

Book Review on: Leenco Lata¹. (2012). *Peacekeeping as State Building: Current Challenges for the Horn of Africa*. Red Sea printing press.

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The overall hope (objective) of this work is to make a modest contribution to the emerging field of theorizing state building. Hence, the central message of this work is state building requires rethinking the attributes conventionally associated with the state. The book is organized with nine chapters. The first chapter is an introductory section mainly narrates about state formation, state legitimacy and peacekeeping operations in the horn of Africa.

In this chapter, the book argues that state formation was the result of the late 19th C European imperialists outside the region mainly (Britain, France and Italy) and internal imperialists within the region (Christian Abyssinia and Mahdist Sudan). State legitimacy is conceptualized as the degree to which the idea of the state is shared by all the inhabitants of the state territory or not. However, for this book the reality on the ground is that, the idea of the state in the horn of Africa is shared by some of its members and not others. Hence, the state is legitimate for some and while it is not for others. The other focus of this chapter is about the expansion of peacekeeping doctrine in the Horn of Africa. It is stated that a number of peacekeeping operations are conducted in the horn of Africa. It is argued that, the operation however, the state must belong to all people approach is missing. The book underscores that, the end point of peacekeeping is not any kind of state building rather it should be building a democratic state.

The second chapter of this book is devoted to state building and the challenges associated with it mainly about: asymmetrical flow of resources, nation-building and external recognition and legitimacy. With regard to asymmetrical flow of resources, it is argued that debt servicing and the ever rising gap between the prices of raw materials exported by poor countries and the price of industrial products they import from the wealthy countries is favoring developed states. The book claims that there is no way that African states could sustain the institutions and practices underpinning the modern democratic state unless the ongoing asymmetrical flow of resources is corrected. The regions current practice of nation-building as a state building guarantees the survival of some sectors of the

state's population and the erasure of others. The author believes that, such practice will lead to reactive nationalism and in turn this may lead to state failure. Hence, the cause of state failure is the result of nation-building in this instance. The book strongly believes that, external recognition and legitimacy should be linked to the prevalence or non-prevalence of internal legitimacy. The author insists that, any regime that lacks internal legitimacy if it makes a treaty and agreement it should be void or null.

The third chapter of this book is about calibrating state size in the Horn of Africa. In the horn of Africa the simultaneous prevalence of expansionist and contractionist tendencies within a state matters a lot. It is argued that, some of the region's states aspire to achieve expansion by claiming the whole or parts of a neighboring entity. At least, there is power projection and influence into neighboring states. At the same time there is at least one group entertaining separation or at least decentralization. The author believes that, any state-building initiative that overlooks those close interactions between expansionist and contractionist tendencies is not likely to succeed. It is recommended that, regional integration combined with decentralization should be a response to the regional nature of many African problems.

Chapter four discuss about the role of traditions. It is noted that, the Enlightenment notion about progress heavily influenced attitudes about African political traditions. The Europeans and educated Africans didn't consider the positive elements of the traditional practices and structures. Educated Africans under the influence of European theorization about Africa and African societies turned their backs on African traditions. The author underscores that any state building undertaking should take in to account the positive aspects of the concerned society's traditions and employ them as the bedrock. For him building sustainable and robust state in Africa would be unthinkable unless traditional structures, practices and formations are taken into account.

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Chapter five of the book is devoted to state ownership. The book in this chapter notes that, state ownership and state legitimacy is contested in every state in the horn of Africa to varying degrees. It is mentioned that, the policies, practices, symbols and myths of each state privilege a particular sector of its population and not others. The author stresses that, many of the conflicts in the horn of Africa stem from this asymmetrical sense of state ownership.

Under chapter six the author explores that, a version of democracy that takes account of cultural and linguistic diversity becomes imperative for successfully building state in the horn of Africa. This section of the book states that, liberal democracy is not preferable for Africa, as it lacks sensitivity to cultural pluralism, and it needs strong economy. The author is optimistic about deliberative version of democracy to that of liberal type. It is underscored that, deliberative democracy reconciles the question of common national and particular ethnic identity.

In chapter seven the issues of diversity and citizenship are discussed. The fact that the world in general and the Horn of Africa in particular are diverse in many ways recognizing these identities is the only way. The author suggested that, citizenship has to consider the prevalence of such diversity. Chapter eight of the book is devoted legitimacy of military and security institutions. The author points that; state building would not succeed without legitimizing these actors. It is recommended that, the military and security organs should be protector of all sectors of the societies and accepted by the wider society. The book further argues that, in the Horn of Africa, as the military has transformed into political party, the fundamental challenge is ending the militarization of political parties and the politicization of militaries.

Finally, in the last chapter the book concludes by summarizing four imperatives that need to be addressed for sustainable peace and stability to prevail in the strife-ridden Horn of Africa region. Those imperatives are: addressing expansionist and contractionist tendency, ensuring symmetrical sense of state ownership, accountability and accessibility of state institutions to grass communities and identity recognition.

The main strength of this book is that, the work gives a comprehensive picture about state building exercise and the challenges associated with it regarding each state in the Horn of Africa. The most interesting thing about this work is that the author came up with alternatives for those problems that are raised under discussion. The reviewer believes that, this book is relevant in many ways. The work came up with a different perspective regarding state-society relation as an antithesis to the existing common practice of state autonomy over societal autonomy. The existing tradition considers state is an autonomous entity standing above and controlling society and territory. However, for the author such common practice of visualizing state as autonomous entity undermined the

autonomy of members of the society. Hence, the author's opposite process of conceptualizing state autonomy as a reflection and testimony of the autonomous status of the individuals who compose its population perhaps opens a room for academic debate.

The work also urges that taking the solution of the Western states as a panacea to the existing problems of the region has to be reconsidered. Such suggestion encourages further study and reminds other academicians to critically evaluate the positives aspects of the region and the negative aspects of those western states.

Above all, given the subject of state building is a burning issue in the region it urges policy makers, academicians and other stakeholders to consider it in their respective area for its realization. The reviewer believes that such work would serve as an alarm for the stakeholders of state builders in the Horn of Africa by stressing its significance for the overall survival and best of the region and its respective people.

Methodologically, the work lacks variety of data sources, as the book entirely depends on secondary sources, it would have been better if other data sources such as primary sources were also considered. With regard to modernization, the author portrayed and described Christian Abyssinia, the northern Sudanese and some Somali clan families as if they feel they are different, civilized and rivals of Europeans. The reviewer notes that, though such description has some truths in some respects it seems a little bit over exaggerated at least these groups do not feel as contender of western states.

The reviewer also feels that, in some respects the author followed a reductionist approach. Though the fact that there were dominant groups such as (Christian Abyssinia and the northern Sudanese) the book overlooked the role of other ethnic groups that participated during state formation and state building in the region. The reviewer further believes that the author is obsessed with idiosyncrasy regarding the reality of the region. The Horn of Africa is described as peculiar in many respects while the fact on the ground is not.

The author mis-conceptualizes peace-keeping doctrine. The book treated peace-keeping operation as a long term strategy and one way of state building in the horn of Africa. However, the very genesis and purpose of peacekeeping operation as doctrine was emerged as an ad hoc response to the international crises after the formation of United Nations. The reviewer argues that the mission of any peace-keeping operation in the world in general and in the horn of Africa in particular is all about preventing further violence.