

African Studies Centre

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Revisiting the politics of state survival: Violence, legitimacy and governance in the Greater Horn of Africa

Thursday, 8 May 2014

2.00-7.30pm

Pavilion Room, St Antony's College, Oxford

The countries of the Greater Horn of Africa are on diverging trajectories with regard to state strength, economic development, and legitimacy. Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya are expanding control over their territories and peoples; these states project economic and military power into weakly-governed or ungoverned areas of their neighbours. In Somalia, and increasingly in Sudan, the concept of the 'state' has become blurred (but not erased). Somaliland demonstrates how a non-sovereign entity can adopt the attributes of a functioning state. Disintegration threatens Sudan, where the agendas of regional movements in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile vacillate between state reform and separatism. South Sudan lacks both the instruments and vision to maintain and solidify a peacetime political system, and the governance structures needed to consolidate a functioning state. In Eritrea, stagnation and authoritarianism have eroded the state's legitimacy, though not yet eliminated its coercive power. Across the region, notions of sovereignty and state-society relations are challenged and re-shaped by trends of multilateralism, regional economic integration, and transnationalism. The changing distribution of power at the global level has seen new players on the rise and the erosion of the US and European capacity to define and drive the international agenda vis-à-vis African countries.

The contributors to this seminar will analyse the context, implications, and expected consequences of these trajectories in each of these countries and in the Greater Horn of Africa. What drives regional differentiation? To what extent are warfare and organized violence necessary ingredients in this process? How does this differentiation affect the relations between rulers and ruled?

Registration for this half-day conference is free, but places are limited. Please email Adam Gilbertson at hornofafrica2014@gmail.com in order to confirm your attendance.

Programme

2.15pm Opening remarks: Nic Cheeseman, Director, African Studies Centre, Oxford

2.30pm Panel 1: Current Modes of State Survival in Northeastern Africa: Stagnation and Expansion

Chair: David Pratten, African Studies Centre, University of Oxford

Discussant: John Markakis, SOAS.

Presenters:

- **Jason Mosley**, African Studies Centre/Chatham House
Productive landscapes: projection and risk in the state's vision for the Ethiopian frontier

- **Amanda Poole**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
'We are not the government': political imaginaries and the politics of daily life in Eritrea

- **Øystein H. Rolandsen**, PRIO
Gaining sovereignty: the case of South Sudan

4.15pm Tea and Coffee Break

4.45pm Panel 2: Shadow politics anno 2014

Chair: Øystein H. Rolandsen, PRIO

Discussant: Christopher Clapham, University of Cambridge

Presenters:

- **William Reno**, Northwestern University
Regional and Global Responses to the Failure of State-building in the Greater Horn of Africa

- **David M. Anderson**, University of Warwick
Military Madness? Co-Option, coercion, and counter-Insurgency in the (re)making of Kenya, 2008-2014

- **Sandrine Perrot**, Sciences Po, Paris
Violence and modes of domination in a hybrid regime: lessons from the 2011 Ugandan Elections

6.30-7.30pm Drinks Reception