

State Building-Peace Building Nexus

The Horn of Africa

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Abstract - This article seeks to examine the state building-peace building nexus in the Horn of Africa (HOA). It is often purport that a harmony exists between state building and peace building. The article however argues that a contradiction characterises the nexus, at least initially. State building relates to political power and is a political process thus creates losers and winners consequently may generate conflicts, exclusion and marginalisation. After all state is a loci of power and wealth. Peace building, on the other hand, follows peace deal and aims at consolidating and institutionalising it. It endeavours to reconcile and integrate antagonists. It is also a short-term project. State building refers to long-term process of institution building. In the long-term, however, inclusive and democratic state building could mitigate conflicts and promote peace building. The emergence of a hegemonic state engenders pacification of society and emancipation of state that harness lasting peace building. Sustainability of societal pacification and state emancipation presupposes institutionalisation and democratisation of the state. State legitimacy ultimately consolidates peace building.

Key words:

state building,
peace building,
Horn of Africa,
pacification,
emancipation.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

بناء الدولة، بناء
السلام، القرن
الإفريقي، نشر
السلام، تحرر.

ملخص: يهدف هذا المقال إلى تحري العلاقة بين بناء الدولة وبناء السلام في القرن الإفريقي. كثيرا ما يزعم أن هناك توافقا بين بناء الدولة وبناء السلام، في حين يؤكد هذا المقال فكرة وجود تناقض، على الأقل مبدئيا، يطبع مثل هذه العلاقة.

إن بناء الدولة مرتبط بالسلطة السياسية، وهو مسار سياسي ينتج عنه رابحون وخاسرون ويكون بالتالي سببا في ظهور النزاعات، والإقصاء، والتهميش، فالدولة في الأخير هي مجال للقوة والثروة. في الجهة المقابلة يأتي بناء السلام الذي يتبع اتفاق سلام ويهدف إلى تقويته ومأسسته، فهو يسعى إلى الإصلاح بين المتخاصمين وإدماجهم، وهو مشروع قصير المدى، عكس بناء الدولة الذي يمثل مسارا طويلا لبناء المؤسسات.

رغم ذلك، يمكن القول أن بناء الدولة الشامل والديمقراطي بإمكانه على المدى الطويل التخفيف من حدة النزاعات وترقية بناء السلام. إن بروز دولة قوية يؤدي إلى نشر السلام في المجتمع وتحرر الدولة من أجل بناء سلام دائم. إن ديمومة السلام المجتمعاتي وتحرر الدولة يستلزمان مسبقا تأسيس هذه الدولة ودمقرطتها، إذ أن مشروعيتهما هي التي من شأنها تقوية بناء السلام في مرحلة لاحقة.

Introduction

The HOA is here perceived as a security and conflict complex unit. The countries of the HOA comprising Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti are suffering of endemic inter-state and intra-state conflicts. The endemic conflicts primarily derive from the fact that the post-colonial state in the HOA have not yet evolved into fully matured responsible hegemonic socio-political agency. In addition to this, rather as a result of it, centrifugal internal forces and external interventionist ones, continuously aggravate the precarious situation of the state building project. It is against this structural context and backdrop that state building and peace building and their interrelation is examined and analysed.

Another methodology of connectivity between nature of the state and conflicts is drawn. The connectivity is expressed in that it is purported that the nature of the state generates conflicts, and conversely conflicts affect the process of state building. This mutual adverse affectivity explains the rampant conflicts, lack of development, environmental degradation, disease, unemployment and poverty: pathologies bedevilling the region. The resolution of this vicious circle that produces the pathologies may therefore be found in the state building-peace building nexus. But, how is this nexus expressed?

Initially, the state building-peace building nexus is characterised by disharmony. State building is essentially a political process and relates to political power. As such, it creates winners and losers where the later may resort to conflict as mechanism of addressing their grievances. State is loci of power and wealth that attracts contending forces toward itself in order to capture it. Peace building, on the other hand, follows peace deal and aims at consolidating and institutionalising it. It strives to reconcile and bring together political contenders. It is also a short-term project, while state building is a long-term process of institution building. In the end, however, a democratic and inclusive state building may facilitate conflict prevention and resolution, and promote peace building. The emergence of hegemonic state that spawns state emancipation and societal pacification buttresses peace building. Sustenance of state emancipation and societal pacification would presuppose state building-peace building nexus.

The article seeks to demonstrate how and when state building becomes a prerequisite for peace building in the Horn of Africa. It provides an elaborate treatise of state building in the Horn, then to establish the nexus. Following a detailed examination of state building and peace building in general, the article empirically examines the nexus in the HOA.

The article comprises six sections. The second section deals with state building, followed by subsections that examine notions such as pacification, emancipation, institutionalisation and democratisation that arguably foster state building. The third section examines state building in the HOA. Section four analyses the role of external involvement in state building and peace building. Section five examines the relation between state building and peace building. Section six concludes the article.

State Building in the Horn of Africa

The ontological genesis of the formation of the modern state in all the HOA countries virtually coincides, temporality wise. It is the product of the 19th century, including the oldest state, Ethiopia. In terms of agency of state formation, external forces (imperial powers) stand behind that social agency. Ethiopia, widely accepted as the oldest state and the sole country in the whole continent that did not fall in the yoke of colonialism assumed its modern shape during the Menelik II era (1889-1913) (Zewde 2001: 112, Käufeler 1988: 83, Tareke 1996: 25ff). In collusion with Western imperial powers (Britain, France, Italy and Russia) Menelik expanded, centralized and consolidated the Abyssinian state, bulging it by several times of its original size as well as maintaining the sovereignty of the country. Although Ethiopia is believed, broadly speaking, to have escaped Western colonisation, and in spite of the fact that it claims several thousand years of existence (cf. Rubenson 1976, Zewde 2001), yet its state building process remained precarious. The addition of Eritrea to its imperial possession, following the demise of Italian rule, increased the number of centrifugal forces poised to break the imperial shackles. The various centrifugal forces challenging the imperial core, hence, constituted the underlying factors of the weak state formation in Ethiopia rendering it extremely prone to rampant conflicts and wars (Gudina 2003, Jalata 2005, Lata 1999).