) and of its citizens, particularly of those located in the borderlands. The solidarity between the Tigrinya-speaking communities North and South of the Mereb faltered in the aftermath of Eritrea's independence and was disrupted by the border war.

The war impacted upon the state-building project of the EPRDF. In this sense, the proposition to address is how the war affected the EPRDF project of remaking the state along ethnic lines?

In Ethiopia the soviet-inspired model on nationalities was implemented to address and countervail the trend towards the multiplication of *loci* of contention and insurgency at the periphery of the state. The Federal model based on ethnicity, however, failed to meet its stated aim of solving the 'nationalities questions'. Ultimately the model elevated sub-nationalities over the national identity. This trend was disrupted by the 1998-2000 war and in its aftermath the emphasis on diversity and decentralization (which had never left from the level of policy design to that of political implementation) was increasingly substituted by the focus on unity and on a revived and more salient centralizing trend. The emphasis on sub-nationalities subsided while the war lasted. The EPRDF's earlier emphasis on sub-nationalities was revised and its saliency diminished.

Ethiopia's federal model led to a redrawing of domestic boundaries between regions based on the criteria of ethnicity and language. This attempt to ascribe a particular ethnic group and language to a region encountered manifold problems and led to a proliferation of domestic boundary disputes between the new administrative units. The outbreak of the war allowed the citizens to voice resentment towards the ruling party's own conception of statehood. In addition, the EPRDF was forced to abandon its emphasis on diversity and revive the motto of 'One Ethiopia' to mobilise support for the defence of the territorial integrity of the state against external aggression.

The focus on the need to defend the territorial integrity of the state was critical in raising revenues from peripheral areas, such as the Somali region and the Afar

regions. Whereas the trajectory of the Afar region shows that the Afar tend to escape the state's control, the fact that Afar land had been divided by Eritrea's independence meant that their support for the EPRDF was more likely than ever. With regard to Ethiopia's Somali region the communities contributed both with men for the battlefield and with goods for the troops, such as sheep; at a particularly difficult moment when the drought in the region had already depleted the livestock economy. In this regard, the 1998-2000 war led the peripheral regions to display their loyalty towards the Ethiopian state. As a consequence, the EPRDF acquired its nationalist credentials through victory on the battlefield.

In the aftermath of the war, the Ethiopian government toned down the saliency of ethnic politics and criticised those who manipulated ethnicity for parochial purposes or used nationalism in a narrow way.<sup>153</sup> This rhetoric shift marked the turn towards a more centralized Federal system.

Eritrea had to put to the test its nationalist credentials and bring into implementation its long withheld claims that Eritrea was a viable political and economic independent unit. The PFDJ perceived ethnic and/or regional solidarity as a hindrance to state and nation building. The Eritrean government diminished the saliency of all solidarities at the sub- state level and subordinated them to the overarching national identity.

With regard to the relationship between war and nationalism, both the PFDJ and the EPRDF skilfully mobilised support from their citizens and diaspora (particularly the PFDJ) around the need to protect the country. The PFDJ rallied support around the need to protect the country's hard-won independence and the EPRDF rallied support around the revival of the need to unite all Ethiopians against an external threat to the state's territorial integrity. While the PFDJ revived the founding myth of the war for independence, the EPRDF revived the myth of the unity of Ethiopia in the face of external threats to the state's sovereignty. In this regard both leaderships were successful while the war lasted. However, as the war was brought to

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<sup>153</sup> Assefa Fisseha, 2006, op. cit., p. 147.

an end the increasingly authoritarian stance of the two governments eroded the support which the war had momentarily raised.

In Ethiopia the end of the war was accompanied by a resurgence of sub-nationalist conflict. In Eritrea the aftermath of the war and the political crisis<sup>154</sup> that ensued ‘generated antagonism to the state-led national project among those who have borne its brunt’.<sup>155</sup> Quite significantly, Dorman highlights that the 1998-2000 war generated increasing political opposition to the Eritrean government and led to a re-evaluation of the nationalist legacy.<sup>156</sup>

Finally, with regard to the three activities induced by the war and which serve as indicators of the consolidation of the state the conclusions are outlined below. In the Eritrean case the war allowed the PFDJ to raise its revenues sharply. In this sense the collection of funds was not conducted domestically but at the transnational level. This case highlights how globalisation and transnationalism have altered the stage within which the relationship between war making and state making should be analysed. Indeed, globalization in this respect seems to have widened the constituencies of the sovereign state. However, as the war unfolded and as the diaspora communities had no say in the diplomatic and military conduct of the war and/or in the political debate which followed Eritrea’s defeat, the diaspora’s contributions decreased to ante bellum levels and in some cases diminished significantly. Before the war even opposition members perceived their 2 per cent contribution to the state as a sign of national commitment. The war eroded the legitimacy of the PFDJ as the sole bearer of the legacy of the war for independence. In addition, the state’s accrued needs to raise revenues to finance the war depleted the government of its fiscal resources.<sup>157</sup> In the Ethiopian case, the war allowed the state

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<sup>154</sup> The political crisis in the aftermath of the war led to the imprisonment of a group of 15 PFDJ’s members who wrote an open-letter criticising the President for the diplomatic and military conduct of the war and calling upon the President to implement the Constitution and hold long due elections. Not only were most of the signatories of the letter immediately imprisoned, but also various journalists. The private media were banned and cases of imprisonment, disappearances and arbitrary arrest of those perceived as dissenters abound. Conrad, 2006, op. cit., footnote 7, pp. 251- 52.

<sup>155</sup> Dorman, 2005, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>156</sup> ibid, p. 204.

<sup>157</sup> Forrest, J. 2004. *Subnationalism in Africa : ethnicity, alliances, and politics*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 139.

to raise revenues from peripheral groups both in the borderlands with Eritrea and far removed from it, as was the case with the Afar and Somali respectively.

The ex-combatants' criticism of the government should not remain unheeded at the peril of compromising not only the government's hold on power but also the survival of the state. Indeed, as several ex-combatants and those from the diaspora who committed time, financial resources and their skills to the war for independence tend to repeat: 'We didn't fight for this'<sup>158</sup> or they simply share one ex-combatant's sense of frustration and disillusionment: 'I fought so that my children wouldn't have to'.<sup>159</sup>

Finally, in contradistinction to what Herbst seems to suggest, the weakness of the state in Africa cannot be solely explained on the basis of the absence of inter-state war.<sup>160</sup> In this case we are faced with this type of war. The main contention of this chapter is that as the war unfolded it allowed both governments to sharply raise the revenues and rally support around the nationalist appeal. However, the aftermath of the war showed that the war-induced elements of state consolidation were only epiphenomenal and ceased as the war was brought to an end. The 1998-2000 war has been further disruptive to the process of state consolidation. In the short term the war has led to the opposite<sup>161</sup> outcome. In its aftermath internal opposition to the governments increased<sup>162</sup> and in Ethiopia's case was maintained fuelling, indirectly, further *loci* and support for opposition groups to the EPRDF-TPLF.

## 5.5 Conclusion

The first part of the chapter showed on the one hand how the war reinforced the state's determination in achieving domestic sovereignty, and on the other hand

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<sup>158</sup> Group Interview in London, May 2007.

<sup>159</sup> Dorman, 2005, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>160</sup> Tilly claims that wars of territorial conquest were central to the formation of particular types of states in Europe. According to Herbst 'the consequential role that war played in European state development was not replicated in Africa. Herbst, 2000, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>161</sup> Clapham and Jacquin-Berdal's analysis of the war suggests that the outcome has been quite the reverse or, at the best, ambiguous in face of the erosion of the legitimacy of both leaderships. Clapham, C. 2003. 'Guerre et construction de l'État dans la Corne de l'Afrique' in Hassner, P., et, Roland Marchal, (ed.) *Guérres et sociétés : États et violence après la Guerre Froide*. Paris: Éditions Karthala. Jacquin-Berdal 2005, op.cit., p. xix.

showed how the limited gains in state and nation building activities were undermined as the war unfolded and, especially, in its aftermath. The intensity of the activities of taxation and conscription during and after the war clearly contributed to a decrease in the vast amount of legitimacy the regime had enjoyed at Independence.

The chapter argued that at least in the short term there are no straightforward answers to the claim that war induces state making.

The evidence collected corroborates the claim that war both makes and breaks the state. Indeed, in Ethiopia and Eritrea the 1998- 2000 war had contradictory impacts on state and nation building. Particularly in Eritrea, the 1998- 2000 war against Ethiopia meant a relapse in nation building and fundamentally undermined the regime's capital of legitimacy inherited from the war for independence.

With regard to taxation, although the war caused an increase in revenue it did not produce a ratchet effect<sup>163</sup> and the war undermined the diaspora's willingness to contribute to the PFDJ state-building project for Eritrea's sovereign state. Indeed, the contributions from the diaspora have decreased in the aftermath not only of the war but, especially, after the PFDJ implementation of increasingly authoritarian measures in 2001.

Ironically, the 1998-2000 war provided the ruling party in Eritrea with the justification to pursue its state building activities based on mass conscription and patriotic education. For how long the state will be able to pursue this military orientation remains to be seen. The evidence produced by this study tends to confirm that the increasing generational tension inside Eritrea and the growing external opposition from the diaspora fundamentally de-legitimise the ruling party's militarised orientation both to domestic politics and to foreign policy making.

The compulsory military service has had a pervasive effect on the attractiveness of Eritrean citizenship and on the development of a private space for

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<sup>162</sup> This is the subject of chapter 4.

economic activities. Not only is the majority of the working force of the population serving in the military, but is also used for party-controlled business activities.

As Bascom contends:

In face of an increasingly repressive and authoritarian state, both the remarkable solidarity that characterised those mobilised in the war for independence and the euphoric optimism of achieving it<sup>164</sup> are gradually fading from collective memory.<sup>165</sup>

As a consequence, Eritrean citizenship is lacking in attractiveness, especially to those who have either resisted or who were forced to undergo the military service for an extended period beyond the official one ascribed by law.<sup>166</sup>

The regime is increasingly authoritarian and is run as a de facto one-party state. Indeed, the PFDJ equals the state. In this context, opposition to the regime has led to a resurgence of sub-national identities along ethnic, religious and, most importantly, regional cleavages.<sup>167</sup>

The symbiosis between party and state suggests that loyalty to the state has waned as opposition to the regime is on the rise, particularly among the diaspora.

In Ethiopia, the war further compromised the state's ability to guarantee the monopoly of coercive violence.

Interestingly enough the explanatory power of this case- study challenges one of the central tenets of Herbst's argument. In this case, we witnessed an inter-state war where the external rivalry led to the escalation of the crisis into a conventional war. In line with what is defended by different authors, in the short term the war has not substantively induced state building activities that contribute to state

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<sup>163</sup> The ratchet effect caused by wars refers to a situation 'whereby revenue increases sharply when a nation is fighting but does not decline to the ante bellum level when hostilities have ceased.' Herbst, 2003, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>164</sup> For an earlier and already cautious interpretation of the potential and constraints of the PFDJ in leading state and society toward the democratization path refer to. Iyob, R. 1997. 'The Eritrean Experiment: a Cautious Pragmatism?' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35: 647- 673.

<sup>165</sup> Bascom, 2005, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>166</sup> Dorman, 2005, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>167</sup> Conrad, 2006, op. cit., p. 252.

consolidation, rather the opposite.<sup>168</sup> In its aftermath internal opposition to the governments, in Eritrea's case has increased and in Ethiopia's case continues fuelling, opposition and insurgency against the EPRDF-TPLF. The aftermath of the war showed that the widespread support for the ruling party during the war with Eritrea was epiphenomenal.

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<sup>168</sup> Clapham, 2003, op. cit. ; Jacquin-Berdal, 2005, op. cit.

## Chapter 6: The Regional security architecture

### 6.1 Introduction

The Horn of Africa continues to be predominantly portrayed as an endemic region of warfare, cyclic drought and famine, among other inter-linked tragedies that punctuate the lives of its peoples.

The region's geo-strategic location facing the Arabian Peninsula and on the juncture of the Strait Bab el Mandab, which allows entry of oil shipments from the Gulf towards the Mediterranean sea, has over different periods attracted external powers. Its peculiar geo-strategic location led to rivalry and competition among the superpowers in order to gain influence over the Horn of Africa's states.

Aside from extra-regional actors' influence, these states are linked in a multitude of ways. Both the patterns of international relations and the security dynamics in the region tie the domestic, international and regional levels of each of the constituent units in the region. For the purposes of this chapter the Horn of Africa refers to Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Kenya. Uganda is also of relevance to the analysis, as a member of the regional organization: the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Egypt also plays a major role in the regional politics, but like extra-regional actors its influence in the region is linked to its own interests; in Egypt's case to the key factor of securing its continued privileged access to the waters of the Nile.<sup>1</sup>

The contention of this chapter is that the region's security dynamics must be understood within the deep structure of politics, which binds these states together. Both Egypt and other extra-regional actors' influence enhance and exacerbate these dynamics, which mainly originate at the domestic and regional levels. Their foreign policies towards the individual states and towards the region, build upon the structures and processes created since the Second World War by the regional states. Extra-

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<sup>1</sup> de Waal, A. 2004. 'Prospects for peace and security in the Horn of Africa' in Sørbø, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, p. 14.

regional actors' influence and the outcomes of their foreign policies add another layer of complexity to the multiple crises and constraints faced by regional actors.

The first part of the chapter will specifically analyse the relationship between divergent conceptions of statehood and their implications within the regional structure of international relations. The aim of this part is to reflect upon the broader processes of state formation and different trajectories of the political units. The trajectories of state formation included cases of state creation and state disintegration in the aftermath of the Cold War. By trying to understand how the diverging conceptions of statehood were pursued and played out in the regional arena, the chapter will argue that state building and nation building, although defined domestically, had regional implications. The blurring line between domestic and regional politics is related not only to the deep structure of regional relations, but also to the role of frontiers for each of the units.

The key question to investigate is the relationship between processes of state creation, disintegration and state and nation building activities, which in turn resulted in a re-configuration of regional security dynamics in the Horn of Africa. The causes and the outcomes of different types of war in the Horn of Africa will be singled out in accordance with their regional repercussions and with the regional patterns of warfare. The region's security dynamics will finally be analysed against the backdrop of the patterns resulting from the intervening actors' conduct with regard to neighbouring states and non-state actors.

The second part of the chapter will analyse extra-regional actors' interference in the region to reflect on how their influence exacerbated tensions, the sources of which need, nonetheless, to be located within the Horn of Africa's political landscape. This section will build upon the patterns identified in the section devoted to the regional structure of international relations. Finally, the regional organization's role in forging the regional security architecture will be analysed. The final section aims to assess the constraints and potentials of a regionalist approach to security to overcome the destructive impact of one of the main causes of conflict in the region, namely militant nationalism.

## 6.2 Regional repercussions of a diversity of state trajectories

### 6.2.1 The creation of a new state and new borders

Territorial disputes in the Horn of Africa have persisted throughout the post-colonial period. The nature of the process of creation of colonial borders sowed the seeds for future disputes. Four major players were involved in this process: Ethiopia and three external powers - Britain, France and Italy.

Despite the consensual acceptance of *uti possidetis* principle in Africa, as laid down in the OAU border resolution of 1964, ambiguities in the colonial treaties with regard to the delimitation of borders led to territorial disputes. At the height of independence territorial disputes happened among the new contiguous neighbouring countries: Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. Ethiopia was the only state in the Horn of Africa that had been at the centre of the crafting of colonial boundaries. One of the striking contrasts between the Horn of Africa and West and Southern Africa is with regard to the type of war in which they have engaged. Inter-state territorial disputes in West Africa and Southern Africa have not escalated into inter-state wars.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly remarkable because it is widely acknowledged that territory was one of the major causes of inter-state wars.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the Horn of Africa has been the theatre of two inter-state wars over borders, namely, the 1977-1978 war between Somalia and Ethiopia and the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup>

Although Eritrea's Independence did not challenge *uti possidetis*, its newly acquired sovereignty led to changes in the length of shared borders between contiguous neighbouring countries. The figure below illustrates this new configuration and, significantly, draws attention to the fact that Ethiopia continued to

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<sup>2</sup>Kornprobst, M. 2002. 'The Management of border disputes in African regional sub-systems: comparing West Africa and the Horn of Africa'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 40: 369-393.

<sup>3</sup> Kocs, S. A. 1995. 'Territorial Disputes and Interstate War, 1945- 1987'. *The Journal of Politics* 57: 159- 175. Vasquez, J. 1995. 'Why do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality'. *Journal of Peace Research* 32: 277-293.

<sup>4</sup> Buzan, B., and Ole, Waever 2003. 'Sub-Saharan Africa: security dynamics in a setting of weak and failed states' in Buzan, B., and Ole, Waever (ed.) *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Lemke, D. 2002. *Regions of War and Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

be the state with which all the other contiguous neighbouring states shared the widest length of their land boundaries.

Figure 12: Horn of Africa's states and length of their boundaries with Ethiopia<sup>5</sup>

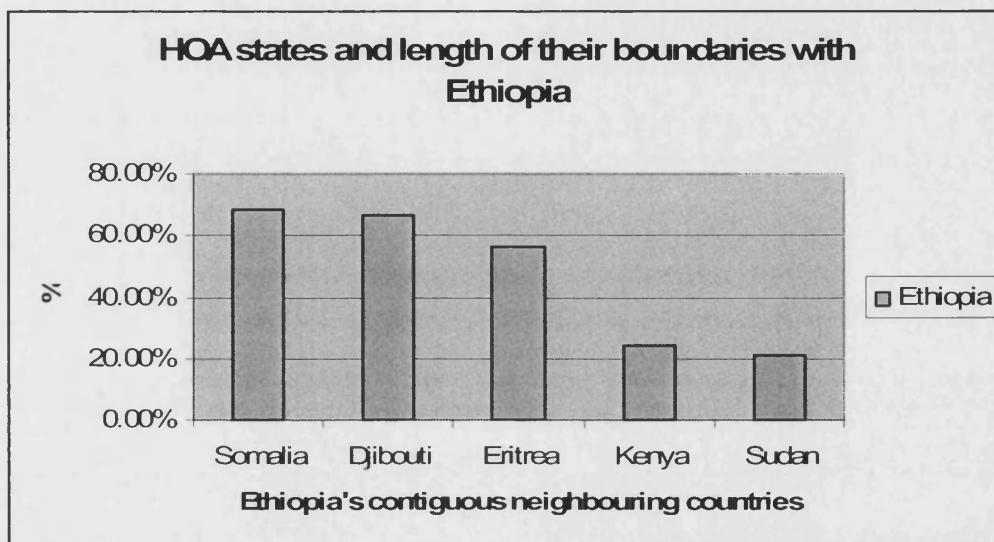


Figure 12 also shows that in both cases of interstate wars contiguity was paramount in the escalation of the border disputes. If we look from Somalia and Eritrea's standpoints, Somalia shares 68.7 per cent of its boundaries with Ethiopia and Eritrea 56 per cent,<sup>6</sup> respectively. Looking from Djibouti the length of shared boundary with Ethiopia is 66.3 per cent, from Kenya the value drops to 24.1 per cent and from Sudan to 20.9 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Even after Eritrea's secession, Ethiopia remained the country with which neighbouring states, especially Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti (and Sudan to a lesser degree) shared the widest length of their land boundaries.

Figure 13 shows the contiguous neighbouring countries to Eritrea and Ethiopia. The graph draws attention to the fact that prior to the war Ethiopia's major concerns with regard to territorial boundaries emerged not from Eritrea but from Somalia, followed immediately by Sudan.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 for the table with the original data.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, E. M. 2003. *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*. London: TSO.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

Figure 13: Eritrea and Ethiopia and their contiguous neighbouring countries<sup>8</sup>

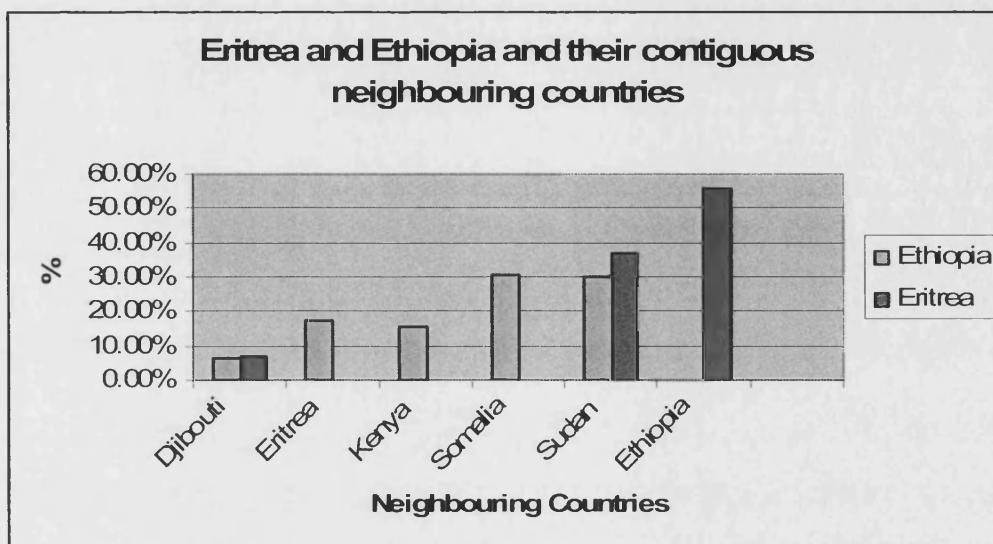


Figure 13 shows Ethiopia shares 30.6 per cent of its boundaries with Somalia, followed by 30.2 per cent with Sudan, 17.2 per cent with Eritrea, 15.6 per cent with Kenya and finally just 6.4 per cent with Djibouti. Eritrea shares 56 per cent of its land boundaries with Ethiopia, 37.1 per cent with Sudan and 6.9 per cent with Djibouti. While Ethiopia shares only 17.2 per cent of its boundaries with Eritrea, Eritrea shares more than half of the total length of its boundaries with Ethiopia. In absolute terms this corresponds to a boundary of 1,000 kilometres.

With Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia the potential for border disputes between the new state and neighbouring states was overlooked, in particular with its southern neighbour. Indeed, any changes in Ethiopia's territory were significant to the contiguous neighbouring countries. As a consequence, its role in the Horn of Africa remained pivotal for regional peace and security.

After independence Eritrea was immediately involved in border and maritime disputes with its neighbours, namely Sudan (1994) Yemen (1995), Djibouti (1996)<sup>9</sup> and, finally, the border dispute with Ethiopia (1998), which escalated into full- scale war.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 (table 9) for the original data.

<sup>9</sup> Connell, D. 2005. *Conversations with Eritrean Political Prisoners*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 69.

One must seek to understand why Eritrea's other militarized disputes over territory did not escalate into full-scale war. One key difference between these disputes and the one with Ethiopia was the degree of rivalry between Eritrea and Ethiopia before the outbreak of hostilities. In the three other disputes in which Eritrea was engaged rivalry was less salient when compared to the increasing rivalry with Ethiopia, which was related to economic and political issues, namely terms of trade, access to the ports, and currency regimes, as discussed in chapter 2.<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the relations between the ruling parties had been much closer during the pre-independence period. Indeed, the alliance between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) was crucial for Eritrea's international recognition as a sovereign state.<sup>11</sup> In addition, although an inter-state war, the 1998-2000 war displayed some characteristics of a civil war, including the fact that civil wars tend to be less prone to de-escalation and more intense.

The comparison of Eritrea's foreign policy towards its neighbouring states confirms the theoretical claim that the interaction between contested territory, contiguity, and rivalry results in an impressive recipe for conflict escalation.<sup>12</sup> This combination may in part explain why the dispute with Ethiopia escalated into full-scale war; in clear contrast with the other disputes in which Eritrea was engaged over its borders.

Eritrea's foreign policy meant as well that the neighbouring states were predisposed to act as safe havens for Eritrea's insurgent movements. It does not appear to be an accident that the only cases of deportations of Eritrean *draft-dodgers* happened not from neighbouring states but from non-contiguous states. The deportations were conducted from Malta<sup>13</sup> and from Libya<sup>14</sup> and not from Djibouti,

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<sup>10</sup> --- 2005. 'Eritrea: On a Slow Fuse' in Rotberg, R.I. (ed.) *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. Cambridge, Massachusetts & Washington, DC: World Peace Foundation & Brookings Institution Press, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> This contention, however, does not diminish the legitimacy of Eritrea's claim for self-determination.

<sup>12</sup> Rasler, K. A., and, Thompson, William R. March 2006. 'Contested Territory, Strategic Rivalries, and Conflict Escalation'. *International Studies Quarterly* 50, p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International. 19 May 2004. ERITREA 'You have no right to ask' Government resists scrutiny on human rights' (AI Index: AFR 64/003/2004) [http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/AFR640032004ENGLISH/\\$File/AFR6400304.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/library/pdf/AFR640032004ENGLISH/$File/AFR6400304.pdf).

Sudan or from Ethiopia. However, the deportations from Ethiopia during the war fall under a different category. The latter can only be understood in the context of the border war and its outcome with regard to the redefinition of national identity and citizenship rules in Ethiopia, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

In addition, Eritrea's foreign policy can only be understood in the context of the prevalence of a militarist ethos in the realm of domestic politics. Eritrea's leadership, at the helm of the post- insurgent state, persisted on state building activities that contributed to the militarization of state and society. In this sense, Eritrea's foreign policy mirrored domestic politics and both were embedded in the same continuum of state building. It can plausibly be argued that what happened with neighbouring states was not intended to divert attention from internal opposition; Eritrea's foreign policy resembled an extension of the state's relation with its own domestic opposition. Indeed, all opposition to the ruling party's conception of Eritrean statehood, either domestic or international, justified the incumbent regime's forceful intervention. Consequentially, any citizen that opposed the state became an enemy, and any state or movement in neighbouring states that opposed the regime, and its leadership, became an enemy of the state. In a context where foreign policy making is personality driven, any opposition to the regime is perceived as a threat to the state itself.<sup>15</sup> The domestic constituencies (both within the territory of the state and in the diaspora) that opposed the regime became enemies of the state. This domestic and foreign policy orientation led to the isolation of the regime by neighbouring states during and in the aftermath of the war with Ethiopia. Eritrea was forced to forge alliances increasingly outside the region. In February 2005 Saudi Arabia signed a 20 million US dollar loan agreement with Eritrea.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, despite Saudi Arabia's previous support for Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) factions, which opposed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice / Eritrean People's Liberation Front

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<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch. August 3, 2004. 'Eritrea: Refugees Involuntarily Repatriated from Libya: Letter to President Issayas Afewerki'. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/08/03/eritre9178.htm>; Human Rights Watch. July 22, 2004 . 'Eritrean Refugees in Danger of Deportation from Libya: Letter to Mu'ammar al-Gadaffi' <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/07/22/libya9127.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Paulos Tesfagiorgis 2004. 'A brief understanding of the current crisis in Eritrea: What can be done?' in Sørbo, G.M., and, Siegfried Pausewang, (ed.) *Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget. Connell, 2005, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> BBC Monitoring Service, 8 February 2005. Title: 'Eritrea Saudi Arabia sign 20m US dollar loan agreement'. (last accessed: 14/02/07) <http://www.eritreadaily.net/news/article380205002.htm>

(PFDJ/EPLF) regime,<sup>17</sup> the isolation of the regime in part explains this significant shift of alliance. As will be discussed in the epilogue, paradoxically, the 2006-2007 Somalia crisis diminished Eritrea's isolation within the region and with extra-regional actors, namely Middle Eastern states and the European Union.

The creation of a new state in a volatile and conflict prone region posed specific challenges to contiguous neighbouring states. With regard to Eritrea's creation and its subsequent foreign policy towards the region the key lesson to retain is the need to pay particular attention to border delimitation and demarcation at the time of state creation and recognition. This feature acquires particular significance to mitigate and eliminate potential tensions arising out of border disputes. As the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea confirms, once established, borders are only changed at great cost.<sup>18</sup>

### **6.2.2 The disintegration of a state in the Horn of Africa**

After the ousting of Siyad Barre's regime in 1991, the Somali state succumbed to the centrifugal forces of segmentation within society and disintegrated. In order to advance their claims to the spoils of the state the various political factions manipulated clan and sub-clan rivalries. With the disintegration of the state economic rivalry between factions of the same clan/sub-clan came; inter-clan alliances were forged and changed, sometimes in contradiction with the kinship principle, fuelling lawlessness in the country and with spill-over effects across borders.

Without a government at the helm of the state, Somaliland unilaterally declared independence (1991). Jacquin-Berdal claims that the subsequent unilateral declaration of Independence in the former British Somaliland territory suggested that, after all, the Greater Somalia ideal was not deeply ingrained.<sup>19</sup> Jacquin-Berdal contends that 'Pan-Somalism should be viewed as an essentially Southern Somali

<sup>17</sup> Clapham, C. 1995. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: the politics of post- insurgency' in Wiseman, J.A. (ed.) *Democracy and Political Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. N. Y: Routledge, p. 126.

<sup>18</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, D. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, p. 219.

<sup>19</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit., p. 165.

ambition'.<sup>20</sup> President Egal's origins as a Northerner and abandonment of the Greater Somalia ideal in 1967, and Somaliland's unilateral declaration of Independence in 1991 provided credence to Jacquin-Berdal's assertion. However, Somaliland, in contrast with Eritrea, despite its achievements in political liberalisation and democratization, remains hampered from achieving full sovereignty unless a government in Mogadishu finally emerges and is willing to recognize Somaliland's independence, like the one in Addis Ababa *vis-à-vis* Asmara. The contrasting trajectories of the former Italian colony (Eritrea) and the former British Protectorate (Somaliland) confirm that international society is less inclined to support unilateral declarations of Independence. Another of the Somali Northern Provinces, Puntland, established itself as an autonomous region (1998) but did not seek to secede from Somalia.<sup>21</sup> The disintegration of the state further aggravated the pre-existing permeability of Somalia's borders, rendering it vulnerable to incursions from neighbouring states. For contiguous neighbouring countries, namely Ethiopia and Kenya, the breakdown of the state, in part, froze challenges to their territorial integrity. For Ethiopia the major threat to its territorial integrity from its south eastern border with Somalia was suspended.

The remnants of Somalia, i.e. the capital, central and southern Somalia were ravaged by armed conflict between shifting factions. The disintegration of the state and Somalia's increased porous borders rendered it more prone to breaches to its sovereignty, as the section on the structure of regional relations will discuss.

### **6.2.3 Regional implications of diverging conceptions of statehood: a two-level understanding**

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> The disintegration of the state created notable changes and the former Somali Republic split up into at least three 'self-governing units', to use Mayall's and Lewis's term. Lewis, I. M. 2002. *A modern history of the Somali : nation and state in the Horn of Africa* Oxford: James Currey, footnote 24, p. 333. In 1991 Somaliland declared independence on the basis of its colonial past as the British Somaliland Protectorate. In 1998 Puntland declared its autonomy but did not seek to secede. The central and southern regions remained tied to the capital; ravaged by lawlessness and divided by clan-based factions and by leaders of various groups. In 2002 the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) splintered seriously. The faction of the head of the RRA, Hasan Shatigud, opposed the factions of Aden Madobe and Muhammad Ibrahim Habsade. The bone of contention was their diverging positions toward the establishment of the South West State of Somalia. Hansen, S. J. Fall 2003. 'Warlords and Peace Strategies: The Case of Somalia'. *Journal of Conflict Studies* XXIII, footnote 79, p. 78.

As discussed in chapters 2 and 4, the peculiar Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front/Tigray People's Liberation Front (EPRDF/TPLF) conception of statehood led to a significant redrawing of the domestic administrative territorial jurisdiction of each Regional State within the Ethiopian Federation. The attempt to match the ethnic group in majority proportion in each region (or nationality according to the new Ethiopian Constitution parlance) and the territorial jurisdiction of each newly created regional state had unintended external implications. While the Eritrean and Sudanese conceptions of centralised statehood implied a complementary notion of hard frontiers, the post- 1991 Ethiopian Federalism, based on ethnicity, led to a softening of the frontiers. Clapham argues that this process occurred at two levels. It affected the relations between groups across frontiers, with clear implications for Ethiopia's northern, eastern and western borderland communities, those located in the borderlands with Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan respectively. Concurrently, the model of ethnic-based Federalism favoured the state's engagement in cross-border politics,<sup>22</sup> namely hot pursuit missions across the northern and south-eastern border in pursuit of insurgent movements.<sup>23</sup>

While Jacquin-Berdal draws our attention to the external implications of the redrawing of Ethiopia's Northern Region's administrative territorial jurisdiction, Lyons alludes to the external implications of the same process for the south-eastern Region. While the former had implications for Ethiopia's relations with Eritrea, the latter had implications for its relations with Somalia. However, the implications were different in part due to the different conceptions of statehood of Eritrea and Somalia *vis-à-vis* their frontiers with contiguous states, among which Ethiopia stood prominently. Arguably, the contrasting state trajectories of Eritrea and Somalia after 1991 led to their different positioning *vis-à-vis* Ethiopia. While Eritrea's insurgents emerged victorious in the aftermath of the Cold War and successfully established themselves at the helm of the newly created sovereign state, Somalia's insurgents failed to find a solution to accommodate the different factions within the Somali polity, and the result was the disintegration of the state. Eritrea emerged as a 'strong

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<sup>22</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Insecurity and Intervention in the Horn' in May, R., and Furley, Oliver (ed.) *African Interventionist States*. Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> Specific details of these incidents will be described in the section devoted to the structure of regional relations.

state' rigidly attached to the frontiers established by Italian colonialism and established territoriality as the basis of statehood.

The Somali state, divided by clan and sub-clan rivalries, succumbed to the centrifugal forces of fragmentation within society and disintegrated. Without a government at the helm of the state, the self- declaration of Independence by Somaliland and the establishment of Puntland as an autonomous region, the Somali entity was far more vulnerable in the face of the regional implications of Ethiopia's state building activities.

Lyons contended that the EPRDF/ TPLF (at the time of this occurrence acting as the Transitional Government of Ethiopia) had proposed a new provincial map for the Southern region based on ethnic lines, including a Somali province that incorporated parts of the old areas of Harerge, Bale, and Sidamo.<sup>24</sup> This measure is best understood against the protracted nature of insurgent movements mobilized around Somali identity in the Ogaden.

In addition, after the border war broke out, Eritrea accused the administration of Tigray of being responsible for the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea. According to the Eritrean government, Tigray's regional administration issued a map in which the boundaries between the two countries had been modified without prior notification.<sup>25</sup> These two examples draw our attention to the importance of considering the regional implications of domestic state building activities. Indeed, the Ethiopian model of Ethnic Federalism had not only significant domestic implications but also - as the war with Eritrea confirmed - unexpected regional implications.

Ethiopia's state building activities had implications for its south-eastern and northern contiguous neighbouring countries. The analysis of the regional dynamics against the backdrop of the deeply embedded structure of regional relations

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<sup>24</sup> Lyons, T. 1994. 'Crises on Multiple Levels: Somalia and the Horn of Africa' in Samatar, A.I. (ed.) *The Somali Challenge: From Catastrophe to Renewal?* Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, footnote 10, p. 206.

<sup>25</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit., footnote 18, p. 84.

shows the importance of regional politics to the understanding of state building trajectories. Indeed as Clapham suggests:

(...) domestic state- building was too closely associated with the regional politics for the two to be kept apart, and though in somewhat altered form- familiar patterns of external involvement reasserted themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Somalia's conception of statehood continued to challenge the territorial arrangements inherited at the time of independence. Somaliland's self-declaration of Independence in 1991 undermined Somalia's conception of statehood and nationhood. The idea of a Greater Somalia, reuniting the Somalis divided across the three Somalilands of the colonial period, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and the Somali- speaking areas of Djibouti, is still a potent force underlying Somali nationalism. However, the disintegration of the Somali state further aggravated the pre-existing permeability of its borders, rendering it more prone to incursions from neighbouring states.

The two instances of inter-state war in the Horn of Africa confirm the trend for the 'regionalization of conflicts over sovereignty and borderland communities'.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the different conceptions of statehood and their implications with regard to frontier zones, territorial integrity at the formal level remains a key component of sovereignty for the regional states. However, the formal rigidity of territorial integrity has not been tied with increasing control or surveillance of the frontier. Indeed, the state's attachment to the territorial integrity norm does not preclude the irregular movement of people and goods across national borders. At the informal level the porous international boundaries mean that national boundaries are only minimally controlled by the states. This informal understanding of the business of regional politics is only suspended when the interests of a given state are at risk; as the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea confirms.

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<sup>26</sup> Clapham, 2001, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>27</sup> Deng, F. M., Kimaro, S., Lyons, T., Rothchild, D., Zartman, William I. 1996. 'Regional Dynamics' in Deng, F.M., Kimaro, S., Lyons, T., Rothchild, D., Zartman, William I. (ed.) *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, pp. 155-57.

The maintenance of porous international borders in turn leads to two other phenomena with implications for state building trajectories and for the regional security architecture: the relative ease with which people and goods cross the borders.

The overall number of refugees in the region reaches 1.4 million<sup>28</sup> and the numbers of Small Arms and Light Weapons that circulate across borders reaches 3 million.<sup>29</sup>

The Horn of Africa figures amongst the regions with most widespread groups of pastoralists. The Horn of Africa states rank among the top 10 states worldwide in terms of pastoralist population size. Sudan comes first, Somalia third, Ethiopia fifth and Kenya 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>30</sup> In Ethiopia pastoralists account to 10 to 12 per cent of the total population, that is, 7-8 million.<sup>31</sup> They are concentrated especially in the Afar and Somali regional states, in the Borana zone of Oromia regional state and in the South Omo zone of the Southern regional state.<sup>32</sup> The pastoralist habitats make up the largest part of each state's territory, 100 per cent in Djibouti, 75 per cent in Somalia, 72 per cent in Kenya, 70 per cent in Eritrea, 66 per cent in Sudan and 52 per cent in Ethiopia.<sup>33</sup>

The pastoralists are among the groups more inclined to resist states' pressures for centralisation and control of citizens' movement across national boundaries<sup>34</sup>. The regional states have often met the pastoralists' attempts to resist the extension of the state's centralizing institutions with increased political marginalization and/or forceful

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<sup>28</sup> Lomo, Z. 2006. 'Refugees in East Africa: Developing an Integrated Approach' in Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges to Good Governance*. Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Kiflemariam Gebrewold, a., Byrne, S. 2006. 'Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Horn of Africa' in Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *Ibid.* Colorado and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> The Statistical data on pastoralists in the region should be interpreted as indicators and not as precise figures. Markakis, J. 1998. *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: PRIO and SAGE Publications, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> --- 2004. 'Pastoralism on the Margin'. UK: Minority Rights Group International.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> --- 1998. *Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: PRIO and SAGE Publications., p. 41.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

control<sup>35</sup>. Pastoralists continue to straddle the borders of the sovereign states in search for critical resources for their livelihoods: water and pastures. The key resources for their survival span across international boundaries. The state's control of territorial boundaries interferes with the pastoralists strategies for survival which require seasonal movement across states' boundaries.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately most pastoralists disregard international boundaries and 'consider them non-existent'.<sup>37</sup> The diverging conceptions of boundaries have been exploited differently by various groups in their competition for access to critical resources. This trend has resulted in considerable attrition and conflict between pastoralists and the state. Conflict has also been a common occurrence among pastoralists leading competing groups to support either state or non-state actors depending on their group's strategy; with significant spill-over effects across borders.<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, this feature has had a significant impact on the region's security dynamics as the next section will discuss.

### 6.3 The structure of regional relations and the region's security dynamics

The norms that bind the African state system into a regional sovereign society of states are *uti possidetis* and the non-interference norms.<sup>39</sup> At the formal level of international relations the consensus is generally accepted. Within the realm of informal international relations the practice confronts the norm of non-interference. The analysis of the conduct of international relations, both at the formal and informal levels, provides a complex picture. Indeed, even if tacit compromise over the respect for the borders inherited at the time of independence informs the relations between contiguous neighbouring states, at the informal level each provides support to insurgent movements. Within the realm of formal relations such covert support is denied. What goes on at the informal level challenges the formal consensus around the norm of non-interference and hence undermines the respect for the domestic

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<sup>35</sup> Doornbos, M. 1993. 'Pasture and Polis: The Roots of Political Marginalization of Somali Pastoralism'. London: MacMillan Press with the Institute of Social Studies, pp. 116-19.

<sup>36</sup> Amutabi, M. N. 2005. 'Transient, Mobile 'Nations' and the Dilemma of Nationhood in the Horn of Africa: Interrogating Nomadic Pastoralists, Insecurity and the Uncertainty of Belonging' in Yieke, F.A. (ed.) *East Africa. In Search of National and Regional Renewal*. Dakar: CODESRIA, p. 122.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> Markakis, 1998, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Deng, F. M., Kimaro, S., Lyons, T., Rothchild, D., Zartman, William I. 1996. 'Regional Dynamics' in Deng, F.M., Kimaro, S., Lyons, T., Rothchild, D., Zartman, William I. (ed.) *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, p. 157.

sovereignty of neighbouring states. This is a practice deeply embedded in the structure of regional relations and poses a serious challenge to international order. In the Horn of Africa the consensus, on *uti possidetis* and non-interference norms, was never widely accepted.<sup>40</sup> As Clapham notes:

The recent history of intervention has thus reflected not the breakdown of previously respected conventions of state sovereignty, but a continuation of the complex interactions between political forces in the region that reach back decades, indeed centuries, into the past.<sup>41</sup>

The Horn of Africa is characterised by a combination of a pattern of mutual interference in each other's domestic affairs with a shifting pattern of alliance formation wherein, to follow Martin Wight's definition of the pattern of power, the power on the opposing side to the neighbouring country becomes the natural ally.<sup>42</sup>

The next sections will discuss these patterns of mutual interference and of power, as they are played out on the Horn of Africa. Against the backdrop of the deep structure of regional relations, the following questions arise: as the war unfolded how did the relations among the two and with other ruling parties and factions in the region evolve? Did the course and the intensity of the war lead to a prolongation of the conflict? When the crisis escalated neighbouring states and non-state actors benefited from the conflict differently. Against the region's security dynamics this section seeks to understand how both parties exploited ongoing armed conflicts in neighbouring states to pursue their strategy of weakening the regimes in Addis Ababa and Asmara through: i) support to each others' opposition movements based in neighbouring countries (contiguous to both belligerents and non-contiguous at least to one) and ii) through a significant shift in the alliances between the former allies with the major actors (both state and non-state actors) in ongoing armed conflicts, especially in Sudan and in Somalia. Moreover, this strategy contributed to heightening internal conflict in Djibouti. Neighbouring countries, for their part,

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<sup>40</sup> Clapham, 2001, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> Bull, H., and, Carsten Holbraad 1995. 'Power politics / Martin Wight'. New York: Leicester University Press, p. 158.

shifted alliances and followed contrasting strategies *vis-à-vis* the warring parties, as the section on the pattern of power will discuss.

### **6.3.1 The pattern of mutual interference in each other's domestic affairs**

The breaches to the consensus around the norm of non interference should be considered in a continuum. International relations in the Horn of Africa (encompassing both state and non-state actors) seem to undermine and pose different challenges to this norm. Indeed, even if the consensus does not hold when evaluated against common practice, the degrees of interference substantiate different conceptions of where the limits of acceptable interference lie. The public discourse of denial of interference in neighbouring states' internal affairs is informed by this common conduct of regional relations.

In the long run and in various instances (as the history of international relations in the Horn of Africa since the Second World War shows) this practice has indeed increased the likelihood of escalation of disputes into full- scale war. A case in point was the prelude to the 1977-1978 war between Ethiopia and Somalia. Although other factors played a role in the escalation of the crisis, Somalia's covert support to the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) clearly conditioned the successful outcome of the movement's insurgency campaign in the Ogaden. In turn, the achievements of the insurgent movements in the Ogaden enhanced the degree of Somalia's forcible interference in Ethiopia's domestic affairs, short of declaring war. The Somali regime's aim was the incorporation of the Ogaden Region within a united Somalia. Somalia's covert support to the insurgent movement paved the way for its forceful intervention in Ethiopia's domestic affairs. Somalia continuously denied involvement in the Ogaden region but in August 1977 it was clear that Ethiopia's previous claims to the contrary were accurate.<sup>43</sup> As a consequence, the Soviet Union suspended its military assistance to Somalia.<sup>44</sup> By the end of September 1977 Somalia had indeed successfully occupied most of the Ogaden region.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Gorman, R. F. 1981. *Political Conflict on the Horn of Africa*. New York: Praeger Publishers, p. 65.

<sup>44</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

The analysis of the structure of regional relations shows that at one extreme of the continuum lies forcible interference, short of declaring war.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, as Martin Wight claims: 'This is the twilight region where domestic and international politics become indistinguishable'.<sup>47</sup>

At the other extreme of the continuum lies covert interference in neighbouring states' domestic affairs. During Mengistu and Barre's regimes, support for each other's dissidents continued unabated. During Mengistu's regime, the two northern opposition movements to Siyad Barre, the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and the Somali National Movement (SNM) organised their guerrilla operations inside Somalia from bases in Ethiopia.<sup>48</sup> Members of the two northern Ethiopian Provinces insurgent movements, the TPLF and the EPLF, were regularly provided with Somali passports.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, as the cited examples show, the practice of mutual interference in each other's internal affairs, through support to dissidents from neighbouring countries, has long been an established feature of the political landscape in the Horn.<sup>50</sup> One state's interference in the other's internal affairs fuels a *tit-for-tat* strategy, reproducing this pattern of mutual interference.

Furthermore, between unofficial and underhand forcible interference and mutual interference in each other's domestic affairs lies the conduct of incursions or hot-pursuit missions of insurgent movements within the territorial jurisdiction of contiguous neighbouring states. This practice is common currency in the relations between a state and its own opposition movements hosted by neighbouring countries. The following, more recent, instances are two cases in point to illustrate facets of this practice.

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<sup>46</sup> Bull and Holbraad, 1995, op. cit., p. 198. According to Wight's classification Somalia's forcible interference was offensive in the sense that it aimed at changing the *status quo*.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>48</sup> Lewis, I., and, Mayall, James 1996. 'Somalia' in Mayall, J. (ed.) *The New Interventionism 1991-1994: United Nations experience in Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and Somalia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 104.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

The first instance was Ethiopia's hot pursuit missions of *Al Itihad Al Islamiya's* (AIAI) members in Gedo region in Somalia from 1996 onwards. In 1996 the Somali militant Islamist movement AIAI, translated as the 'Islamic Union',<sup>51</sup> conducted a series of terrorist attacks on Ethiopian soil. The rise of the AIAI in 1991 was deeply related to domestic developments in Somalia during the early 1970s,<sup>52</sup> but its operations in Ethiopia were only significant during 1996 and raised legitimate security concerns over the rise of militant Islamist movements in Somalia. AIAI operations in Ethiopia were primarily conducted as an expression of ethnic solidarity with the Somalis in the Ogaden. However, it remained unclear the extent to which the AIAI mobilized support within Ethiopia's Somali region. The Islamist imperative also played a role but its primary aim was to incorporate Ethiopia's region V (Ogaden) in Somalia. As a response, from 1996 onwards Ethiopia embarked upon a series of hot pursuit missions of AIAI members in Gedo region. Ethiopia's incursion into Somalia culminated with the destruction of the movement's base and military training camp in Luq and Buulo Hawa.<sup>53</sup> This incursion into Somalian territory was justified as a response to al- Itihad support for the Ogaden insurgent movement, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), and for its involvement in terrorist attacks in Ethiopia.<sup>54</sup> According to Ethiopian sources, the Ethiopian-Somali movements (the Ogaden National Liberation Front included) issued a communiqué condemning the AIAI attacks.<sup>55</sup>

The second incident was Ethiopia's hot-pursuit mission of the Afar Revolutionary Democratic United Front (ARDUF) in the Bada area in Eritrea in August 1997. This incident culminated with letters of protest from the Eritrean President to the Ethiopian Prime Minister. This incident came to be known as the Adi

<sup>51</sup> Reuters. [http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE\\_BOR.htm.](http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm.); Reuters. [http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE\\_BOR.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm).

<sup>52</sup> For an Ethiopian perspective on the rise of the AIAI refer to: Medhane Tadesse 2002. *Al-Ittihad Political Islam and Black Economy in Somalia: Religion, Money and the Struggle for Supremacy over Somalia*. Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Enterprise. For a more neutral account refer to: International Crisis Group 12 December 2005 'Somalia's Islamists, Africa Report N°100, '. Nairobi/ Brussels.

<sup>53</sup> Marchal, R. 2004. 'Islamic Political Dynamics in the Somali civil war. Before and after 9/11' in de Waal, A. (ed.) *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. London: Hurst & Company, p. 128.

<sup>54</sup> These included bomb explosions in several Hotels in Ethiopia and failed and successful assassinations targeting government members and International Organizations' international staff. For more details refer to: Bryden, M. 2003. 'No quick fixes: coming to terms with terrorism, Islam and statelessness in Somalia'. *Journal of Conflict Studies* 23, pp. 31- 2.

<sup>55</sup> SWB 16 January 1997. 'Two groups in Somali region to unite against Islamic Union'. *Horn of Africa Bulletin* 1/97.

Murug incident and was mentioned both in the 'Proposals for a Framework Agreement for a Peaceful Settlement of the Dispute Between Ethiopia and Eritrea/ 19/11/1998 and in 'The Agreement between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea/ 12/12/2000'.<sup>56</sup>

For the reasons outlined above both forceful intervention and hot-pursuit missions can not be treated independently because these incidents pose serious challenges to the regional order. In the long run, the pattern of mutual interference in each other's internal affairs has rendered the terrain propitious for hot pursuit missions or incursions into neighbouring state's territory, and ultimately has escalated into forceful interventions. The two occurrences of interstate war have had wider regional implications. As discussed in chapter 3, the conduct of the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea had ramifications in neighbouring countries, especially through Eritrean and Ethiopian interference in neighbouring countries' internal affairs. This strategy was followed either to support each other's opposition movements, with bases in these countries, or just to tip the balance of forces in their own favour. Indeed, in addition to the regionalization of conflicts over sovereignty and borderland communities, the belligerents' aim to weaken each other's regime after the outbreak of hostilities further enhanced this trend.

In Ethiopia's case the conflict with Eritrea led it to form alliances with regional states in order to bring about a forceful change of Eritrea's policy towards the region.<sup>57</sup> Finally, this pattern of international relations in the Horn of Africa is further aggravated by a shifting pattern of alliances. The analysis of the frequent dramatic shift of alliances will contribute to clarifying how these strategies were pursued.

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<sup>56</sup> The text was maintained in both documents. In the Proposal it appeared as article 7 and in the Peace Agreement it appeared as article 3,1). The content of the article clearly establishes a link between the escalation of the dispute into full-scale war in May 1998 and the previous incident in July/ August 1997. The text reads: ' In order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date which could have contributed to a misunderstanding between the two Parties regarding their common border, including the incidents of July- August 1997. Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, 2005. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business'. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. 257.

<sup>57</sup> Deng et al., 1996, op. cit. The authors claim that one of the features of the structure of regional relations has been the regionalization of conflicts to change policies.

### 6.3.2 The Region's Pattern of Power

In order to understand the regional ramifications of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea it is important to bear in mind the alliance between Addis Ababa and Asmara in the region until the outbreak of hostilities in 1998 (as discussed in chapter 2). When the crisis escalated neighbouring states benefited from the war in different ways. This section provides an overview of how the belligerent parties provided support to each other's armed opposition movements and how these changes led to a shift of previous alliances. In understanding this strategy it is important to consider neighbouring countries' own relations with the new state in the Horn of Africa.

Both parties exploited ongoing armed conflicts and dissension in neighbouring countries to pursue their strategy of weakening each other's regime and of isolating the other *vis-à-vis* neighbouring states.

This strategy was pursued through a significant shift of alliances with the major protagonists in ongoing armed conflicts, especially in Sudan and in Somalia, and to a lesser degree in Djibouti.

Eritrea's foreign policy record of territorial disputes with contiguous countries and the outbreak of hostilities with Ethiopia led the other states to join Ethiopia. Eritrea's conduct challenged the peculiar regional compromise between the formal respect for the principle of *uti possidetis* and the practical maintenance of porous borders. Eritrea's previous foreign policy towards contiguous neighbouring states had worked against its interest. Indeed, Eritrea positioned itself at odds with the two key contiguous neighbouring countries: Sudan and Ethiopia.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the Sudanese government went as far as to portray the Ethio-Eritrean alliance as a coalition against Islam. The reason for this claim was the support provided both by the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments for the major insurgent movement in southern Sudan: John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Sudan's accusations should also be understood against the backdrop of the superpower's policy towards the region since the ascendancy of the National Islamic Front (NIF) in Sudan; as the final section will discuss further.

Indeed, the US provided support for the consolidation of the axis of the new African Renaissance leaders, namely: President Issaias Afewerki, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and President Yoweri Museveni, to contain the rise of political Islam in a militant version in the region and, especially, that of the NIF.

Egypt intervened in the controversy in defence of Ethiopia and Eritrea to dissipate the Sudanese government's accusations that the two neighbouring countries had a specific agenda against Islam, or indeed Islamism, and/or were responsible for the ongoing civil war in Sudan.

With Eritrea's forceful occupation of the disputed areas under Ethiopian administration, Sudan took advantage of this key opportunity to shift roles with Eritrea in the region. Sudan re-aligned with Ethiopia, in a move to be followed up by the other aggrieved states.

Sudan was, arguably, the state that benefited the most from the escalation of hostilities between the two former allies. Alex de Waal claimed that in the case of Sudan:

The war (between Ethiopia and Eritrea) was a political gift for which Khartoum could never have dreamed. Hassan al Turabi was jubilant, saying that Allah had intervened and the weapons provided by the Americans to Ethiopia and Eritrea were now being used by these countries against each other.<sup>58</sup>

The other neighbouring states changed their alliances according to the conjectural interests unleashed by the war between the two former allies. After the first round of fighting, Ethiopia rebuilt its relations with the Sudanese government.

The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea also weakened the strategic position of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) within Sudan.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> de Waal, A. 2004. 'The Politics of Destabilisation in the Horn, 1989-2001' in de Waal, A. (ed.) *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. London: Hurst & Company, p. 211.

<sup>59</sup> SIPRI 1999. *SIPRI Yearbook 1999 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

With hindsight this transformation is significant because it brought an end to the Sudanese government's isolation in the region.

Prior to the war with Ethiopia, President Issaias Afewerki continuously accused the Sudanese government of fomenting and of providing support for Eritrean militant Islamist movements. While President Issaias Afewerki faced the threat of the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM) across Eritrea's western border with Sudan, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi faced the threat of bombings in the Ethiopian capital perpetrated by the Somali Islamist movement AIAI. Both executives had to deal with militant Islamist movements at this juncture and were united in their common goal of containing the rise of militant Islamism in the region. But even at this key juncture, the movements' aims were different in nature. While the EIJM's insurgency had reformist aims, the insurgency led by AIAI had secessionist ones which were aimed at supporting the incorporation of Ethiopia's region V into Somalia.

The war between the two former allies led to a major realignment of alliances. More significantly, it brought to an end the concerted efforts of Uganda- Ethiopia and Eritrea to weaken the NIF. Incursions into the Eritrean western border with Sudan continued unabated, as did Eritrea's support for Sudanese opposition movements.

Ethiopia assured the Sudanese government that domestic Sudanese insurgent movements' use of Ethiopian bordering areas to organize operations against the regime would no longer be tolerated. Ethiopia also sought a rapprochement with Yemen and Djibouti. The selection of these two states was in part determined by their previous border disputes with Eritrea. The Sudanese government re-aligned with Ethiopia against Eritrea, in a move similar to other aggrieved states. The Sana'a Axis was forged during the 1998-2000 war and brought together Addis Ababa-Khartoum-Djibouti and Sana'a's leaderships against the contiguous neighbouring state with a proven record of hostility towards the region's porous borders. The emergence of the Sana'a grouping was based on their common suspicion of Asmara. Ethiopia's foreign policy towards the region was designed and implemented in order to isolate Eritrea and curtail its regional ambitions.

Ethiopia and Eritrea's shift from a common approach to militant Islamism to a collision route, as the inter-state war unfolded dramatically, shifted the balance of forces in the region. Ethiopia supported Eritrean armed opposition movements based in Sudan or Ethiopia, and Eritrea in a *tit-for-tat* tactic supported Ethiopian armed opposition movements based in Somalia, Kenya or Eritrea.

According to Klein, during the war, Eritrea channelled arms to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) via Somalia, and extended its support to the Somali faction led by Hussein Aideed. In turn, Ethiopia supported the Somali Rahanwein Resistance Army (SRRA).<sup>60</sup>

The interference of Eritrea in Somalia's internal affairs can only be understood against the backdrop of these previous developments. With Eritrea's support for Ethiopian insurgent movements based in Somalia, support for the opposing faction to the one Addis Ababa was supporting followed. When Ethiopia opposed the Transitional National Government (TNG), Eritrea supported factions within the TNG. When the TNG failed and was replaced by a new interim government, which Ethiopia supported, Eritrea once again supported the opposing side to Ethiopia. Addis Ababa's rationale for interference in Somalia's internal affairs was informed by fears of revival of the idea of a Greater Somalia and of any executive in Somalia that would be prone to support further insurgency in Ethiopia's Region V. Eritrea had no similar concerns to motivate its interference in Somalia's internal affairs. Indeed, Eritrea's gradual interference in Somalia's internal affairs can only be understood as an indirect means to undermine Ethiopia's regional standing and, simultaneously, weaken the regime in Addis Ababa. Hence, Eritrea's support to the factions within Somalia meant they were more likely to support insurgency within Ethiopia, namely in Ethiopia's Somali regional state. Ultimately, this tactic was followed in order to weaken Ethiopia's military presence along the border with Eritrea by supporting those with an interest in creating further tension in another border area. As a consequence of the ramifications into Somalia, the Ethiopian National Defence Force had to build a permanent military presence along the border with Somalia to prevent armed incursions by non-state

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<sup>60</sup> Klein, A. 2002. 'The Horn of Turbulence: Political Regimes in Transition' in Debiel, T., with Axel Klein, (ed.) *Fragile Peace: State failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London, New York, Bonn: Zed Books with The Development and Peace Foundation, p. 158.

actors, conducted either by Ethiopian domestic insurgent movements or by Somali ones.

The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea produced a shock wave in Djibouti's internal affairs. The Eritrean government did not wait long before providing support for the Afar opposition movement, Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), which was conducting an insurgency campaign within Djibouti. As a retaliatory measure the Ethiopian government assisted Djibouti in its efforts to bring to a halt the FRDU destabilizing operations in the Northern borders of Djibouti.<sup>61</sup>

These strategies reinforced the regional trend towards the regionalization of conflicts. Indeed, the regional pattern of shifting alliances enhances the trend towards the regionalization of the conflicts, both intra and inter-state. The regionalization of conflicts to bring changes of regime and policies was fostered by Ethiopia and Eritrea *vis-à-vis* each other's regime.

In conclusion, this section has confirmed that in the aftermath of the Cold War the pattern of shifting alliances was reproduced. Between 1995 and 1998, the regional politics were dominated by the Renaissance leaders Axis against Sudan. The three post- insurgent states: Ethiopia-Eritrea-Uganda composed the Axis. During this period the alliance was formed around the common denominator of containing the Islamists' rise and isolating the NIF regime. In addition, at the regional level the Renaissance axis sought to contain the ascendancy and export of militant Islamist movements from Sudan into the region. Between 1998 and 2006 the Sana'a Group, formed by Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, and later by the Somali-TFG, dominated the regional politics. The alliance was formed around the common denominator of isolating the PFDJ regime. At the regional level the Sana'a group sought to contain the rise of militant nationalism and contain Eritrea's offensive foreign policy towards contiguous neighbouring states. As the epilogue will discuss, militant nationalism seems to be a recurrent challenge to regional peace and stability.

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<sup>61</sup> Abbink, J. 2003. 'Ethiopia- Eritrea: Proxy Wars and Prospects of Peace in the Horn of Africa'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 21, p. 415. Anonymous 2005. 'Positive Neutrality':

### 6.3.3 The regionalization of political space

The nature of the regimes in the region and the resistance to alternation in power via elections has meant that domestic politics tend to be pursued outside the target state. As Deng et al. rightly point out this feature has led to a regionalization of political space<sup>62</sup>. In the four types of insurgency identified by Clapham<sup>63</sup> we can find examples of each in the Horn of Africa. In the scope of this chapter only reformist and secessionist insurgencies receive particular attention. These movements more often than not have pursued their aims from bases outside the target state and with neighbouring countries' support. The nature of the regimes in the region forces opposition to conduct its activities and guerrilla campaigns from outside the target state. The elimination of any space for legitimate contestation has contributed to the transformation of opposition forces into insurgencies. The domestic politics in Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea, and the nature of the regimes, contribute to the regionalization of the political space, as the circumstances described below confirm.

In Eritrea after the 1993 Independence referendum for Independence, the Constitution was never implemented and elections were postponed indefinitely. Private press is not allowed and in the aftermath of the war both journalists and the opposing faction within the ruling party were detained and held incommunicado. Indeed, the PFDJ - the ruling party - equals the state, and the state is run as a one-party-de facto state. Members of opposition movements in Eritrea have either joined the diaspora or have reorganized their agenda firstly with Sudanese support and then with Ethiopia's support. Indeed, Ethiopia started a rapprochement with Eritrean opposition forces and created conditions for them to set up bases and operate from its territory.<sup>64</sup>

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Djibouti' in Jacquin-Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, pp. 172-74.

<sup>62</sup> Deng et al., 1996, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>63</sup> As already discussed in chapter 1 on the analysis of the patterns of warfare in Africa, Clapham identifies the following types of insurgency: Liberation insurgencies; Separatist insurgencies; Reform insurgencies and Warlord insurgencies. Clapham, C. 1998. 'African Guerrillas'. Fountain & Indiana: James Currey, pp. 5-9.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

As the 1998-2000 war unfolded Ethiopia provided support to Eritrea's opposition movements, namely to the Alliance of Eritrean National Forces (AENF).<sup>65</sup>

Sudanese opposition movements have also benefited from the tense relations between Sudan and Eritrea. When the two governments fell out in 1997 Eritrea awarded the Sudanese Embassy in Asmara to the Sudanese National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

In Ethiopia the post-1991 political landscape seemed to be entering the path of political liberalization and the process of democratization was underway. The May 2005 elections and the events that followed have consistently confirmed the ruling party's trend towards criminalization of dissent. This has had negative consequences on democratization and internal conflict and members of the opposition parties and insurgent movements, which prior to the elections had differing agendas, have now come together as the Ethiopian National Alliance (ENA). Eritrea has offered safe haven and provided support for the movements within the ENA.

With regard to each other's policies, Ethiopia's bid to isolate Eritrea in the region envisaged a change to Eritrea's foreign policy. Eritrea's support for opposing factions to the one Ethiopia was supporting in Somalia envisaged forging alliances with Ethiopia's enemies, both domestic insurgent movements and/or regional insurgent movements.

This pattern of relations between regional states is neither specific to Africa nor can it be defined as a new characteristic of states' behaviour after the end of the Cold War. Indeed, in the Middle East one can observe a similar pattern wherein the regional states interfere in each other's internal affairs.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, this pattern of mutual interference challenges the approaches that tend to place the primacy of security dynamics in Africa at the domestic level.<sup>67</sup> Even

<sup>65</sup> Gilkes, P., and, Plaut, Martin 1999. *War in the Horn: The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia*: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 73.

<sup>66</sup> Halliday, F. 2005. *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> Buzan, B., and Ole, Waever, 2003, op. cit.

if the sources of the armed conflicts are to be found internally, the struggles are played out in the regional arena. State and nation building activities in addition to their regional implications are also pursued in the regional arena. In conclusion, both domestic and international factors shape the outcomes, contributing to the complex influx-like security architecture, which characterizes the region.

### **6.3.5 Regional Organizations and security**

The late creation of the first regional organization in 1986 must be understood in the light of the historical record of regional relations in the Horn of Africa.

Ultimately, the natural conditions, especially the cycles of drought that plague the countries in the region, led the states to create the Intergovernmental Authority for Development and Drought.

The stalemate that persisted between Ethiopia and Somalia was the first instance to test the regional organization's leverage on questions related to regional security. At the time of the Ogaden War of 1977-78 an OAU good-offices committee was set up but it failed and the dispute was temporarily settled on the battlefield.<sup>68</sup>

The summit that led to the formal establishment of the regional organization also marked a turning point and major breakthrough in the stalemate between Ethiopia and Somalia. As Keller notes:

Ironically, the border dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia achieved a tentative resolution through the facilitation of the subregional technical organization, The Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development. At the first IGADD summit in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia agreed to begin direct talks to resolve their border problems.<sup>69</sup>

The IGAD initiative, at the time, was a very important step towards bringing the two leaderships to the negotiation table. A peace settlement was finally reached in April

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<sup>68</sup> Keller, E. J. 1997. 'Rethinking African Regional Security' in Lake, D.A., and, Morgan, Patrick M. (ed.) *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 312.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p. 312.

1988. Quite significantly, the peace accord signed by Mengistu and Siyad Barre in 1988 obliged each side to stop supporting the other's dissidents.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps, IGAD's experience in mitigating the tension between the two belligerent parties in the first Horn of Africa interstate war should be put to good use in order to overcome the current stalemate between the two belligerent parties in the Horn of Africa's second inter-state war.

With regard to regional security the organization has set up mechanisms to tackle the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and to counter-terrorism. Its intervention as a broker between belligerent parties in intra-state wars acquired saliency with the Sudanese and Somalia peace processes, both of which were designed under IGAD's aegis and reflected regional efforts and support for a new regional security architecture.

Despite the shortcomings of the peace processes under IGAD's aegis, the outcomes show how regional initiatives, if given support by extra-regional and other regional actors (AU), are suitable to foster and implement regional peace.

The Sudanese peace process shows the shortcomings of the regional organization in the face of other states' determination to dispute prominence as peace brokers in the region. The Egyptian-Libyan peace proposal for Sudan emerged as a counterweight to the IGAD initiative, undermining its credibility and limited achievements at the time. Since the onset of the Sudanese peace process, Egypt, a key player in the Horn of Africa's international relations, had been accorded observer status. The limited role ascribed to Egypt undermined IGAD's efforts to bring hostilities to an end in Sudan. Egypt's direct involvement in the Horn of Africa's international relations, and particularly in Sudan, has been motivated by its dependence on the Nile waters. This instance shows that Egypt's national interests are too crucially linked with the Horn of Africa's states for its influence and role in the regional security dynamics to be overlooked.

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<sup>70</sup>Lewis and Mayall, 1996, op. cit., p. 105.

IGAD did not intervene during the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in part due to the failure of its Chairman's immediate attempt at mediation. Indeed, the regional organization was paralysed by the fall out of the two former allies. In addition, its responsibilities as a broker in the two other mentioned peace processes were, in part, curtailed and compromised by the end of the alliance between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Because of its standing in the region and past experiences, IGAD is in a privileged position to develop a monitoring facility on existing boundary disputes between contiguous states, and on local disputes in the frontier zones between the state and borderland communities. In addition, a close monitoring of rivalry between contiguous states should be given paramount attention, especially on political, military, economic, social and regional issues. As the evidence collected shows, the combination of contiguity, territorial disputes and rivalry is an explosive combination, likely to disrupt regional order. IGAD is also lacking of a mechanism with which to address the problem of refugees in the region, who pose a further challenge to regional order.

However, as Ethiopia and Eritrea's interstate war has shown and the Sudanese and Somali processes have confirmed, the regional organization tends to be by-passed by interstate relations. In addition, the pattern of mutual interference in each other's internal affairs at the informal level of international relations undermines the regional organization's achievements. This pattern coupled with the reproduction and reinforcement of the motto 'My enemy's enemy is my friend' undermines the regional organisation's initiatives. Indeed, a pattern of power still prevails. The limited scope and density of regional governance at the formal level of inter-state gives space for non-state actors to play a large role in determining the regional security dynamics.

#### **6.4 Extra- regional actors and the structure of regional relations**

Historically, the Horn of Africa has been a cockpit for several strategic power games, in which control of territory counted for more than the rights and aspirations of its inhabitants.<sup>71</sup>

The international relations of states and non-state actors in the region cannot be understood without taking into account the three periods of superpower(s) involvement in the region, namely: a) the post-World War II and Cold War periods,<sup>72</sup> b) post-Cold War and c) post-9/11. For the purposes of this chapter the focus will be mainly in the post-Cold War period.

At the height of the Cold War superpower rivalry was informed by the need to secure access to key strategic locations within the region. The aftermath of the Cold War was punctuated by a lack of interest from the only remaining superpower towards the region. The creation of a new state in the region was in part influenced by the international environment in the aftermath of the Cold War. The debacle of the UN Somalia operation further compromised US willingness to get involved in the regional politics of this part of the world. The return of the remaining superpower to the region, especially after the bombings of the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (August 1998), culminated with the definition of the Horn of Africa as a Front Line region in the ‘war against terror’ in the aftermath of 9/11. In this context, the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea was a major setback to the US support for the new African Renaissance leaders, namely the leaders from Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. US support increased their determination to counter the rise of militant Islamists in the region and destabilise the NIF regime in Sudan; especially after the failed assassination attempt on President Mubarak in 1995 while in Addis Ababa.

With Ethiopia and Eritrea on the brink of an all out war the US investment in these two countries as the main pillar for stability in the region was derailed. President Issaias Afeworki in his visit to Washington in April 1998 had expressed some reservations with regard to the prospects of this pillar but in such a way that it was indiscernible for any observer to pick up the increasing drift between the two former allies.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> de Waal, 2004, op. cit., p.13.

<sup>72</sup> Peter Woodward provides a well-informed and historically grounded analysis of the evolution of US foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa. Woodward, P. 2006. *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*. Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate.

<sup>73</sup> Africa Confidential May 29, 1998. 'Eritrea/Ethiopia: Murder in the Family' 39, p. 3.

The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea led to a major realignment of alliances between states and non-state actors in the region. As will become clear, the previous pattern of shifting alliances remained a key characteristic of regional politics. However, this practice of submitting foreign policy making to the pattern of power based on the motto 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' further compromised the emergence of regional security architecture. As in the past, external actors continued to exert their influence in the region.

At times extra-regional actors exploited patterns of rivalry and reinforced them; at other times extra-regional actors became involved in the regional dynamics. The indirect support or cooperation with one regional state is likely to lead to suspicion from the opposing side. In the first case the superpower exploited the enduring rivalry between Sudan and Ethiopia to further its interests in the region without directly intervening. In the aftermath of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea the privileged relations between Addis Ababa and Washington led to suspicion on the part of Asmara. This outcome shows that the superpower's close association with one regional actor undermined leverage and relations with the opposing side (in this case Eritrea). Indeed, Washington's relations with Asmara at the formal level are practically maintained to a bare minimal presence. The motto underlying alliance formation in the region also applies to extra-regional actors: 'my enemy's friend is my enemy.'

The domestic politics and international relations of Ethiopia and Eritrea can only be understood in the context of these regional and extra-regional dynamics. External actors were also dragged into the patterns of enmity and rivalry among regional actors. But as the Epilogue will discuss, extra-regional actors' engagement in the region also magnified the region's patterns of power and warfare.

## 6.5 Conclusion

As the preceding sections on the regional security dynamics have shown, the interplay between domestic, international, regional and extra-regional processes and actors impacted upon the security architecture in the region.

Boundary disputes under the banner of nationalism have characterized international relations of the Horn of Africa's states. Indeed, this pattern of relations has led to two inter-state wars, which by itself has been an uncommon pattern of warfare in Africa. Secessionist insurgencies, under the banner of a separate national identity and the corresponding claims to separate sovereign statehood have abounded, both within the Ethiopian and the Somali polities. In both circumstances the inter-state wars impacted beyond the borders of the concerned dyads.

The process of state formation in the region has been accompanied by armed conflict. The extension of the state's agents and institutions has sparked off resistance. The groups in the borderlands (pastoralists and/or ethnic groups divided by the state's borders, among others) and other groups within the state have resisted the attempts of the central state to homogenise local economies and identities under the banner of the extension of its institutions and the process of national identity formation and consolidation.

More significantly, the centralizing pressures of state formation, and consequently the state's use of the means of coercion to eliminate peripheral loci of power have sparked further local resistance. This latter characteristic of the process should not be overlooked. As Bradburd claims 'local resistance shapes the trajectory of state formation in a variety of ways'.<sup>74</sup>

The mutual interference of the Horn of Africa's states in each others internal affairs is of particular relevance to understanding non-state actors' enduring resistance to the state's centralizing pressures. Although this characteristic is not unique to the region, the ability of non-state actors to benefit from neighbouring countries' support as safe havens, as bases for setting up military training facilities and other military support contributed significantly to their survival and to the launching of successful insurgency operations.

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<sup>74</sup> Bradburd, D. 1996. 'Towards an understanding of the fate of modern pastoralists: Starting with the state'. *Nomadic Peoples* 38, p. 43.

The superpower rivalry during the Cold War led the regional leaderships to guarantee outside patrons' military support and, thus, magnified their ability to deploy force in their quest to guarantee the elimination of resistance. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the amount of well trained demobilized ex-combatants and weaponry in the region further increased regional instability and the states' inability to guarantee the monopoly of the means of coercion over the entire extension of the state's territory.

This latter trend coupled with authoritarian regimes has left local insurgencies unabated and has contributed to the creation of new grievances, around which disenfranchised communities are mobilised to resist the state.

The inability of the states' agents in the region to guarantee the monopoly of coercion throughout their entire territory means that frontiers are permeable. Furthermore, the practices of groups living at the border reflect the limited presence of the state's agents and institutions along the frontiers. As we have learned with the Ethiopian experience in chapter 2, it is not uncommon for states to use the emplacement of returned refugees in frontier zones; this applies up to a point to Kenya, as well. This process is, perhaps, best understood as a state's strategy to create buffer mechanisms at its periphery without incurring additional costs, which the extension of the states agents' and institutions to areas removed from the capitals and regional centres of decision-making would imply. However, the minimal presence of the state along the frontier has implications for the regional security architecture as the section on the regional implications of the diverging conceptions of statehood has shown.

In the Horn of Africa, states' leaderships since Independence were all confronted with different types of armed conflict with different causes. Like in other regions, the spill over effects of internal conflicts has been a key threat for regional and international security. The common causes of armed conflict in the Horn of Africa's context, like in other regions, translate grievances and cleavages related to nationalist, ethnic, religious, territorial, economic and political factors. One of the common causes of armed conflict in the region has been militant nationalism. Indeed, nationalism in its various dimensions - national identity formation and/or fragmentation, the profound territorial nature of nationalism and the definition of

economic priorities subordinated to nationalist aspirations and tendencies has been a portent force of instability in the region. Religion and ethnicity as sources of identity are of paramount importance to understanding the multiple sources of identity and cleavages within the multinational states in the Horn of Africa. With the exception of Somalia, none of the states in the region corresponds neatly to a single nation. In multinational states various sources of identity were mobilized, manipulated and gained saliency according to the states' leadership's grand design for social engineering. The question of how to accommodate nationalism and regionalism in order to contain the destructive impact of its militant version remains a central challenge to the Horn of Africa states and to IGAD.

The outbreak of hostilities between the two former allies contributed to a new wave of instability in the region and the stalemate only confirms how the complex relationship between the domestic, the regional and external dynamics is a key challenge to build a security architecture based on a regionalist approach.

As the case- study confirms, the importance of territorial integrity was perceived as a key asset for the survival of the states. However, this norm did not prevent repeated interference of Horn of Africa's states in each other's internal affairs, as long as hot- pursuit missions did not challenge the existing borders.

The ability of neighbouring countries to influence the course of events was entirely dependent upon the warring parties. This interference played a secondary role. Indeed, the disputes over the ill- defined nature of borders in this sub- region tend to lead to high intensity interstate wars (Somalia-Ethiopia and Eritrea-Ethiopia) or interstate disputes Djibouti-Eritrea and Yemen-Eritrea. As the war unfolded, domestic and regional politics affected the course of the interstate war. The regionalization of the conflict by the intervention of neighbouring states is likely to happen not only when the conflict is being fought over control of government, but also over territory.

## **Epilogue: Somalia's crisis, the stalemate concerning Eritrea- Ethiopia's boundaries' demarcation, and regional implications**

In the post- 9/11 international relations era the dominant perception is anchored on the premise that weak and 'failed' states could serve as safe havens to militant Islamist movements, from where attacks on US interests could be planned or effectively launched.<sup>1</sup> The pre and post-September 11 terrorist attacks in the region led the Bush Administration to define the Greater Horn of Africa as a front- line region in the 'war against terror'.<sup>2</sup> The prospects of a shift towards militant Islamism in Somalia raised concerns due to the links of some of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)'s senior leading members to transnational Islamist movements, namely *al-Qae'da*.

The rise of the ICU in Somalia was particularly significant for Ethiopia, as it had the potential to revive Pan-Somali solidarity.<sup>3</sup> The idea of Greater Somalia aimed to incorporate Somali-speaking areas of present-day Ethiopia's 'Region V', of Kenya's Northern District and of Djibouti in a unified Somali state.

The rise of the ICU brought some order and stability to areas previously ravaged by 'anarchy'.<sup>4</sup> Since the overthrow of the Somali dictator, Siyad Barre, in January 1991 the situation in the capital Mogadishu and in the southern and central regions has been characterized by the disintegration of the 'central government, lawlessness and armed conflict'.<sup>5</sup> The ICU six-month period of effective control of the capital and of vast swathes of southern Somalia's territory was too limited to understand its long-term ideological and political programme for Somalia.

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<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, J. Winter 2003-04. 'Africa's Growing Strategic Resonance'. *Survival* 45: 153- 172.

<sup>2</sup> Lyman, P. N., and, Morrison, J. Stephen January/ February 2004. 'The Terrorist Threat in Africa'. *Foreign Affairs* 83: 75- 86.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, I. M. 1989. 'The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary Nationalism'. *African Affairs* 88, p. 576.

<sup>4</sup> International Crisis Group 10 August 2006. 'Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?', Africa Report N°116'. Brussels.

<sup>5</sup> Menkhaus, K. 2004. *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, Adelphi Paper 364. Oxford: Oxford University Press for IISS, p. 49.

Ethiopia and Eritrea, during their two-year border war (1998-2000), ascribed divergent approaches to the crisis in Somalia. The persistent enmity between the two neighbouring states raised fears of a regionalization of the conflict.<sup>6</sup>

Ethiopia's forcible intervention in the follow-up to the invitation issued by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in December 2006 led to the ousting of the ICU from the capital by the combined forces of Ethiopia and of the Somali interim government. The immediate outcome of the Ethiopia-backed TFG offensive was the recapture of the territory previously controlled by the ICU. The United Nations Security Council authorised the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM, under a Chapter VII Resolution (UNSC/RES/1744) on 20 February 2007.<sup>7</sup> The African Union (AU) deployed the first contingent of peacekeepers in the capital on 6 March 2007. However, insurgency waged by the remnants of the ICU, and by Islamist movements (which gained saliency in the aftermath of the Ethiopia-backed TFG offensive) has continued and has intensified after the routing and dismemberment of the ICU.

Seen from Addis Ababa, it seems unlikely that the call for a *jihad per se* would have been enough to trigger its forcible intervention, in the follow-up to the invitation issued by the interim government, in Somalia. Calls for *jihad* against Ethiopia have been recurrent from Somalia. When Ethiopia dismantled the *Al-Itihad Al Islamyia* (AIAI) base in Luuq (Gedo region) similar calls sprang from various groups in Somalia.<sup>8</sup> The key trigger was the ICU revival of the 'Greater Somalia's ideal'.

The factor of contiguity also played a role. Ethiopia shares 30.6 per cent of its borders with Somalia.<sup>9</sup> Somalia shares 68.7 per cent of its border with Ethiopia.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Lyons, T. 2006. 'Avoiding Conflict in the Horn of Africa: U.S. Policy toward Ethiopia and Eritrea'. Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations. ; Healy, S., and Plaut, Martin 2007. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Allergic to Persuasion'. London: Chatham House.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council 21 February 2007. 'UNSC Resolution 1744'. [www.securitycouncilreport.org/](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/).

<sup>8</sup> Reuters 8 November 2007. 'Eritrea-Ethiopia border: At a glance'. [http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=db/crisisprofiles/EE\\_BOR.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm).

<sup>9</sup> Calculated on the basis of borders' length between Horn of Africa countries as indicated by Anderson, E. M. 2003. *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*. London: TSO, p. 268. For the original data refer to Table 9 in Appendix 4.

There was a precedent of armed conflict over border disputes in the 1960s and a war in 1977-78; in which Somalia resorted to force to incorporate the Ethiopian Ogaden and Haud regions. The final factor was the Eritrean and Ethiopian insurgent movements - namely the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) - support for the ICU.

Seen from Washington, the rhetoric of *jihad* was the major trigger. In addition, the ICU's political programme of creating a government based on *Shari'a* also raised suspicions and antagonised the US Administration. The prominence achieved by Skeih Hassan Dahir Aweys and other members of AIAI within the ICU was critical. The movement was on the US list of terrorist organizations since September 23, 2001.<sup>11</sup> The ICU also benefited from support from businessmen linked with Al-Barakat. This major Somali financial enterprise had been placed on the US list of organizations funding terrorist activities on November 7, 2001 and, subsequently, had its assets frozen.<sup>12</sup> The US air campaign in Somalia in the area of Ras Kamboni allegedly to track the masterminds<sup>13</sup> behind the bombing of the US Embassies in East Africa (which occurred in August, 1998) had important political ramifications. This air campaign inexorably tied Ethiopia's forcible intervention to the Bush Administration.<sup>14</sup>

The combination of the idea of Greater Somalia with calls for *jihad* at the current juncture of post- 9/11 international relations were fatal for the ICU and undermined its international standing. Perhaps, Ethiopia in a different international climate would not have been able to advance towards the Somali capital. But its involvement was neither determined by, nor subordinated to, US broader interests in Somalia and/or in the region. Ethiopia skilfully resorted to the dominant rhetoric of

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<sup>10</sup> ibid., p. 733.

<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group 12 December 2005 'Somalia's Islamists, Africa Report N°100, '. Nairobi/Brussels, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Marchal, R. 2004. 'Islamic Political Dynamics in the Somali civil war. Before and after 9/11' in de Waal, A. (ed.) *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*. London: Hurst & Company, p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> The key individuals accused of having organised the August 1998 bombings and of being the main *al-Qaeda* operatives in East Africa are Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, Abu Taha al-Sudani and Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan. The US air campaign in Ras Kamboni was justified under the premise that the ICU harboured *al-Qaeda* operatives, namely the aforementioned individuals.

<sup>14</sup> Voice of America 9 January 2007. *De Capua interview with Kenneth Menkhaus: US Air Strikes in Somalia Have Political Ramifications* Washington, <http://www.voanews.com/>.

the ‘war against terror’ to garner support and legitimacy to pursue its own aims in Somalia and allegedly hamper further threats to its territorial integrity.

The outcome of the Ethiopia-backed TFG offensive and the ONLF claimed attack on a Chinese oil extracting company operating in Ethiopia’s Region V were not unrelated events. The attack on April 24, 2007 attained unprecedented proportions. Its scale suggested that the ONLF may have benefited from support from neighbouring actors. However, it is difficult to assess whether the ONLF benefited from support from the Eritrean government or from Somalia’s militant Islamist activists, from Somali warlords or from other armed factions in Somalia, who oppose Ethiopia’s continued presence in Somalia. Against the backdrop of the history of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia it seems more likely that the ONLF benefited from support from ‘insurgents’ in Somalia. However, it is not possible to determine whether the ICU’s earlier call for a *jihad* against the TFG and Ethiopia’s armed forces led its militant elements to carry *jihad* on the international stage. However, the precedent of AIAI’s terrorist attacks in Ethiopia sustains this hypothesis.

The Ethiopian opposition parties did not endorse the Prime Minister’s decision to intervene in Somalia in support for the TFG and to defend Ethiopia against the ICU’s call for *jihad*. The media coverage indicates that the Ethiopian soldiers are faced with an increasingly difficult theatre of operations.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the ‘enemy’ has been able to hide among the civilian population. Somalis both within the country and in the diaspora disapprove of Ethiopia’s forcible intervention and resent the occupation of their country by Ethiopian forces. The opposition parties who had largely condemned the EPRDF’s decision to intervene forcibly in Somalia are likely to rally support around the increasing casualties inflicted on the Ethiopian National Defence Force.

The regional organization, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), had been divided on the TFG’s request for an interposition force. Earlier plans to create an IGAD Peacekeeping operation for Somalia (IGASOM) failed due to

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<sup>15</sup> A case in point was the killing, mutilation and burning of the corpses of soldiers (who belonged to the TFG and to the ENDF). Associated Press Writers By Mohamed Olad Hassan and Elizabeth A. Kennedy March 21, 2007. ‘Somali Gunmen Burn Slain Soldiers’ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>.

a lack of consensus among its member states on the composition of such force. Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti at the time opposed contributions from contiguous neighbouring countries to Somalia.

The ICU and some members of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) had as their common denominator the opposition to the deployment of foreign forces in Somalia. The current coverage indicates that civilians in Mogadishu continue to be hostile to the presence of both Ethiopian troops and AMISOM peacekeepers. In addition, the disproportionate use of force by the warring parties has placed civilians in the middle of hostilities inflicting major casualties on non-combatants.<sup>16</sup> This state of affairs has increased resentment both of Ethiopia and the TFG, and has revived the worst memories of the intense fighting between faction leaders in the early 1990s. The US air campaigns have further fuelled resentment against US interference in Somalia's domestic affairs.

Tension along Ethiopia's northern border with Eritrea has increased. The 2007 reports of the UN Secretary General to the UN Security Council depicted alarming trends, with the build up of troops and the movement of military equipment and armaments inside the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) in Eritrea and in the adjacent areas along the frontier on the Ethiopian side.<sup>17</sup> Any clash or incident along the border could have the potential to trigger a major confrontation. After the IGAD's last summit and its public recognition of Ethiopia's sacrifice for regional peace in Somalia, Eritrea decided to suspend temporarily its membership with the regional organization.<sup>18</sup>

IGAD countries divergences *vis- à- vis* the Somali crisis have further increased. In addition to the Ethiopia-backed TFG offensive, Kenya closed its border with Somalia in order to hamper ICU members from escaping and mingling unnoticed

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<sup>16</sup> Economist 26 April 2007. 'It just gets worse : War again, holy and unholy'.

<sup>17</sup>United Nations Security Council 30 April 2007. 'Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea: S/2007/250': UN Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep07.htm>. United Nations Security Council 18 July 2007 'Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea: S/2007/440 ': UN Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep07.htm>.

<sup>18</sup>Sudan Tribune 23 April 2007. 'Eritrea suspends its membership in IGAD over Somalia, <http://www.sudantribune.com>'; Eritrea Ministry of Information 21 April 2007. *Eritrea suspends membership in IGAD*. <http://www.shabait.com>.

with the Somali-speaking communities. Kenya handed in to the US one of the prime 'terrorist suspects' , allegedly for his involvement in the Mombassa 2002 hotel bombing and for his links with the al- Qaeda East Africa Network.<sup>19</sup>

The limited scope and density of regional governance at the formal level of inter-state relations within the Horn of Africa gives space for non-state actors to play a major role in determining the region's security dynamics. Sudan and Djibouti, Ethiopia's former allies on the Sanaa's axis,<sup>20</sup> have tended to support Eritrea, rather than Ethiopia, on their colliding approaches to the Somali crisis. The opening of the Sudanese-Eritrean border in October 2006 was the outcome of a gradual rapprochement between President Issaias Afewerki and President Omar Beshir.<sup>21</sup> However, this positive development removed tension from Eritrea's western border with Sudan and, arguably, allowed for an increased concentration of forces on its southern border with Ethiopia.

The Somalia crisis confirmed that the influence of the regional organization tends to be by-passed by bilateral inter-state relations. In addition, a shifting pattern of alliances has characterized the region contributing to the reproduction and reinforcement of the motto 'My enemy's enemy is my friend.' Indeed, both the 1998-2000 war and the 2006-2007 Somali crisis further re-enforced the pattern of power within the Horn of Africa.<sup>22</sup> The influence of extra-regional actors rather than obliterated has magnified the shifting alignments within the region.

The EU seems to have distanced itself from the Ethiopia-backed Somali interim government in order to engage with other regional actors and diffuse tensions.<sup>23</sup> EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel,

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<sup>19</sup>Reuters by Roberts, K. 26 March 2007. *U.S. moves Kenya terror suspect to Guantanamo*, <http://www.reuters.com/>.

<sup>20</sup> For more details on the Sana'a axis refer to chapter 4 and to the section on the region's pattern of power in chapter 6.

<sup>21</sup> Sudan Tribune . Friday 27 October 2006. 'Sudan opens border with Eritrea'. In <http://www.sudantribune.com/>.

<sup>22</sup> Bull, H., and, Carsten Holbraad 1995. 'Power politics / Martin Wight'. New York: Leicester University Press, p. 157.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission DG Communication 4 May 2007. 'EU - Eritrea: Issaias Afewerki, President of Eritrea, visits Commissioner Louis Michel and extracts from the joint press briefing' <http://ec.europa.eu/>;Reuters 8 November 2007. 'Eritrea-Ethiopia border: At a glance'. [http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE\\_BOR.htm](http://www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/crisisprofiles/EE_BOR.htm).

conducted a meeting with President Issaias in order to engage constructively with the main regional contender to Ethiopia's forcible intervention in the Somali crisis.<sup>24</sup> President Issaias Afewerki rapprochement with the EU could contribute to de-escalation of tension in the border with Ethiopia.<sup>25</sup> At the current juncture the EU could develop its leverage over the various parties.

This initiative came as a positive move to curtail the isolation of the PFDJ on the international stage. Since the Somali crisis this isolation diminished in relation to the region and the Middle East but contributed to the deterioration of the relations between Asmara and Washington. The US warned Eritrea that its inclusion in the US list of states that sponsor terrorism is eminent in case Asmara does not stop providing support for the militant Islamists engaged in the insurgency in the Somali capital.

The United Arab Emirates President, Sheik Khalifa Bin Zaid Al-Nahyan, invited President Issaias Afewerki for a visit to discuss bilateral trade and regional issues. President Sheik Khalifa lauded the Eritrean President for his role in calling for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa.<sup>26</sup>

If the past is any guide, perhaps Meles Zenawi and Issaias Afewerki should draw lessons from Siyad Barre and Mengistu Haile Mariam's belated decision to resort to the negotiation table and to cease providing support for each other's insurgents. The continuous interference of these two countries in Somalia further aggravates the increased vulnerability of a civilian population who have survived the past sixteen years in a context where lawlessness and impunity prevail. The civilians have born the brunt of the most recent appalling upheavals in the Horn of Africa.

The stalemate in the boundaries demarcation process in the aftermath of the EEBC 2002 Decision on Delimitation of the Border and the Demarcations Directions<sup>27</sup> reached a key juncture in 2007. The EEBC concludes its work in

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<sup>24</sup> EU 2007, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Security Council 30 April 2007, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Khaleej Times Online by Abdullah, A. 10 May, 2007. 'Eritrea woos United Arab Emirates investors'. <http://www.khaleejtimes.com>. ; Eritrea: Ministry of Information 7 May 2007. Eritrea: President Isaias Holds Talks With UAE Counterpart. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200705071617.html>'.

<sup>27</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission April 13, 2002. 'Decision on Delimitation of the Border between Eritrea and Ethiopia, [http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag\\_id=1150](http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1150)'. Eritrea-Ethiopia

November 2007. Ultimately, the territorial boundary will be delimited on the map regardless of any objections by the parties. Since 2005 Eritrea has incrementally put in place obstacles to the UNMEE fulfilment of its Mission as defined in the Algiers Agreements. More recently, and in particular during 2007, Eritrea increased movement of troops and of heavy military equipment to the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) and Ethiopia has scaled up military forces on its side of the border (in areas adjacent to the TSZ).<sup>28</sup>

Paradoxically, the further deterioration of the political and military conditions during 2007 has prompted Ethiopia to reiterate in June 2007 its willingness to abide by the EEBC Decision without pre-conditions.<sup>29</sup> As a result of this opening, the President of the EEBC agreed to convene a meeting on September 6, 2007.<sup>30</sup> The convening of international meetings between the representatives of the two governments since the Algiers peace process is not without precedent.<sup>31</sup>

The ramifications of the Somalia crisis seem to confirm that regionalism provides no clear-cut answer to new ways of accommodating and taming the destructive impact of militant versions of nationalism. Chapter VII of the Charter had envisaged regional organizations acting in support of the world body. At the start of the twenty-first century, it seems more likely that, in future, the order will be

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Boundary Commission June 24, 2002. 'Decision Regarding the 'Request for Interpretation, Correction and Consultation' Submitted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on 13 May 2002, <http://www.pca-cpa.org/upload/files/Decision24June2002.pdf> Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission November 7, 2002. 'Determinations 7 November 2002, <http://www.pca-cpa.org/upload/files/Determinations071102.pdf>'.

<sup>28</sup> As of August 2007 Eritrea had moved 4,000 troops along with supporting artillery and armor into the TSZ. Eritrea maintains a further 120,000 troops in the adjacent areas, while Ethiopia has deployed about 100,000 troops along the border. James Swan Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs August 4, 2007. 'U.S. Policy in the Horn of Africa' *'4th International Conference on Ethiopian Development Studies*. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, August 9, 2007, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/>

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council 18 July 2007, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>31</sup> On 10 March 2006 the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission convened a meeting in London, followed by a second one on May 17, 2006, including representatives from both countries as well as international mediators. However, this initiative did not achieve any noticeable progress. Furthermore, Eritrea refused to send its representatives to the two remaining meetings scheduled to take place in June and August 2006. United Nations Security Council 13 March 2006. 'Update report no.2: Ethiopia and Eritrea, [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.gIKWLeMTIsG/b.1482697/k.EEAB/Update\\_report\\_no2b/Ethiopia\\_and\\_Eritreab13\\_March\\_2006.htm](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/c.gIKWLeMTIsG/b.1482697/k.EEAB/Update_report_no2b/Ethiopia_and_Eritreab13_March_2006.htm)'. United Nations Security Council 19 September 2006. 'Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea: S/2006/749': UN Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep07.htm>.

reversed'.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the creation of AMISOM to tackle the challenges created in the aftermath of the Ethiopia-backed TFG offensive further confirms this emerging trend. However, as the regional organization's humanitarian intervention has been marred by increasing difficulties, the escalation of the crisis demands the world body to contribute to enforce the regional organization's mission and enforce the sparse contingent of peacekeepers in the theatre of operations.

The same factors that led to the fall of the ICU also led to a permutation of the crisis. The previous dynamic of factionalism re-asserted itself. The intervention of regional actors escalated the crisis. Somalia's civil war acquired important international dimensions. Ethiopia's past relations with Somalia and its forcible intervention further undermined the prospects of Somalis acceptance of a peacekeeping force. In addition, the Ethiopian and Eritrean rivalry further exacerbated the impending crisis.

With the escalation of hostilities and the increasingly civilian casualties, the best alternative seems to be the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops and Eritrea's retreat from supporting the splintering factions of the ICU and defecting members of the TFI. Other regional countries are in a better position to mediate between the parties.

Despite the warring parties' fierce opposition to the deployment of peacekeepers, the reinforcement of AMISOM and its eventual replacement by a UN peacekeeping force emerge as the only alternative to halt the intensity of violence and its consequences for civilians.

Having forcibly intervened in Somalia, international actors have a 'responsibility to tackle the underlying causes of the conflict'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Mayall, J. 2000. *World Politics: Progress and its limits*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 146.

<sup>33</sup> Wheeler, N. J. 2000. *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 190.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion- A Re-Appraisal of Territory and state trajectories in the Horn of Africa**

This concluding chapter addresses three sets of questions:

- 1) Why did the literature on the case study, with some exceptions, overlook the territorial dimension of the 1998-2000 war, and what are the implications of the thesis' findings in understanding territory and the boundary politics<sup>1</sup> between Ethiopia and Eritrea?
- 2) What can the case-study tell us about the globalization perspectives that argue that the trend towards the deterritorialization of politics in the international system signalled a future borderless world<sup>2</sup> and the withering away of the state's sovereignty?<sup>3</sup> How have the changes associated with globalization affected the relationship between war and state making and remaking in this region?
- 3) How have the 1998-2000 war and the regional ramifications of the conflict challenged the normative framework that binds the African state system into a regional sovereign society of states?

These questions have far broader theoretical implications than this thesis alone can address. However, the case-study findings contribute substantively to identify some of the principal points of contention and to illuminate the paradoxes of the normative framework of international society in its interplay with the Horn of Africa's structure of politics. The first part of the chapter will derive conclusions from the analysis of the various dimensions of territory in relation to the 1998-2000 war in order to clarify

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<sup>1</sup> The boundary politics refer to a set of buffer institutions used by the state to mediate political pressures from the international system and maximize its authority over territory, as defined by Herbst. Herbst, J. 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 25. This thesis analyses the two states' use of the set of buffer institutions (as defined by Herbst) in the following chapters: the currency exchange mechanisms (chapter 2); the territorial boundary (chapters 2, 3 and 4) and the rules governing citizenship (chapter 4).

<sup>2</sup>Van Creveld, M. 1991. 'The Future of War' in Van Creveld, M. (ed.) *The Transformation of War*. N.Y: The Free Press. ;Kaplan, R. D. February, 1994. 'The Coming Anarchy'. *Atlantic Monthly*, p. 23.

why territory still matters for international order and stability. The second part will discuss the findings of the thesis concerning the relationship between war and state making and remaking to assess the question of whether war leads to state consolidation or disintegration in the context of globalization. Finally, the chapter will discuss the implications of the thesis' findings for re-examining the consensus around the *uti possidetis* and the non-interference norms, and the values of self-determination, human rights and democratization within the Horn of Africa.

### 7.1 Does territory refer to mere lines on a map?

This thesis claims that territory does matter in understanding not only the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea but also contemporary armed conflicts. The recognition of the central role played by territory in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea shows that territory should not be understood in a myopic sense, i.e., a one-dimensional approach. Indeed, the central purpose of the thesis is to broaden our understanding of the relationship between territory and armed conflicts.<sup>4</sup> In order to achieve this aim this thesis shows the need to consider the complex ways in which territory is related to sovereignty, nationalism and self-determination. The central arguments put forward in this thesis can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The analysis of the relationship between territory and different types of armed conflict (both inter-state and civil wars) is central to understanding contemporary patterns of warfare and the trajectories of state and nation building in the developing world [this is the central argument of the thesis as whole].
- 2) Territory comprises more than the territorial boundary; this thesis shows that we need to look at the multi-dimensional nature of territory<sup>5</sup>, that is

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<sup>3</sup> Held, D., Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and, Jonathan Perratan 1999. 'The Territorial State and Global Politics' in David Held, A.M., David Goldblatt and, Jonathan Perratan, (ed.) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Oxford: Polity, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Various meetings with Dr. Dominique Jacquin- Berdal in the course of the PhD Programme.

<sup>5</sup> Penrose, J. 2002. 'Nations, states and homelands: territory and territoriality in nationalist thought'. *Nations and Nationalism* 8, p. 280.

its politico- military, economic-social and historical dimensions, and at the boundary politics of the state<sup>6</sup> associated with it [chapters 2, 3 and 4].

3) Not only is territory an integral component of the sovereign state but the territorial sovereign state is based upon popular sovereignty, and the holders of sovereignty, the people, still retain a powerful attachment to territory,<sup>7</sup> which may or may not coincide with the state's boundaries [chapters 2, 3 and 5].

4) The symbolic and historical dimensions of boundaries play a central role in nationalism [chapter 3].

5) Territory is associated with the boundary politics of the state concerning the arrangements and the implementation of a set of buffer institutions used to mediate political pressures from the international system and to maximize the state's authority over territory, such as currency exchange mechanisms, the territorial boundary and the rules for acquiring citizenship<sup>8</sup> [chapters 2, 4 and 5].

6) The analysis of the relationship between territory and the nation-state shows that globalisation does not lead to the withering away of sovereignty, and hence the territorial integrity upon which it rests is upheld by globalization; in addition, globalization and nationalism interact in mutually re-enforcing ways, as the Eritrean diaspora's role in the homeland politics confirms, and this in turn changes the relationship between war and state making and remaking [chapter 5].

7) Territorial integrity is critical to the norms that bind the African state system into a regional sovereign society of states, in particular *uti*

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<sup>6</sup> Herbst, 2000, op.cit., p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Mayall, J. 1999. 'Sovereignty, Nationalism and Self- Determination'. *Political Studies* 47, p. 501.

<sup>8</sup> Herbst, 2000, op.cit., p. 25. Cowen, D., and, Gilbert, Emily 2008. 'War, Citizenship, Territory'. New York & London: Routledge.

*possidetis* (the strict adherence to the colonial boundaries) and the non-interference norms [chapter 6].

The recognition of the features of the problem is not only crucial in releasing from ambiguity the understanding of the 1998-2000 war but also in contemplating the lessons from this war for the debates on the nature, prevention, management and resolution of contemporary armed conflicts, and on the trajectories of state and nation building projects in the developing world. The thesis findings contribute to the literature on the relationship between territory, sovereignty, nationalism and contemporary armed conflicts. In addition, in light of the case-study's findings the thesis contributes to understanding the relationship between war and state making in the context of globalization. Finally, this thesis contributes to the debate on the question of whether Africa's territorial boundaries should be re-drawn.

### **7.1.1 Territoriality and international order**

#### **Boundary disputes and the probability of war**

In accordance to realist assumptions, boundary disputes figure amongst the top causes of crisis' escalation between states.<sup>9</sup> This thesis confirms that territorial disputes increase the probability of war. This probability should not be under-estimated because any forceful attempt to change territory is a threat to international order and has broader regional implications, as the 1998-2000 war shows.

In the aftermath of the Second World War this recognition led to the enforcement of the prevailing consensus around the international legal norm which outlawed wars of territorial aggrandizement or conquest.<sup>10</sup> To a certain extent the Cold War superpowers' rivalry 'ironed out' regional rivalries.<sup>11</sup> This meant that

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<sup>9</sup> Vasquez, J. 1993. *The War Puzzle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 124. Vasquez however claims that 'it is territoriality (that is, the tendency for humans to occupy and, if necessary, defend territory) rather than the struggle for power that is the key for understanding interstate war'. Perhaps as this thesis shows power rivalries have an object and in this case the combination of increasing rivalry between the political leaderships with the pre-existing territorial dispute resulted in an impressive recipe for conflict escalation.

<sup>10</sup> Mayall, 1999, op. cit., p. 489.

<sup>11</sup> Bull, H., and, Carsten Holbraad 1995. 'Power politics / Martin Wight'. New York: Leicester University Press, pp. 159-60.

during the Cold War the world's political map remained frozen; that is, the creation of new states was suspended. However, previous boundary disputes and conflicts (both between and within states) were not ironed out by the Cold War. The Green Lines and the Line of Control created as buffer zones between Israel and Palestine, Turkish and Greek communities in Cyprus and between India and Pakistan to diffuse tension over their contested sovereignties over Kashmir confirm that claims of sovereignty over the same territory bring about the 'most intractable type of political dispute'.<sup>12</sup>

A new wave of state creation followed the end of the Cold War. From the dismemberment of the Soviet empire new states emerged. The wave of state creation was replicated within the Balkans and the Horn of Africa. However, the theoretical assumption that boundary disputes were matters of inter-state relations fed into the dominant interpretation that territory as a major cause of war had significantly decreased as a consequence of the trend towards the decline of inter-state wars. Following on from this, the potential of territory as a cause of war was de-emphasised and the dominant literature concerning contemporary armed conflicts barely addressed it because of its central concern with civil wars, new wars and their regional implications.

#### **Territory matters economically: the combination of territorial disputes, contiguity and rivalry increases the probability of war**

One key difference between Eritrea's militarized disputes with other neighbouring countries over land and maritime boundaries and the conflict with Ethiopia was the degree of rivalry which accompanied the outbreak of hostilities. The boundary incident in Adi Murug, in the Bada area,<sup>13</sup> although handled in cordial terms, set the precedent. As discussed in chapter 2, a contingent of the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) was involved in a hot-pursuit mission of an insurgent movement that occupied an area within Eritrea's territorial jurisdiction. This did not constitute a territorial dispute in a substantive sense because it did not lead to final occupation of the area. However, this incident increased the urgency to demarcate the territorial

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<sup>12</sup> Bose, S. 2007. *Contested lands : Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Iyob, R. 2000. 'The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000'. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, p. 665.

boundary and the likelihood of the two governments resorting to power political behaviour.

The heightened rivalry between Eritrea and Ethiopia over terms of trade, access to the Eritrean ports, and the currency exchange regime was related to their divergent boundary politics. The disagreement over these issues 'raised the saliency of their imprecise mutual boundary'.<sup>14</sup> These issues of contention show that boundaries matter economically<sup>15</sup> independently of being endowed with natural resources of economic value, in contrast to what the literature of contemporary armed conflicts seems to suggest.

This conclusion supports the theoretical claim that the interaction between contested territory, contiguity, and rivalry results in an impressive recipe for conflict escalation.<sup>16</sup> In Eritrea's dispute with Yemen, rivalry was less intense and the dispute was over the maritime boundary, that is, the contiguity factor to the homeland territory was lacking for both sides in the dispute. Perhaps the absence of these two factors, rivalry and contiguity, helps us to understand why once international arbitration settled the ambiguities surrounding delimitation and demarcation of the maritime boundary, the outcome was accepted by both parties and '(...)the probability of war [became] very unlikely'.<sup>17</sup>

This should be interpreted as a positive precedent because it confirms the parties' willingness and respect for the binding nature of the legal settlement. Perhaps the precedent offers Eritreans and Ethiopians with an incentive to embrace the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission's decision. However, unless the parties agree to addressing the problems related to the boundary politics, rivalry is unlikely to dissipate and the delimitation and the demarcation of the territorial boundary *per se*

<sup>14</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2005. 'Introduction: The Eritreo- Ethiopian war' in Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Martin Plaut, (ed.) *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business*. Trenton and Asmara: Red Sea Press, p. xiv.

<sup>15</sup> Bach, D. 1999. 'Regionalism versus regional integration: the emergence of a new paradigm in Africa' in Grugel, J., and Hout, Wil (ed.) *Regionalism Across the North-South Divide: State strategies and globalization*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 152.

<sup>16</sup> Rasler, K. A., and, Thompson, William R. March 2006. 'Contested Territory, Strategic Rivalries, and Conflict Escalation'. *International Studies Quarterly* 50: 145-167.

<sup>17</sup> Vasquez, J. 1995. 'Why do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality'. *Journal of Peace Research* 32, p. 283.

cannot solve the problem. Negotiations concerning the broader boundary politics of the two states are indeed critical in overcoming the stalemate. Against this backdrop, Eritrea's position has been consistent with regard to its insistence that the EEBC Decision was final and binding. Ethiopia's belated unconditional compliance with the EEBC ruling is a positive breakthrough.<sup>18</sup> However, this is but a first-step towards restoring incrementally the indispensable element of political trust between the parties. Eritrea also needs to move forward and open negotiations in order for the parties to produce a mutually acceptable solution without resorting to force. The boundary politics of the two states need yet to be established through mutual accommodation and diplomatic agreement in order to supersede the enduring rivalry.<sup>19</sup>

### **Territory matters for the nation-state: the sacralization of territory under conditions of popular sovereignty**

Any threat to a segment of a state's territory is a threat to its sovereignty.<sup>20</sup> This should come as no surprise as political communities are territorially bounded.<sup>21</sup>

The sovereign society of states is quintessentially based upon the principles of territorial sovereignty and self-determination. The latter is only meaningful insofar as it is linked to the notion of sovereignty.<sup>22</sup> The state embodies these two principles. Indeed the territorial integrity of a state remains a key component of sovereignty. Rather than having been subverted, globalization seems to have strengthened the sovereign territorial ideal. In addition, the nation-state is premised upon popular sovereignty, that is, the members of the political community hold sovereignty within a state. Following from this, territory is held to belong to the people.<sup>23</sup> As we have seen, territory matters for states, but ultimately it matters also to the people.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Security Council 18 July 2007 'Progress report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea: S/2007/440 ': UN Security Council, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep07.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Vasquez, 1993, op.cit., p. 147.

<sup>20</sup> Giddens, A. 1985. *The Nation- State and Violence Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p. 291. Cowen and Gilbert, 2008, op.cit., p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Jacquin, D. 1999. 'Nationalism and self-determination in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation' *Department of International Relations, LSE*. London: University of London, p. 260.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>23</sup> Mayall, J. 2000. *World Politics: Progress and its limits*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 77.

This should come as no surprise because as Geneviève Nootens remarks, 'the sovereign territorial ideal lies at the heart of the modern state'.<sup>24</sup> Far from an ideal, as Mayall argues, the tragic implications of this conception for citizens living in disintegrated states, as well as for national minorities stranded on either side of the boundaries expose:

(...)in an uncomfortably public and dramatic form the fiction that the contemporary world order is built on nationality. It is not. It is built on the separate territorial state, which may or may not preside over a society in which national sentiment is strongly felt.<sup>25</sup>

But territory plays a central role in nationalism.<sup>26</sup> Indeed nationalism is a profoundly territorial phenomenon.<sup>27</sup> The symbolic importance of territory to nations cannot be de-emphasised just because the territory under dispute has no tangible material or strategic value. A strand of the case-study literature reflecting the predominance of the 'greed vs. grievances' debate in understanding contemporary armed conflicts places the focus on the economic dimensions of the 1998-2000 war. Because of this, these accounts dismiss the importance of territory in the face of the lack of resources of any economic potential in the areas under dispute. In addition, the accounts that de-emphasise territory overlook how Ethiopian nationalism was deeply engrained in the territorial integrity of the state and how Eritrean nationalism was derived from colonial territoriality.<sup>28</sup> Indeed the 1998-2000 war confirms the central role that territory plays in nationalism.<sup>29</sup> In the case of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the war was about the disputed boundaries. Jacquin-Berdal correctly argues that: '(...) insofar as boundaries represent a key element of nationhood, their symbolic significance should not be underestimated'.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Nootens, G. 2006. 'Liberal nationalism and the sovereign territorial ideal'. *Nations and Nationalism* 12, p. 35. It should be noted however that Nootens contribution is geared towards loosening the importance of the implications of the symbiotic relationship between sovereignty and territory for the definition of the nation. Instead Nootens argues that 'nationality is to be granted through a free, individual and extra- territorial declaration of nationality'. *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup>Mayall, J. 1990. *Nationalism and international society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 122.

<sup>26</sup> Penrose, 2002, op.cit., p. 291.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>28</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D. 2002. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Horn of Africa: A Critique of the Ethnic Interpretation*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press. Clapham, C. 2006. 'Ethiopia' in Clapham, C., Herbst, J., and, Greg Mills, (ed.) *Big African States*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Penrose, 2002, op. cit., p. 291.

<sup>30</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, D. 5th- 11th June 2000. 'Ethiopia- Eritrea: Addis Ababa's victory' *West Africa*.

In addition, the historical importance of territory for nations is reflected in myth making as boundary-defining mechanisms. The myths of *antiquitas* are particularly important whenever disputes over control of specific swathes of territory emerge. The myth of *antiquitas* provides the political leadership with credence to put forward claims of pre-existing title. On the one hand, Ethiopia could draw on the myth of *antiquitas* and on evidence of historic administration of the areas. On the other hand, Eritrea relied on the historical grounding of its origins as a nation during Italian colonial rule. Eritrean myths were forged during the war for independence. The heroic resistance of its fighters, the martyrs, and their sacrifice to prevent Eritrea from remaining the target of discrimination and persecution from its neighbour provided the ruling party with the myth of martyrdom to justify its legitimacy at the helm of the state. Any claim of *antiquitas* prior to Italian colonization would run counter to the entire edifice upon which the Eritrean nation and nation-state had been legitimately constructed<sup>31</sup> but the border under dispute was that defined according to the colonial treaties. The borders had crystallized by 1936, that is, prior to the incorporation of Ethiopia into the East African Empire. According to the principles of treaty devolution neither the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, nor the later Federation and its subsequent unilateral abrogation by Ethiopia met the legal requirements to invalidate the international agreements defining the boundaries of Eritrea's territory, that is, the colonial treaties.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the boundaries treaties were binding for both Eritrea and Ethiopia. The 1998-2000 war further confirms the centrality of the principles of treaty devolution and of *uti possidetis* for the definition of boundaries in the region. Indeed Eritrea's use of myths was consistent with its claims for independence. Both the myths of origins and its interpretation of self-determination re-enforced its legal case and ultimately entitled Eritrea to international recognition of its right to self-determination as a former overseas possession of the Italian Empire in Africa.

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<sup>31</sup> According to John Sorenson ' Eritrean nationalist discourse rarely projects a unified identity into antiquity. Instead, it emphasises a decisive transformation under Italian colonialism'. Sorenson, J. 1993. *Imagining Ethiopia : struggles for history and identity in the Horn of Africa*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> Kocs, S. A. 1995. 'Territorial Disputes and Interstate War, 1945- 1987'. *The Journal of Politics* 57, p. 164.

As a consequence, these accounts overlook two critical features of territory: i) the centrality of territoriality for the nation-state and ii) its symbolic and historical dimensions in relation to states' trajectories of nation making and remaking.

The way in which the 1998-2000 war was conducted enhanced the symbolic and historical dimensions of territory.

For those who argued that the border incident was not sufficiently serious to escalate the crisis, Giddens' remark comes as a potent reminder:

Unlike in the case of traditional states, a threat to a segment of the territory of the modern state is a potential challenge to its administrative and cultural integrity, no matter how barren or 'useless' that segment of territory may be.<sup>33</sup>

### **7.1.2 Territory, nationalism and armed conflicts**

#### **Territory, Nationalism, and inter-state wars in the Horn of Africa**

In the Horn of Africa, as elsewhere, the spill-over effects of internal conflicts have posed a threat to international order. One of the most powerful causes of armed conflict has been nationalism. Indeed, nationalism in its various dimensions- national identity formation and consolidation, its profound territorial nature, and the definition of economic priorities as dictated by national interests has remained a potent source of instability in the region. The inter-state wars in the Horn of Africa lend credence to the conclusion that the political leaderships have attempted to prove their nationalist credentials through military victories on the battlefield. Religion and ethnicity are also important to understanding the expedient mobilization of cleavages in the societies for political purposes. However, nationalism in the two cases of inter-state war superseded other sources of mobilization.

The opposing conceptions of nationhood and statehood in the region have led to one interstate war (1977-78 Ethiopia-Somalia war) and played a significant role in a second war (1998-2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia war). In the 1977-78 war the idea of 'Greater Somalia' was used to mobilize support around Pan-Somali solidarity. From

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<sup>33</sup> Giddens, 1985, op. cit., p. 291.

this ideal sprang Somali's version of militant nationalism, i.e., 'the idea that political and cultural maps of the world should be congruent'.<sup>34</sup> This collided with the OUA consensus on the principle of *uti possidetis*, that is, that the boundaries inherited at the time of independence were binding upon the successor post-colonial states.

Ethiopia's version of militant nationalism, i.e., the idea that the state's territorial integrity was non-negotiable, further reinforced the crystallization of *uti possidetis* norm. Ethiopia's nationalism remained deeply embedded in the defence of its sovereignty against any external threat and challenges to its territorial integrity. Any forcible challenge to its territorial integrity was a serious breach of its sovereignty and justified the call to arms to defend the 'multinational' state.

The opposing conceptions of nationhood led Somalia to support irredentist movements in Ethiopia's Somali-speaking region and triggered a full-scale war. The 1977-78 war led to an estimated 20,000 fatalities on the Ethiopian side and to 25,000 fatalities on the Somali side.<sup>35</sup> In addition to the fatalities, the war led to a major movement of refugees from the Ethiopian Ogaden region to Somalia.<sup>36</sup> The threat of nationalist conflict to regional order and security became all too evident.

In the 1998-2000 war between Ethiopia and Eritrea militant nationalism played a significant role as the war unfolded. The two-year war led to estimated 80,000-100,000 fatalities on both sides.<sup>37</sup> The fact that the PFDJ and the EPRDF mobilized support and committed troops to the defence of a disputed border town

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<sup>34</sup> Mayall, J. Spring 1992. 'Nationalism and international security after the Cold War'. *Survival: The International Institute for Strategic Studies Quarterly*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> According to Gebru Tareke, three documents from the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defence provide different figures. Gebru suggests that the 1977-78 war led to 20,563 fatalities on the Ethiopian side and 9,137 fatalities on the Somali side. Gebru Tareke 2000. 'The Ethiopia-Somalia War of 1977 Revisited'. *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, p. 637. Ahmed Samatar suggests a higher estimate for the 1977-78 combat-related fatalities on the Somali side. Ahmed Samatar places the estimated fatalities around 25,000 out of a population of 5 millions at the time of the war. Samatar, A. I. 1988. *Socialist Somalia : rhetoric and reality*. London: Zed, p. 137.

<sup>36</sup> The figures on war induced refugees are discrepant, ranging from 500,000 to 700,000. Mayall, J. 1978. 'The battle for the Horn: Somali Irredentism and international diplomacy'. *World Today* 34, p. 343 ; Samatar, A. I., 1988, op. cit., p. 139; Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit., p. 170.

<sup>37</sup> Tekeste Negash & Tronvoll, K. 2000. *Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean- Ethiopian War*. Oxford and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press, p.99; Steves, F. 2003. 'Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia- Eritrea Conflict'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16: 119- 133.

with no known valuable economic resources puzzled observers.<sup>38</sup> Once Eritrea resorted to force to occupy the disputed areas, the EPRDF promptly abandoned the previous trend towards softening of the frontier and warned the PFDJ of the impending consequences of the unlawful occupation of Ethiopia's sovereign territory. The EPRDF was caught by surprise by the outburst of Ethiopian nationalism.<sup>39</sup> The government rallied support under the banner of nationalism to defend the territorial integrity of the state against an external threat.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the two-year border war shows that territorial integrity remains a profound component of Ethiopia's sovereignty. The major cause of the war was the collision between Eritrea's and Ethiopia's versions of militant nationalism, one based on colonial territoriality and the other one based on territorial integrity, respectively. In this respect, the case-study demonstrates that 'nationalism is a profound territorial phenomenon' for both Eritrea and Ethiopia.<sup>41</sup>

### **Territory, nationalism and civil wars**

The resurgence of nationalist conflicts in the aftermath of the Cold War led many to conclude that the causes, conduct and outcomes of civil wars had regional dimensions and implications.<sup>42</sup> However, the studies of contemporary armed conflicts overlook the profound territorial nature of nationalism and hence dismiss its importance in relation to each region's security dynamics. First, in civil wars non-state actors are driven by the aim to acquire, if necessary by force, effective control of territory. This attribute tends to be overlooked as long as it does not pose a challenge to the territorial integrity of the sovereign state. As a consequence of the prevailing normative framework within Africa's sovereign society of states, the insurgents are not able to challenge the legitimacy of their domestic governments at the international

<sup>38</sup> According to Clapham, the EPRDF was taken by surprise by the resultant outburst of Ethiopian nationalism in the aftermath of Eritrea's occupation of this small disputed frontier zone in May 1998. This confirms that substantial sections of the population are committed to the Ethiopian state and determined to defend it. Moreover, the commitment to national identity and the territorial integrity of Ethiopia is not 'merely the property of a single ethnic group.' Clapham, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 25. Domestic and external observers overlooked the attachment of substantial sections of the population to the territorial integrity of the state and hence dismissed the centrality of territory in understanding the war.

<sup>39</sup> Clapham, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> Assefa Fisseha 2006. 'Theory Versus Practice in the Implementation of Ethiopia's Ethnic Federalism' in Turton, D. (ed.) *Ethnic Federalism: The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 147.

<sup>41</sup> Penrose, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

level. The extent to which this feature has persisted in the aftermath of the Cold War is further reinforced by the outcomes of the 2006 crisis in Somalia, as discussed in the epilogue. In addition, even in cases of state disintegration the control of the capital is paramount; paraphrasing Lemke, the capital symbolizes the very existence of the nation.<sup>43</sup> Both state and non-state actors aspiring to the status of legitimate state representatives, and trying to mobilise support around some sense of residual nation, will attempt to vindicate their nationalist credentials through acquiring effective control of the capital. However in these circumstances, the insurgents' ability to challenge the legitimacy of their domestic governments at the international level seems to be dependent upon the levels of engagement of extra-regional actors' in the region's security dynamics.<sup>44</sup> Yoweri Museveni, Issaias Afewerki and Meles Zenawi seized the capital as insurgents on their way to capture the state; however their rise to power coincided with the power vacuum in the aftermath of the end of the superpowers' rivalry in the Horn of Africa. Perhaps at a different juncture of world politics their fates could have been similar to that of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys of the Somalia's Islamic Courts Union (ICU).<sup>45</sup>

In Somalia's case, the ICU despite having secured control and managing to pacify the capital for the first time since the disintegration of the state, lacked international legitimacy. President Yusuf and Prime Minister Gedi retained the upper hand as legitimate state representatives of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), whose creation had been sanctioned internationally. However, their survival as state representatives was undermined by their inability to establish the seat of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) in the capital of the disintegrated state, Mogadishu. In the aftermath of the invitation issued by the TFG, Ethiopia forcefully intervened in order to back the TFG seizure of the capital. This shows that even in a case of state disintegration the capital still retains symbolic importance.

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<sup>42</sup> Pfetsch, F., and Rohloff, C. 2002. *National and International Conflicts, 1945-1995: New empirical and Theoretical approaches*. London and N.Y: Routledge, p. 23 ; Kaldor, M. 1999. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 29-30.

<sup>43</sup> Lemke, D. 2002. *Regions of War and Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, footnote 10, p. 79.

<sup>44</sup> Kaldor, 1999, op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> The Epilogue provides further details on the 2006 Somalia crisis.

The resurgence of nationalist conflict shows how state and non-state actors mobilize, manipulate and ascribe saliency to various sources of identity according to political aims. Nationalism remains a potent force in the region's politics. As Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Aida Mengistu claim:

Ever since the early 1960s, nationalism has figured critically in the politics and international relations of the Horn of Africa, regimes have toppled under its impact, boundaries have been challenged on its behalf, and states have emerged in its name.<sup>46</sup>

### **7.1.3 Territory and the boundary politics of the state**

The analysis of the conduct and of the outcomes of the war further demonstrates how the war magnified in complex ways the importance of territory and of the boundary politics associated with it.

The belligerent parties vindicated by force the new dispensations with regard to the boundary politics, namely the territorial boundary, the currency exchange mechanisms and the citizenship rules. The conduct of the war with regard to the broader boundary politics resulted in considerable injustice in particular to those citizens who were not accorded the right to decide on the acquisition of the citizenship of the predecessor state. They were forced, through expulsion, to fully embrace the citizenship of the successor state and were deprived not only of their right to decide on which citizenship to acquire but also of their possessions in the predecessor state.<sup>47</sup> This group of citizens was deprived of formal and substantive legal rights associated with Ethiopian citizenship. This measure further confirms that 'it is through the nation-state that the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship are distributed'.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, as the war unfolded, formal citizenship became interchangeable with nationality.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, D., and, Aida Mengistu, 2006. 'Nationalism and Identity in Ethiopia and Eritrea: Building Multiethnic States' in Bekoe, D.A. (ed.) *East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges to Good Governance*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, p. 81.

<sup>47</sup> Amnesty International 21 May 1999. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Human Rights issues in a year of armed conflict'. AI Index: AFR 04/03/99; Human Rights Watch January 2003. 'The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue (June 1998- April 2002)'. vol.15, No.3 (A): HRW, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/ethioerit0103/ethioerit0103.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Cowen and Gilbert, 2008, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>49</sup> ibid., p. 2.

Moreover, as this thesis demonstrates, this *ad hoc* punitive measure of the Ethiopian state towards Ethiopian citizens of Eritrean origin should be understood against the backdrop of the PFDJ and the EPRDF trajectories of nation making and remaking. Ultimately, the divergent trajectories of their state and nation building projects collided because the two domestic projects affected external relations.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, the causal relationship between war making and state making seems to have been reverted. The case-study shows how the EPRDF trajectory of state and nation re-making increased the probability of war exponentially. Indeed the case study shows that the international implications of the trajectories of state and nation building projects should not be overlooked.

In general, previous studies overlook the relationship between boundary politics and the collision route of the PFDJ and the EPRDF's trajectories of state and nation building projects. The international implications of domestic politics are either overlooked or simply dismissed. Clapham is among the few to draw attention to the international implications of the EPRDF's conception of Ethiopian statehood and nationhood, in particular the enshrinement in the Constitution of the right to secession to all nationalities in Ethiopia and of the redrawing of the internal administrative boundaries of the state along linguistic and ethnic criteria.<sup>51</sup> Abbink promptly acknowledged the internal implications of the EPRDF policy of re-drawing the domestic administrative boundaries along these lines, particularly in peripheral areas and in the South.<sup>52</sup> Paradoxically, while Abbink was ready to draw our attention to the potential of this policy of boundary creation along ethnic lines for triggering conflict over internal boundaries between and within regions, particularly between zones and *woredas*,<sup>53</sup> the author dismissed the importance of territory as either a cause or a trigger of the 1998-2000 war.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Insecurity and Intervention in the Horn' in May, R., and Furley, Oliver (ed.) *African Interventionist States*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 125-126.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. In particular refer to pp. 125- 26.

<sup>52</sup> Abbink, J. 1998. 'New Configurations of Ethiopian Ethnicity: The Challenge of the South, To the memory of Jacques Bureau 1947- 1998'. *Northeast African Studies* 5, pp. 71-73.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>54</sup> — 1998. 'Briefing: The Eritrean- Ethiopian Border Dispute'. *African Affairs* 97, p. 552.

Abbink, J. 2001. 'Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio- Eritrean War on the Local Population'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l' Africa e l' Oriente* LVI, p. 448.

The domestic politics of each state and the divergent paths followed after the overthrow of the *Derg* to accommodate ethnicity and the divergent criteria to acquire citizenship are critical to understanding the 1998-2000 war. This thesis shows the significance of boundary politics in understanding how the war erupted and unfolded. Indeed, the 1998-2000 was a watershed for citizenship. In its aftermath the rules governing the acquisition of citizenship, particularly in Ethiopia, were significantly revised as chapter 4 discussed.

The territorial boundary is related to the definition of currency exchange mechanisms. Indeed Eritrea's introduction of its own currency should be interpreted as a mechanism of boundary maintenance,<sup>55</sup> and this measure increased the saliency of the territorial boundary.<sup>56</sup> These findings show how the interpretation of self-determination as a once-and-for all act of decolonization displaced boundary politics from the critical negotiations between the predecessor and successor state upon recognition of Eritrea's sovereignty. As Iyob argues, the poorly institutionalised relations, between the PFDJ and the TPLF, namely with regard to the boundary politics of the two states, had serious implications for the conduct of their relations at the international level as state authorities.<sup>57</sup> This thesis shows that the ill-institutionalised relations between the two ruling parties, more than the legacy of mistrust from their faltering alliance during the civil war,<sup>58</sup> seems to have played a crucial role in the escalation of the crisis.

Territory cannot be de-emphasised. The territorial boundary and the boundary politics of the state are far too serious a matter to insist on a path that excludes negotiations until reaching a mutual acceptable solution to both parties. Instead this thesis shows that persistence on this path will only be a hindrance to overcoming the stalemate. Indeed, territory does not refer to mere lines on a map.

## 7.2 War and state making in the context of globalization

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<sup>55</sup> Clapham, C. 1999. 'Boundaries and States in the New African Order' in Bach, D.C. (ed.) *Regionalisation in Africa: Integration and Desintegration*. Oxford: James Currey, p. 55.

<sup>56</sup> Jacquin- Berdal, 2005, op.cit., pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>57</sup> Iyob, 2000, op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> Abbink, 1998, op.cit., p. 552 and pp. 559-61.

## The Territorial sovereign state matters in the context of globalization

It seems clear from the evidence provided by the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia that scholars working within the globalization approach<sup>59</sup> proclaimed too early the death of traditional forms of sovereign statehood, and especially the centrality of territory and boundaries to the definition of the sovereign state. As Kahler and Walter argue, territory remains a potent source of conflict between states, and one that has continued in the context of globalization.<sup>60</sup>

As this thesis shows, territory is not only a constitutive element of sovereignty and statehood but also of nationhood. Indeed territory and nationalism cannot be separated or treated as independent variables.

In the context of globalization the emergence of transnational non-state actors was too readily equated with the loosening of the citizens' loyalty and identification with the historic homeland. The diaspora's significant role in world politics and particularly in the homeland governments' politics was also often overlooked. Diasporas' role in civil wars is perhaps more readily acknowledged, especially their support for separatist insurgencies.<sup>61</sup> While this is certainly the case, this thesis shows how diaspora constituencies are not only important to understanding the unfolding of civil wars<sup>62</sup> but also inter-state wars.

Significantly this thesis shows how a diaspora can be mobilised by the state in pursuit of its own state-and nation-building projects.<sup>63</sup> The Eritrean case also shows the constraints on a diaspora's participation in the homeland politics in two ways. Although the diaspora's contributions to financing the 1998-2000 war were critical, its members had no influence and/or participation in the decision-making process

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<sup>59</sup> Held and others claim that: 'the contemporary era is marked by a deterritorialization of politics , rule and governance, although new forms of territorialization, such as regionalism , are evident as well'. Held et al., 1999, op.cit., p. 32.

<sup>60</sup> Kahler, M., and, Barbara F. Walter, 2006. 'Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization'. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Østergaard- Nielsen, E. 2001. 'Diasporas in World Politics' in Josselin , D., & Wallace, William (ed.) *Non-state actors in world politics* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

<sup>62</sup> Lyons, T. 2006. 'Diasporas and homeland conflict' in Kahler, M., and, Barbara F. Walter, (ed.) *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>63</sup> Østergaard- Nielsen, E. 2001, op. cit., pp. 225-26.

concerning the conduct of the war.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the government's suppression of all domestic opposition is also reflected in its relations with various diaspora's constituencies. Rather than the diaspora mobilising itself in order to bring about change in the homeland government, the Eritrean state has effectively hampered the opposition constituencies in the diaspora from influencing domestic politics and subverting its political authority. In order to achieve this aim, the Eritrean state has resorted to similar measures identified by Østergaard-Nielsen in her analysis of the relations between other governments and their diaspora's constituencies.<sup>65</sup> Such measures in the Eritrean case include: surveillance by the intelligence service (in particular via the diplomatic missions abroad), creation of obstacles for access to the state's issued licences and other permits in the homeland, and permanent fear of harassment of relatives remaining in the homeland.<sup>66</sup>

In conclusion, this thesis confirms the symbiotic trends of nationalism and globalization brought to the fore by Mayall and Anderson.<sup>67</sup> The Eritrean case further demonstrates how the two may be mutually reinforcing. Globalization and the continuing attachment of a diaspora to the homeland confirm that territory and nationalism cannot be separated because of its profound territorial nature.<sup>68</sup> The analysis of a diaspora's conceptions of the homeland shows that these tend to be territorially based, even if the territory to which the group is attached may or may not correspond to the territory of the sovereign state, or indeed span across states' boundaries. The analysis of Eritrean and Ethiopian diasporas' conceptions of the homeland show how these transnational non-state actors may both attempt to subvert or, instead, consolidate the existing state's authority and the *de facto* recognised

<sup>64</sup> Koser, K. 2003. 'Mobilizing New African Diasporas: An Eritrean Case Study' in Koser, K. (ed.) *New African Diasporas*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, p. 120.

<sup>65</sup> Østergaard-Nielsen, E. 2001, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>66</sup>ibid. Interviews in Britain, 2002-2007.

<sup>67</sup> Mayall, J. 1995. 'Globalization and the Future of Nationalism' *The End of the Century. The Future in the Past*. Tokyo, New York and London: the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, Kodansha International. cited in Jacquin 1999, op.cit., p. 272. Anderson, B. Winter 1994. 'Exodus'. *Critical Inquiry* 20: 314-327. Refer to chapter 1 for the discussion on Anderson's concept of long-distance nationalism and how globalization reinforced its saliency and the implications of the diaspora's role in world politics for the domestic homeland government.

Anderson, B. 2002. 'The New World Disorder' in Vincent, J. (ed.) *The anthropology of politics : a reader in ethnography, theory, and critique*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Schiller, N. G., and, Fourou, Georges 2002. 'Long- Distance Nationalism Defined' in Vincent, J. (ed.) *The anthropology of politics : a reader in ethnography, theory, and critique*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Østergaard- Nielsen, E. 2001, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Penrose, 2002, op. cit., p. 294.

territorial boundaries of the existing states. The thesis further confirms that nationalism is not only a domestic phenomenon - its international dimensions need to be considered.<sup>69</sup> The role of the diaspora in the 1998-2000 war further demonstrates the need to consider the transnational dimension of nationalism.

Despite changes in modern government, and the transformation of sovereignty,<sup>70</sup> this thesis confirms Mayall's contention that:

As territorial borders become more easily penetrated by trans-national economic flows and other forces, territory itself appears paradoxically to have become if anything more rather than less sacred. This is primarily, no doubt, because it is held to belong to the people. (...) The territory over which they preside- and the popular emotions that are identified with it- remain stubbornly beyond their control.<sup>71</sup>

### **War and State making**

The analysis of the relationship between war and state making and remaking, in Eritrea and Ethiopia respectively, does not support Tilly's contention that war making leads to state consolidation. Between 1998 and 2000, certain war-induced activities seem to have contributed to state consolidation. For instance, the war made it possible for governments to increase revenues through the collection of taxes and patriotic contributions from their citizens and (particularly in Eritrea's case) from diaspora constituencies, to mobilize their citizens in the defence of the state against the enemy and to extend their institutions into the periphery. However, post-war these activities were reversed and decreased below *ante bellum* levels. Taxation and conscription levels were only maintained in Eritrea by forceful authoritarian measures, and left citizens and diaspora's constituencies with only one option: to exit from the state or withdraw their support.

Eritreans increasingly exercise this exit option because of the ideology embraced by the PFDJ and the policies implemented in its pursuit. Despite this, the

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<sup>69</sup>Jacquin, 1999, op. cit., pp. 266-67.

<sup>70</sup> Mayall acknowledges the shrinking of sovereignty in particular with regard to the ideal of national political economy but not in relation to the appeal of national political autonomy. Mayall, 2000, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> ibid., pp. 76-7.

citizens' attachment to the homeland has not diluted, though neither should it be taken for granted.

The extension of the states' institutions was undermined by the outcomes of the war, the creation of a Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) within Eritrea and the *de facto* closure of the territorial boundary. Paradoxically, the TSZ allowed the PFDJ to enforce the requirements and checks on identity documentation and, as a consequence, the Eritrean government incrementally enforced the restriction of movements both of its citizens and non-citizens.

In Ethiopia the increased legitimacy of the EPRDF was epiphenomenal, lasting only for the duration of the war. While the Prime Minister was forced by the outburst of Ethiopian nationalism to vindicate his nationalist credentials on the battlefield during the border war, his legitimacy was boosted only when concern for the unity and defence of Ethiopia's territorial integrity should displace all other sources of contention and grievance towards the ruling party.

The Ethiopian government's war-derived nationalist credentials were short-lived and the May 2005 elections results, as discussed in chapter 5, suggested mounting opposition to its project of remaking the Ethiopian state. Furthermore, the increasingly authoritarian path of the government substantially eroded its legitimacy in the aftermath of the elections.

While the relationship between war and state formation is central to our understanding of state trajectories, the evidence from this inter-state war in Africa tends to emphasize two contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, war induces state building activities in the short term, but on the other hand the legitimacy of the political leaderships at the helm of the state is clearly undermined, and in the long term the relationship between war and state making seems to be subordinated to the law of diminishing return. In the Eritrean case the war of national liberation was the catalyst for national identity formation and the main source of legitimacy of the EPRDF/PFDJ; however the two-year border war significantly eroded the ruling party's legitimacy and in its aftermath mounting opposition to its state and nation

building projects show that national identity ‘should not be taken for granted’. <sup>72</sup> Indeed, national identity may unravel.

This relationship needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The attempts to draw historical parallels between the central role played by war in the European experience of state formation and the ongoing simultaneous trajectories towards state consolidations and state disintegration in Africa suggest that war in the latter context has led to more cases of state fragmentation and ultimately state breakdown than state building and ultimately consolidation.

In Ethiopia and Eritrea the political leaderships relied on the shared experience of war in order to create symbols of national unity and demand the exclusive loyalty of their citizens to one or other of the states, especially for borderland communities that straddled the borders. The findings confirm Herbst’s contention that ‘those African states that can legitimately claim to be threatened by their neighbours have had some notable successes in mobilizing their populations for war’. <sup>73</sup> While the war lasted, the clusters of historical myths, discussed in chapter 3, were revived and combined as mutually reinforcing myths and counter-myths. Paraphrasing Kolstø, each national group developed more than one sustaining myth. <sup>74</sup> However, the war-induced activities that contributed to the consolidation of nation building during the war have led to fragmentation in its aftermath.

The blurring of the distinction between the domestic and international arenas means that the causes of this fragmentation are to be found in both realms. In the Ethiopian state, despite its long tradition of statehood and nationhood, a paradox is apparent from the ruling parties’ ability to maintain their grip on power over various regimes, despite the lack of internal accountability and their decreased ability to guarantee the monopoly of the means of coercion in a Weberian sense. Sovereignty in its juridical sense has been a guarantor of state survival despite the failure of those at its helm to fulfil the challenges posed by empirical sovereignty. At the current juncture of world politics although the state’s survival is not challenged, the political

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<sup>72</sup> Mayall, 1999, op. cit., p. 477.

<sup>73</sup> Herbst, J. 2003. ‘State and War in Africa’ in Paul, T.V., Ikenberry, G. John, Hall, John A. (ed.) *The Nation-State in question*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 166.

leaderships need to prove their democratic credentials; their citizens have a stronger audience with International Organizations and external governments in denouncing human rights' abuses, as chapter 5 discusses. In the Eritrean case, the increased blurring of the distinction between the ruling party and the state, combined with the PFDJ's ability to resist demands for either external or internal accountability, seems to be leading in the long term to the dilution of the citizens' loyalty towards the state. Without a combination of external and internal accountability, cases of disintegration should not take us by surprise. In difficult transitions from authoritarian to democratic forms of government, the role and influence of international and transnational actors, such as International Organizations and diaspora, are vital to protect the citizens from the continuity of authoritarian practices under the guise of frail commitments to democratization and political pluralism.

These findings further lend credence to Clapham's contention that African governments tend to be accountable to external actors,<sup>75</sup> especially to International Organizations and external governments, rather than domestic constituencies. The increasing importance of diaspora communities and their permanent links to citizens living within the territorial jurisdiction of the homeland state makes this diversified external- constituency, central to understanding politics in African states.<sup>76</sup> However at the current juncture diaspora constitute a political constituency whose support, more than accountability, African states' leaderships and opposition movements seek to mobilise.<sup>77</sup>

In the trajectory of state and nation building, a combination of internal and external accountability again is vital to ensure that the process does not derail into extremes and the legitimacy derived from the war for independence is not mishandled and used to justify the continuation of a military ethos indefinitely, as the Eritrean case demonstrates. The analysis of war making and state making in Eritrea and Ethiopia suggests that this relationship is subordinated to a law of diminishing return.

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<sup>74</sup> Kolstø, P. 2005. 'Myths and boundaries in south-eastern Europe'. London: Hurst & Co, p. 17.

<sup>75</sup> C. Clapham, 'The externalisation of political accountability' in Clapham, C. 1996. *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 187-207.

<sup>76</sup> Lyons, 2006, op. cit.

As Jacquin-Berdal argues:

As history reveals, war is only one of the factors, and not always a necessary one for that matter, that facilitates the process of state making. More important is the extent to which the state and its representatives are perceived as legitimate by the people concerned.<sup>78</sup>

Hence the legitimacy of the political leaderships seems increasingly to take priority over war-induced activities in pursuit of nation making and remaking projects.

### 7.3 The role of international norms and values and state sovereignty in the Horn of Africa

#### International norms and values

I have argued in this thesis that territory was both the trigger and the cause of the conflict. However several regional scholars initially maintained that the territorial dispute and its escalation were a reflection of *realpolitik* considerations.<sup>79</sup> These accounts privileging the political dimension found a plausible understanding of the war in the complexity of the past relations between the two insurgent movements. According to this line of reasoning the civil war left a legacy of enmity and, as a consequence, a lack of the indispensable element of trust between the political leaderships of the two countries. This, ultimately, contributed to the escalation of the crisis. It followed that the border dispute and its escalation were a mere symptom of the struggle for power and regional hegemony between the EPLF and the TPLF.<sup>80</sup> This strand of the case-study literature fits well within a realist framework of analysis of international relations.<sup>81</sup> Quite significantly, however, other factors, such as international norms and values, and International Organizations, did play a role. In addition, rational calculations and prudence worked as constraints and contributed significantly towards bringing the hostilities to an end.

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<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Jacquin- Berdal 2005, op. cit., p. xix.

<sup>79</sup> Iyob, 2000, op. cit.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> As noted by Kocs realists have viewed legal disputes as pretexts for actions which in reality are motivated by *realpolitik* considerations. Kocs, 1995, op. cit., p. 160.

Even if the legacy of the relations between the EPFL and the TPLF during the civil war should not be overlooked, the alliance between the two was critical for Eritrea's international recognition. Furthermore, the conduct of the war lends credence to the claim that neither Ethiopia nor Eritrea embarked upon a war of territorial aggrandizement. Ultimately, Ethiopia did not take over the port of Assab. Although violating the *jus ad bellum*, Eritrea after the end of the first round of fighting did not advance deeper into Ethiopian territory and insisted on the need to call for international arbitration. Its crucial mistake remains the decision to resort to force in order to settle the territorial dispute, and its insistence on holding on to both disputed and non-disputed swathes of territory it had forcefully gained until a legal settlement was obtained.<sup>82</sup> Ultimately, the parties' conduct of the war shows their willingness to settle legally their territorial jurisdiction over the disputed areas but only at great cost.

Ethiopia's belated decision to abide by the EEBC Decision should be understood against the contingent origins of the boundaries which led to ambiguities in the boundary treaties.<sup>83</sup> In effect, the difficulty in overcoming the demarcation's stalemate illustrates well one of the key paradoxes of international society's approach to territorial boundaries:

Because there is no satisfactory *a priori* criterion for settling state boundaries, international society has settled for investing those that actually exist with an absolute status which belies their contingent origins. It also belies the fact that, in those cases where boundaries do change, the new map quickly becomes as sacred, and consequently as nonnegotiable, as the old.<sup>84</sup>

It was not rare for many to find plausibility and even frustration in the explanation that the war was fought (and intensified) to regain control over Assab port.<sup>85</sup> In the

<sup>82</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission December 19, 2005. 'Partial Award Ethiopia's Claims 1-8 *Jus ad bellum* between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea, <http://www.pca-cpa.org/ENGLISH/RPC/#EECC%20Awards>', p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Guazzini, F. 1999. 'La Geografia Variabile del Confine Eritreo- Etiopico tra Passato e Presente'. *Africa: Rivista dell' Istituto italiano per l' Africa e l' Oriente* LIV: 309-348. Abbink, J. 2003. 'Badme and the Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: Back to Square One?

<sup>84</sup> [<http://www.erpic.org/periherion/wps/ethopia.htm>](http://www.erpic.org/periherion/wps/ethopia.htm)

<sup>85</sup> Mayall, 2002, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>85</sup> Steves, F. 2003. 'Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16, p. 121.

aftermath of the war, opposition in Ethiopia criticised the EPRDF's political leadership for its lack of determination to capture the Assab port, both during the 2001 internal TPLF crisis and during the May 2005 elections campaign.<sup>86</sup> Eritrea's independence and its major consequence - Ethiopia's new status as a landlocked country - created grievances within Ethiopia and among diaspora constituencies. In Ethiopia, while some resisted the idea of Ethiopia without Eritrea altogether; others were willing to entertain the idea of an Ethiopian homeland without Eritrea, as long as the former was entitled to retain territorial jurisdiction over the Assab port. Again, the profound territorial nature of various segments' conceptions of their homeland was overlooked by those who de-emphasised the importance of territory in explaining the 1998-2000 war. Eritrea's secession created resentments for various groups: for some of the borderland communities because of the loss of the Assab port; and for urban and diaspora constituencies because of the attachment to Ethiopia's territorial integrity. Upon independence, Eritrea had inherited the boundaries of the Italian colony, which had included the Assab port. Indeed Ethiopia did not cede the Assab port to Eritrea.

Ultimately, political considerations prevailed over military and economic aims and over grievances and greed concerning the loss of Assab port. Significantly, the Ethiopian political leadership defined its position by reference to international legal norms-namely that it had resorted to force in self-defence against the unlawful occupation of areas within its territorial jurisdiction. The decision not to advance and forcefully re-capture Assab port suggests that the EPRDF's rational calculations prioritised legal and customary norms of international society over its military commanders' aims and those citizens who favoured the *status quo ante* over the new dispensation. Under international humanitarian law Ethiopia had resorted to force in self-defence and under the principles of treaty devolution and the *uti possidetis* norm Eritrea's legitimate territorial jurisdiction over Assab was not under dispute and its forceful take-over was unlikely to be recognized.<sup>87</sup> Ethiopia's conduct of the war ultimately proved that its aim was not territorial aggrandizement, as many had

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<sup>86</sup> International Crisis Group 22 December 2005. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: Preventing War, Africa Report N°101'. Nairobi/ Brussels, pp. 10-14.

<sup>87</sup> Kocs, 1995, op. cit., p. 164.

suggested.<sup>88</sup> Ethiopia's ruling party was constrained by international legal norms and values and, quite correctly, seems to have taken into consideration that any forceful attempt to capture the port of Assab undermined Ethiopia's international standing. The correctness of this political decision was confirmed at the international level: the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECC) on December 19, 2005 recognised Eritrea's violation of the *jus ad bellum* and concluded that Ethiopia resorted to force in self-defence.<sup>89</sup>

By resorting to force to settle the border disputes with its neighbours, Eritrea overlooked international legal norms. In addition, this conduct perhaps brings to the fore the paradox of Eritrea's double standards concerning its own and other's sovereignty. While Eritrea was overly concerned about breaches to its own sovereignty, reciprocity was overlooked in its foreign policy towards contiguous neighbouring countries.<sup>90</sup> Eritrea's entry into international society was marred by its disregard for the prevailing norm which outlawed the resort to force to settle territorial disputes.

Eritrea's turbulent entry into the regional sovereign society of states brings to the fore important lessons for both extra-regional and regional actors when assessing the pending international recognition of new states in the region and the required mechanisms for entry and socialization within international society.

As the Eritrean case shows, it cannot be taken for granted that upon entering international society states' authorities will know how to adjust to the prevailing norms, values and institutions. Eritrea's membership in a conflict prone region was constrained by its neighbours' incursions across its frontiers, namely Sudan and Ethiopia. In the western border Sudanese insurgents entered its territory and the Sudanese state did not exercise restraint in engaging in hot-pursuit missions across state boundaries. The same conduct was followed by Ethiopia across Eritrea's eastern boundaries. Following on from this, Eritrea's socialization into the regional sovereign

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<sup>88</sup> International Crisis Group 24 September 2003. 'Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?', Africa Report N°68'. Nairobi/ Brussels, pp. 10-11.

<sup>89</sup> Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission December 19, 2005. 'Partial Award Ethiopia's Claims 1-8 *Jus ad bellum* between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the State of Eritrea, <http://www.pca-cpa.org/ENGLISH/RPC/#EECC%20Awards>'.

society of states increased its sense of vulnerability in the face of the disregard for the non-interference norm. Indeed the thesis shows that the region's deep structure of politics also played its part and influenced Eritrea's foreign policy decision-making. As a consequence, Eritrea evaluated poorly the limits of what was acceptable within the Horn of Africa's prevailing pattern of mutual interference in the domestic affairs of neighbouring states.

The seriousness of Eritrea's foreign policy practices towards the region was perhaps overlooked when Eritrea resorted to force to settle its maritime boundary dispute with Yemen. Ultimately, the crisis did not escalate into full-scale war but it showed that Eritrea was inclined to resort to force to demarcate its porous borders in order to diminish the likelihood of breaches of its sovereignty. By doing so Eritrea disregarded the international legal norms which outlawed the resort to force to settle boundary disputes. The use of force in international relations is only lawful in self-defence and under a Chapter VII resolution, authorised by the United Nations Security Council, in conditions of a threat to international peace and security and when all the other alternative means for a settlement have been exhausted.<sup>91</sup> Humanitarian intervention, although entailing the use of force in international relations, is lawful when justice needs to be prioritised over order, according to the solidarist principle which denounces serious and extreme violations of human rights.<sup>92</sup> Eritrea in its dispute with Yemen and with Ethiopia neither exhausted all the alternative means for a peaceful settlement, nor was compelled to resort to force in self-defence or for any of the aforementioned reasons. The Eritrean case shows that upon independence state authorities are unlikely to automatically become fluent in the grammar of the institutions of international law and diplomacy, let alone that they will be able to navigate through the paradoxes and different degrees of consent each regional sovereign society of states is willing to accommodate, concerning breaches to sovereignty, and its entailments in *uti possidetis* and the non-interference norms.

### **The challenges to *uti possidetis* and to the non-interference norms within the Horn of Africa**

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<sup>90</sup> Clapham, 2001, op.cit., p. 130.

<sup>91</sup> Mayall, 2000, op.cit., pp. 132-33.

<sup>92</sup> Wheeler, N. J. 1992 'Pluralist or Solidarist Conceptions of International Society'. *Millennium* 21, p. 474.

The norms that bind the African state system into a regional sovereign society of states are *uti possidetis* and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states.

In the Horn of Africa, the deeply engrained patterns of power and of political warfare have waxed and waned over the decades. The deep structure of regional politics is characterised by the combination of a pattern of mutual interference in each other's internal affairs with a pattern of power - <sup>93</sup>reflected in the motto 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. The 1998-2000 war further magnified these patterns, and contributed to its ramification for neighbouring countries. The war engaged the armed forces of two sovereign states and appeared as a conventional inter-state war. While this was the case, the analysis of the structure of regional politics lends credence to Jacquin-Berdal's contention that the pattern of mutual intervention and the support to each other's opposition groups show that the war was not a pure Clausewitzian type-of-war.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, the regional structure of politics reasserted itself and further undermined the prospects for reconciliation between the two political leaderships in the aftermath of the 12 December, 2000 Algiers Peace Agreement. Both the conduct of the war and the continuous stalemate over the boundaries' demarcation process has subordinated the pattern of forces concerning regional alignments to further variations; as the rivalry between the two states is played out on the regional stage and in neighbouring countries' own conflicts. It should be noted that the involvement of superpowers or extra- regional actors in the Horn of Africa's politics did not create these dynamics in the first place, but it has certainly magnified their implications for regional order and stability.

The two inter-state wars challenged the regional organizations in different ways. The Ethiopia-Somalia war was a first test for the OAU. An OAU good-offices committee was set up but it failed and the dispute was temporarily settled on the battlefield.<sup>95</sup> The stalemate was overcome at the founding summit of the new sub-

<sup>93</sup> Bull and Holbraad, 1995, op. cit., pp. 157- 167. Refer to Chapter 1 and 6 for the discussion on the applicability of this concept to understanding the management of security in the Horn of Africa.

<sup>94</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2005, op. cit., p. xi.

<sup>95</sup> Keller, E. J. 1997. 'Rethinking African Regional Security' in Lake, D.A., and, Morgan, Patrick M. (ed.) *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, p. 312.

regional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), and this initiative was a very important step towards bringing the two leaders to the negotiation table. A peace settlement was finally reached in April 1988. Quite significantly, the peace accord signed by Mengistu Haile Mariam and Siyad Barre in 1988 obliged each side to stop supporting the other's dissidents.<sup>96</sup>

In contrast, the 1998-2000 war paralysed IGAD. When the hostilities broke out President Aptidon of Djibouti tried to mediate between President Issaias Afewerki of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia but to no avail. Simultaneously, other actors were involved in peace mediating initiatives, namely the Rwanda- US Peace Plan. During a brief lull of hostilities, the OUA- mediation was recognized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as the legitimate venue for any peace talks. However, it took another round of fighting and Ethiopia's victory on the battlefield for the parties to agree on the cease-fire and peace agreement proposed by the OAU.

The 2000 Algiers Peace Agreement led to the creation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). At first sight, the conventional character of the war presented the UN with a far less daunting task than other UN- mediated post- conflict settlements. In addition, an international Boundary Commission (EEBC) was created.

The parties' disagreement on the legal border decision led to the persistence of the stalemate and fuelled mutual suspicion. The stalemate undermined both IGAD's role in conflict resolution and the AU's role in peace negotiations in the Horn of Africa. This further confirms that other conflicts in Africa do not challenge *uti possidetis* and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of neighbouring states in the same way, as they tend to be intra-state rather than inter-state territorial.

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<sup>96</sup> Lewis, I., and, Mayall, James 1996. 'Somalia' in Mayall, J. (ed.) *The New Interventionism 1991-1994: United Nations experience in Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and Somalia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 105.

Paradoxically, while Eritrea's decision to resort to force to settle the border dispute with its southern neighbour did not aim to pose a fundamental challenge to the formal commitment to the doctrine of *uti possidetis*, in practice the outcome of this decision had quite the reverse effect. Following on from this, the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia lends credence to Clapham's contention that it has become impossible to regard the principles of non-intervention and respect for existing frontiers as operative rules for African state behaviour in two ways.<sup>97</sup> First, both belligerents provided support to each other's opposition movements through neighbouring countries and also to the opposing side the other was supporting in their neighbours' own conflicts. Second, the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia shows how the respect in principle for the territorial integrity of the neighbouring states tends to be by-passed when a conflict reaches a stage beyond negotiability. The increasing challenges on the ground to these norms perhaps confirm again that war is a catalyst for change. The 1998-2000 war provides some broader basis for evaluating the erosion of the consensus on these specific norms. However, rather than diluting their importance for regional peace and security, the 1998-2000 war confirms that regional states need to comply with these two international and regional norms. *Uti possidetis* has been the means through which inter-state rivalry has been controlled and non-interference has been the means through which internal fragmentation has been contained.

The cyclical challenges to these norms seem to suggest that rather than contributing to state consolidation, the resort to force to bring about changes in the colonial inherited boundaries is leading increasingly to state disintegration; and the breaches of the non-interference norm have increased incursions into neighbouring state's territory, that have been just short of declaring war.

In Eritrea's case the inherited colonial borders had crystallized by 1936 - but the borders changed formal status over the decades until Eritrea achieved independence. The case-study suggests that prior and/or upon assumption of independence expeditious and peaceful negotiations over the ill-delimited inherited colonial boundaries of the successor state and the boundary politics (namely currency

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<sup>97</sup> Clapham, C. 2001. 'Rethinking African States'. *African Security Review* 10, p. 5.

exchange mechanisms and citizenship rules) with implications for the inter-state relations between the successor and predecessor states should take place either between the parties, and/or with regional or international arbitration. Indeed, Jacquin-Berdal's claim comes as a portent reminder: once established borders will only be changed at great cost.<sup>98</sup>

The recognition of the sacredness of the territorial boundaries over which governments preside, the creation of Eritrea in the aftermath of the Cold War and the subsequent 1998-2000 war with the predecessor state lead us to qualify Herbst's contention that:

The system of territorial boundaries has been critical to the particular patterns of state consolidation and has been seen as a tremendous asset by African leaders, both in the colonial and independence periods. Far from being a hindrance to state consolidation, African boundaries have been perhaps the critical foundation upon which leaders have built their states.<sup>99</sup>

Indeed the case-study shows that it should not be taken for granted that new states will automatically comply with a consensual international norm. Indeed, rather than suggesting the need to substitute this norm, the 1998-2000 war shows that regional organizations need to put in place effective mechanisms to promote and uphold it. However, in very extreme cases the re-appraisal of *uti possidetis* should not be altogether discarded without considering the merits of the particular cases. As the civil war in Sudan seems to suggest perhaps the attachment to this norm may do more harm and hamper any attempts to successfully break the cyclical outburst of armed conflict. In addition, this conclusion does not challenge the need to consider the merits of other particular cases which justify humanitarian intervention, as per Tanzania's earlier intervention in Uganda and the AU interventions in Sudan and Somalia.

#### **7.4 State trajectories and neighbourly relations in the Horn of Africa in the post-Cold War era**

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<sup>98</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>99</sup> Herbst, 2000, op. cit., p. 25.

While the Cold War ruled out territorial change, the post-Cold War era allowed for territorial change as long as it did not challenge the conventional interpretation of self-determination as de-colonization.<sup>100</sup> Eritrea's independence led to a re-drawing of the boundaries of existing states (of its southern neighbour in particular) but without challenging the conventional interpretation of self-determination.<sup>101</sup> However, Eritrea's pattern of foreign policy towards contiguous neighbouring countries since independence shows that the ruling party was not reluctant to assert Eritrea's territorial claims by force. Eritrea's foreign policy since 1993 reflected the difficulty in reconciling self-determination with the deliberate use of force to bring about delimitation and demarcation of its ambiguous colonially-inherited boundaries. Eritrea's deliberate use of force to change its boundaries brought to the fore the pitfalls of the prevailing interpretation of the principle of self-determination as, paraphrasing Mayall, a once-and-for-all act of decolonization.<sup>102</sup>

Instead, Eritrea's foreign policy suggests that decolonization should be understood as a process in which negotiations over a variety of factors, and not only disputed areas of the territorial boundary, should take place.

The case-study shows that the arrangements on ill-delimited inherited colonial boundaries, the boundary politics of the state and the legitimacy of state authority, that is, the implementation of a set of institutions ensuring democratic national (self)government, cannot continue to be given scant attention or entirely taken for granted. Eritrea's case has clear implications as it points to the need to set up in advance mechanisms to foster peaceful negotiations between the predecessor and the successor state over: 1) ill-delimited or contentious boundaries; 2) the mechanisms that will diminish the likelihood of tension arising from divergent boundary politics, namely currency exchange mechanisms and citizenship rules and, finally, but equally as important, 3) the internal and external accountability mechanisms that will hamper political leaderships from subverting the principle of democratic national government and, instead cling onto military or authoritarian practices of government.

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 477.

<sup>101</sup> Jacquin-Berdal, 2002, *op. cit.*

<sup>102</sup> Mayall, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

The analysis of the relationship between war making and state making confirms that the democratic credentials of state's authorities take precedence over their nationalist credentials vindicated on the battlefield. While the war increased the political leaderships' legitimacy, its conduct and outcomes contributed to a decrease of the citizens' willingness to contribute to the trajectories of state and nation building projects of the EPRDF and the PFDJ and, instead, increased the demands for the creation of mechanisms of internal accountability. In this sense the authoritarian paths followed by both governments eroded the *ante bellum* legitimacy of the PFDJ and the ratchet effect of the war on the EPRDF's legitimacy. The war-induced activities of state and nation building were marred by the failure of both governments to embark on meaningful political liberalization.

The thesis' findings suggest that the survival of state authorities at the current juncture of world politics is likely to be eroded by war making.

## **Appendix 1: Studies of the 1998-2000 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia**

### **Contributions produced during the conflict**

#### **Internal contributions from an Ethiopian perspective**

- 1) MEDHANE TADESSE, 1999. The Eritrean- Ethiopian War: Retrospect and Prospects: Reflections on the Making of Conflicts in the Horn of Africa 1991- 1998 .

#### **Internal contributions from an Eritrean perspective**

- 1) ERITREAN STUDIES REVIEW, 1999. Eritrea & Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation to Cooperation to Conflict .

#### **External contributions**

- 1) ABBINK, J., 1998. Briefing: The Eritrean- Ethiopian Border Dispute;
- 2) TRIVELLI, R.M., 1998. Divided histories, opportunistic alliances: Background notes on the Ethiopian-Eritrean war;
- 3) CORNWELL, R., 1998. Ethiopia and Eritrea: Fratricidal Conflict in the Horn;
- 4) GILKES, P., AND, PLAUT, MARTIN, 1999. War in the Horn: The Conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia;
- 5) GILKES, P., 1999. Ethiopia- Perspectives of Conflict 1991-1999 ;
- 6) GUAZZINI, F., 1999. La Geografia Variabile del Confine Eritreo- Etiopico tra Passato e Presente;
- 7) CLIFFE, L., 1999. Regional Dimensions of conflict in the Horn of Africa;
- 8) TEKESTE NEGASH & TRONVOLL, K., 2000. Brothers at War: Making Sense of the Eritrean- Ethiopian War;
- 9) IYOB, R., 2000. The Ethiopian-Eritrean Conflict: diasporic vs. hegemonic states in the Horn of Africa, 1991-2000;
- 10) CLAPHAM, C., 2000. War and State Formation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Paper presented at the colloquium ' La guerre entre le local et le global', Paris, Centre d' Études et de Recherches Internationales, 29- 30 May 2000 (published in French in 2003).

### **Contributions produced in the aftermath of the conflict**

- 1) ABBINK, J., 2001. Creating Borders: Exploring the Impact of the Ethio- Eritrean War on the Local Population;
- 2) ALEMSEGED ABBAY, 2001. 'Not With Them, Not Without Them': The Staggering of Eritrea to Nationhood;
- 3) BATTERA, F., 2001. Il Conflito Etiopia-Eritrea e i suoi Effetti sulla Crisi Permanente del Corno ;
- 4) TRIULZI, A., Janeiro/ Julho 2002. Violence and the acknowledgement of tense past in the Horn : a note on the Ethio- Eritrean War (1998-2000);
- 5) ABBINK, J., 2003. Ethiopia- Eritrea: Proxy Wars and Prospects of Peace in the Horn of Africa;
- 6) LEENCO LATA, 2003. The Ethiopia- Eritrea War;

7) REID, R., 2003. Old Problems in New Conflicts: Some observations on Eritrea and its relations with Tigray, From Liberation struggle to Inter-state War;

8) STEVES, F., 2003. Regime Change and War: Domestic Politics and the Escalation of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict;

9) TRONVOLL, K., March 2003. Identities in Conflict: An ethnography of war and the politics of identity in Ethiopia 1998-2000;

10) KOSER, K., 2003. Mobilizing New African Diasporas: An Eritrean Case Study;

11) SØRBØ, G.M., AND, SIEGFRIED PAUSEWANG, 2004. Prospects for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Africa's Horn;

12) JACQUIN- BERDAL, D., AND, MARTIN PLAUT, 2005. Ethiopia and Eritrea: Unfinished Business;

13) REID, R., 2005. Caught in the headlights of history: Eritrea, the EPLF and the postwar nation state;

14) DORMAN, S.R., 2005. Narratives of nationalism in Eritrea: research and revisionism;

15) TADDESSSE BERHE, H.G., &, DE WAAL, ALEX , 2005. War and HIV Prevalence: Evidence from Tigray, Ethiopia;

16) HANSEN, S.J., 11 January 2006. Organisational Culture at War: Ethiopian Decision - making and the War with Eritrea ( 1998- 2000) ;

17) JACQUIN- BERDAL, D., AND, AIDA MENGISTU, 2006. Nationalism and Identity in Ethiopia and Eritrea: Building Multiethnic States;

18) TRIULZI, A., 2006. The past as contested terrain: Commemorating new sites of memory in War-Torn Ethiopia;

19) LYONS, T., 2006. Diasporas and homeland conflict;

20) LYONS, T., 2006. Avoiding Conflict in the Horn of Africa: U.S. Policy toward Ethiopia and Eritrea ;

21) HEALY, S., AND PLAUT, MARTIN, 2007. Ethiopia and Eritrea: Allergic to Persuasion.

## Appendix 2: Table of Figures 1-4

**Table 1: Military Expenditure as % of GDP: 1991-2003**

*Ante bellum*<sup>1</sup> and *post bellum*<sup>2</sup> levels

Military Expenditure as % of GDP		
	Eritrea	Ethiopia
<b>1991</b>		<b>5.9</b>
<b>1992</b>		<b>3.2</b>
<b>1993</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>1994</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>10.7</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>36.4</b>	<b>9.6</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>4.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> SIPRI 1999. *SIPRI Yearbook 1999 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> --- 1997. *SIPRI Yearbook 1997 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.; SIPRI, 1999, op. cit. ; SIPRI 2000. *SIPRI Yearbook 2000 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.; Wuyi Omitoogun 2003. 'Military Expenditure Data in Africa: A Survey of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda'. Oxford: Oxford University Press: SIPRI Research Report Nº. 17.; SIPRI 2005. *SIPRI Yearbook 2005 Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford Oxford University Press.

### Appendix 3: Tables of Figures 5-11

**Table 2 of figure 5: Asylum applicants from Eritrea<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Eritrea
1996	610
1997	748
1998	1389
1999	2394
2000	2675
2001	3025
2002	32280
2003	1063
2004	6706
2005	6350

**Table 3 of Figure 6: Refugees from Eritrea: Countries of Asylum<sup>2</sup>**

Refugees  
from Eritrea:  
Country of  
Asylum

Year

Year	Sudan	Ethiopia	UK	Germany	Italy	other	total
1996	328307					3918	332225
1997	315030					4046	319077
1998	342295					4485	346781
1999	342129				3	5006	347138
2000	367735	3276			16	5824	376851
2001	324546	4212			40	4431	333229
2002	305294	5126	975	2553	94	4134	318176
2003	108251	6754	1748	2754	177	4437	124121
2004	110927	8719	2404	2974	785	5322	131131
2005	116746	10700	3617	2746	2705	7552	144066
2006							

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Eritrea'. *UNHCR* 324-325, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**Table 4 of Figure 7: Refugees from Eritrea<sup>3</sup>**

Eritrea	
Year	
1996	332225
1997	319077
1998	346781
1999	347138
2000	376851
2001	333229
2002	318176
2003	124121
2004	131131
2005	144066

**Table 5 of Figure 8: Refugees and Asylum seekers in Eritrea<sup>4</sup>**

Eritrea	
Year	
1996	2148
1997	2694
1998	2501
1999	2972
2000	1984
2001	2272
2002	3624
2003	4089
2004	4696
2005	6009
2006	

**Table 6 of Figure 9: Asylum Applicants from Ethiopia<sup>5</sup>**

Ethiopia	
Year	
1996	6108
1997	5772
1998	7204
1999	11845
2000	13837
2001	11728
2002	9898
2003	12125
2004	10260
2005	11572

<sup>3</sup> ibid.

<sup>4</sup> ibid.

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR 2005. '2005 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook: Ethiopia'. *UNHCR* 328-329, <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/>.

**Table 7 of Figure 10: Refugees from Ethiopia: Countries of Asylum<sup>6</sup>**

Refugees Ethiopia: Country of Asylum Year	Kenya	Sudan	US	Germany	Canada	other	total
1996	7109	51467	10230		3750	23714	96270
1997	8634	44284	7832		2543	21108	84401
1998	8099	35559	5600		1724	19698	70680
1999	8191	35396	7849		1405	18214	71055
2000	4053	34132	9765		1635	16825	66410
2001	13541	16120	11536		2034	15766	58997
2002	11202	14571	12454	8134	2244	12635	61240
2003	11139	15251	12835	7966	2873	12613	62677
2004	12595	14812	12980	6669	3549	12545	63150
2005	14862	14633	13844	5146	3986	12990	65461
2006							

**Table 8 of Figure 11: Refugees from Ethiopia<sup>7</sup>**

Year	Ethiopia
1996	96270
1997	84401
1998	70680
1999	71055
2000	66410
2001	58997
2002	61240
2003	62677
2004	63150
2005	65461

<sup>6</sup> ibid.<sup>7</sup> ibid.

## Appendix 4: Table of Figures 12-13

Table 9: Horn of Africa's states boundaries

HA <sup>1</sup> (%) shared land boundary Source <sup>2</sup> :	Djibouti 451,500/ 20.5 per km2	Eritrea 4,135,950/ 34.1 per km2	Ethiopia 64,117,450/ 56.9 per km2	Kenya 30, 339, 800/ 52.1 km2	Somalia 7,253,150/ 11.4 per km2	Sudan <sup>3</sup> 35,080,000/ 14.0 per km2	Uganda <sup>4</sup> 27, 317, 550/ 98.3 per km2
Djibouti		113 km (6.9%)	337 km (6.4%)		58km (2.5%)		
Eritrea	113 km (22.3%)		912 km (17.2%)			605 km (7.9%)	
Ethiopia	337 km (66.3%)	912 km (56%)		830 km (24.1%)	1,626 km (68.7%)	1,606 km (20.9%)	
Kenya			830 km (15.6%)		682 km (28.8%)	232 km (3%)	933km (34.6%)
Somalia	58 km (11.4%)		1, 626 km (30.6%)	682 km (19.8%)			
Sudan		605 km (37.1%)	1,606 km (30.2%)	232 km (6.7%)			435 km (16.1%)
Tanzania				769 km (22.3%)			396 km (14.7%)
Uganda				933 km (27.1%)		435 km (5.6%)	

<sup>1</sup> For more recent data the World Development Indicators database, as of April 2005, provides the following Population totals ( in millions): DJI 0,705; ER 4,4; ETH 68, 6; KEN 31,9; SOM 9,6; SUD 33,5; UG 25,3. in IGAD, 'Comparative Physiographic and Demographic Data on IGAD States' in <http://www.igad.org/mstates/index.htm> (accessed: 12/06/06).

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, E. M. 2003. *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*. London: TSO. The table is based on calculations by the author on the basis of the data provided in Anderson. For the original data for each country refer to Anderson in the following pages: Djibouti, p. 235; Eritrea, p. 260; Ethiopia, p. 268; Kenya, p. 447; Somalia, p. 733; Sudan, p. 752; Uganda, p. 833.

<sup>3</sup> Sudan shares boundaries also with: Libya 383 km (5%); Democratic Republic of Congo 628 km (8.2%); Central African Republic 1, 165 km (15.1%); Egypt 1, 273 km (16.6%); Chad 1, 360 km (17.7%).

<sup>4</sup> Uganda shares boundaries also with: Rwanda 169 km (6.3%); Democratic Republic of the Congo 765 km (28.3%).

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