

Shifting Grounds for African Secessionism?

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Introduction

Given the diversity of experiences with secessionism on the continent—ranging from the lack of recognition of postcolonial Somaliland to the near universal endorsement (if not celebration) of the independence of breakaway South Sudan in 2011—, we attempt in this concluding chapter to summarize the recent evolution and the current state of the right to self-determination and of the principle of territorial integrity in Africa. In doing so we seek to identify doctrinal changes as well as possible contradictions in the practice of states.

Focusing on the post-Cold War period and particularly the years following the adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which paved the way for the independence of South Sudan, we then review the empirical trends in secessionism across the continent. We do so by focusing first on major conflicts, but also by looking more closely at smaller and more ambiguous movements. As an exercise in summarizing all these instances of African (would-be) secessionism, we then present a map of what Africa would look like should all these groups get their wishes.

While we find, by and large, very few tangible effects of the South Sudan precedent on African secessionist activity, we note, however, a significant rise in the coincidence of separatist and Islamist insurgencies, and suggest that Islamism might represent a more radical challenge to the postcolonial territorial state in Africa than most other instances of secessionism to date. We conclude with a brief discussion of these different trends.

A Muddled Legal Regime

The parameters of African self-determination are usually construed as leaving little room for nuance or uncertainty. Past existence as a colony is generally seen as the fundamental principle guiding contemporary recognition as a sovereign entity in Africa. This principle was enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 1960, which dissociated the sovereignty of former colonies from their empirical existence¹ and outlawed their territorial reconfiguration, and was reaffirmed on multiple occasions, including in the 1963 Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), its famous “Cairo Resolution” the following year, and again with the creation of the African Union in 2000. In a nutshell, because the African repertoire of international law squeezes the right to self-determination into the straight jacket of territorial integrity and maintenance of boundaries inherited from colonialism, decolonization has been the

only legitimate manifestation of African self-determination since the extinction of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.² It is no surprise then that most of the salient cases of attempted secessions on the continent have been couched in terms of decolonization or restoration of colonial boundaries, as in Eritrea, Somaliland, or Western Sahara. Some of the groups that could not plausibly make such a claim have tried instead to argue that they enjoyed a particular status under colonial rule from the rest of the country (e.g., Katanga, Casamance, or Cabinda), or some sort of differential treatment (as with Britain's "Southern Policy" in Nigeria or Sudan), but there is no evidence that such a claim was ever successful at stimulating recognition. The case seems thus both simple and closed. In Robert Jackson's piercing formulation, "To be a sovereign state today one needs only to have been a formal colony yesterday."³

Yet, as many of the case studies in this book make clear, the behavior of both African and non-African states towards African secessions has been a lot more ambiguous over the years than the principle of maintenance of colonially inherited boundaries would suggest. To start with the end, the recognition of the right of South Sudan to secede in the CPA in 2005, and its subsequent accession to sovereignty as an independent state in 2011, shattered Africa's conservative legal record and brought in a considerable degree of confusion as to what makes secession legitimate and what are the odds of recognition. However, while South Sudan has contributed to such confusion, this book amply illustrates that previous practice was already highly contradictory.

Uti Possidetis or not

The principle that African states must maintain the boundaries they inherited from colonization is known as *uti possidetis* (as you possessed).⁴ A dominant element of doctrine and state practice in Africa,⁵ its original adoption on the continent was motivated by the perceived need to protect new and fragile states, and prevent attempts at partial independence. With the secession of Katanga from Congo in July 1960, which garnered at least indirect initial support from Belgium, its former colonial ruler, these issues were understandably far from moot for African rulers.

Yet, while the principle is often reaffirmed and hailed as a building block of Africa's international relations, this volume makes clear that *uti possidetis* has been historically unevenly applied and has been particularly called into question in the wake of South Sudan's independence.⁶ The principle was first violated, before its enshrinement by the UN and OAU,

when Ethiopia attempted to swallow Eritrea in the 1950s, despite having received administration over it as a UN Mandate. Although it had originally agreed to manage Eritrea through a federation, Ethiopia argued that it had historical relations of political control over the region and forcibly incorporated it into a unitary administration. Eritrea's secession war ensued.⁷

Uti possidetis was then violated by the four African countries—Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Tanzania, and Zambia—that decided to recognize the secession of Biafra in the late 1960s. While Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon were only too eager to weaken Anglophone Nigeria, Nyerere's Tanzania made the legal argument that the humanitarian obligation to help the Biafran victims of Nigerian repression trumped the principle of territorial integrity (offering, in effect, an early version of the "responsibility-to-protect" doctrine).

The next violation took place when Morocco invaded Western Sahara in November 1975, a mere month after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) turned down its claim of historical control over it (a similar one to Ethiopia's over Eritrea). To Morocco's credit, it showed consistency by leaving the OAU upon the Saharawi Republic's admission. Incidentally, as the chapter on Western Sahara in this book makes clear, the ICJ considered whether Western Sahara before Spanish colonization was under Moroccan control or "res nullius" (belonging to no one—in which case the colonial shell would prevail in its subsequent self-determination). The argument that the local population could belong to itself does not seem to have been considered—only external control (in this case Spanish or Moroccan) seems to provide the ground for sovereignty in Africa's legal regime. The failure of all UN attempts to organize a referendum in Western Sahara, the de facto annexation of two thirds of its territory by Morocco, and the continued relations of other African states with Morocco, indicate the weak standing of *uti possidetis* as an African norm.

Another rather flagrant violation took place when France chose to retain the island of Mayotte as an overseas territory as Comoros became independent in 1975. Of course, it is not clear whether *uti possidetis* was binding to France in the first place. Not only did France obviously not sign the OAU treaty, but it also abstained on UN Resolution 1514. Nevertheless, in terms of continental practice, the partial independence of Comoros represented a serious deviation from the norm. The Comoros continue to claim Mayotte and, as Gregor Dobler tells us, there have been no fewer than 13 UN General Assembly resolutions condemning France since then. As the Comoros chapter makes clear, the French tried to boost the legitimacy of their

move by holding several referenda in Mayotte. In 1974, 64% of *Mahorais* voted to stay with France; in 1976, the number was 99.4%. This is unusual practice, however, as there does not seem to exist a right in international law for sub-national groups to opt out of a country through referendum. No other sub-region of former colonies ever got a chance to vote on whether it wanted to remain colonized.⁸ It is true, however, that French colonies voted in 1958 on whether to remain with France or become independent. That all but Guinea chose then to remain French did not prevent the French from (somewhat forcibly) granting independence to most of them two years later. Mayotte, which became a French Department in 2011, illustrates the arbitrariness of post-colonial sovereignty and the lack of enforceable legal standing of *uti possidetis*.

To some extent, albeit *a contrario*, the refusal of any country to date to recognize Somaliland as a sovereign state also runs counter *uti possidetis*. Somaliland was a distinct colony from Somalia. The British negotiated its boundaries with the Italians and the Ethiopians (see Markus Höhne's chapter). It reached independence as its own country on 26 June 1960, before uniting by act of parliament with former Italian Somalia only four days later on July 1. Since 1991, after three decades of relative persecution by the south and the latter's complete collapse following Siad Barré's departure from power, Somaliland has reclaimed its own separate sovereignty but without any recognition. Yet, an independent Somaliland formally conforms to the *uti possidetis* principle and should thus have a right to self-determination as a post-colonial entity. Its lack of recognition contrasts with the experience of Senegal which was still recognized as a sovereign state when it pulled out of the Mali Federation in August 1960, two months after forming it with then French Sudan (later to become Mali) in a pattern very similar to the unification of Somalia⁹. It is also worth mentioning here that several countries declined to recognize Somaliland because of the Somali government's refusal to do so. It should be noted, however, that many of the same countries, the United States included, did not have similar concerns recognizing Kosovo in 2008 despite Serbia's objection to its secession. Without a doubt, Serbia exercises more significant territorial control over at least parts of Kosovo than Somalia over Somaliland.

However, it is the near universally recognized independence of South Sudan in 2011 which most radically shattered the conventional territorial constraints to the right of self-determination in Africa. As Mareike Schomerus and Lotje De Vries detail, the notion that South Sudan has a right to self-determination through referendum showed up among some African

states for the first time in 1994 and was formalized in the Machakos Protocol between the north and the south in 2002. Apparently, the military stalemate between the two parties and the international support for the South (together with the North's pariah status as a state supporting terrorism after 2001) were sufficient for the southerners to win this significant legal breakthrough. The subsequent endorsement of the right of self-determination by referendum of the south as part of the CPA consecrated this drift and constituted the broader and most explicit departure from *uti possidetis* on the continent since 1960.

It should be noted, however, that the recognition of South Sudan's independence by other countries, not least the United States, is not entirely arbitrary. For sure, it violates *uti possidetis* as it gives sovereignty to a sub-region that has no history as a separate colony but differs from the rest of the country mostly on religious and racial grounds, which are not constitutive elements of self-determination in Africa. Yet some argue that the region's sustained and dramatic humanitarian crisis trumped *uti possidetis*. Solomon Dersso, for example, sees in South Sudan a "new human security-based approach" to the continental tension between *uti possidetis* and self-determination.¹⁰ In his words, South Sudan "represents a case of self-determination through independence that came about as a result of serious human rights violations and denial of the right to participate in public affairs and the running of the country on an equal basis." In other words, the humanitarian catastrophe that 50 years of warfare, 2.5 million deaths and 5 million displaced¹¹ have caused might have mitigated the otherwise firm post-colonial contours of *uti possidetis*. Similarly, Terrence McNamee, who believes the recognition of South Sudan is more *sui generis* than representative of legal evolution, mentions the "length of the struggle," the "sharp racial and religious divide," the "extreme economic hardship" experienced in the south and the "support of major external players" like the US, Israel and Ethiopia.¹² He adds that if there is a situation in which maintaining the territorial status quo might be seen as undermining international security, the international community might consider a new state as a solution.¹³ US policy seems to have followed such a reasoning.¹⁴

There is no precedent for such an over-ruling. Recall indeed that a version of this argument was also employed by Tanzania in the late 1960s to justify its recognition of Biafra, which suffered 4 years of ruthless warfare that caused 1 million, mostly civilian, deaths. Yet the rest of the international community did not then deem the humanitarian crisis sufficient to warrant recognition (though Johannes Harnischfeger indicates in his chapter that the Ojukwu

administration tried to call attention to it in this respect). The independence of South Sudan might represent once again some application to self-determination of the responsibility-to-protect (R2P) principle. Why it was validated with South Sudan and not with Biafra is unclear. It could be that one million casualties was not sufficient; more likely, the R2P norm evolved and liberalized over the last four decades. At any rate, South Sudan suggests that in cases of prolonged significant suffering and malign administration, subregional peoples might have a humanitarian right to secede.¹⁵ From the point of view of the African system of states, such a doctrinal evolution would have the benefit of keeping secession out of reach of by and large every other African insurgency given the high threshold of required misery. Many African governments ruthlessly repress their citizens and many deny them domestic avenues for addressing their grievances, yet, few if any have done so on the scale of Sudan and most tend not to discriminate regionally or racially in their mistreatment of their citizens.

There is also another way of reading South Sudan's independence that does not represent as much of a legal evolution but fits more squarely with more conservative principles. It relies on what Jure Vidmar calls the "domestic consensus" principle.¹⁶ According to this view, international law is neutral on the question of self-determination of sub-national "peoples" through independence, provided the existing national government agrees to it. This had already been the case with Eritrea in 1991, whose independence had been agreed with the rebels of Ethiopia's Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) before their takeover of Addis Ababa. The participation of Sudan to the CPA and its approval of the referendum extended the application of this principle to South Sudan. In this perspective, which fits more squarely with African Union doctrine and with the preservation of sovereignty of African states, South Sudan's independence is legitimate because Khartoum approved of it. In contrast, the government in Mogadishu never approved of Somaliland's independence (neither did Nigeria with Biafra or Congo with Katanga) making these secessions illegal. Once again, however, this leaves the case of Kosovo as either an illegal outlier or as following different rules apparently not applicable to Africa.¹⁷ One thing the case of South Sudan shows in this respect is that *uti possidetis* does not constrain the behavior of states with respect to their own territory. In other words, it does not prevent an existing state from agreeing to its own partition.¹⁸

In any event, like the earlier precedents that challenged *uti possidetis*, the true lesson from South Sudan is that these principles of international law are of limited importance when

push comes to shove. If dominant international actors like the United States want to recognize a new state, they can do so and find reasons to do so, and the rump state as well as the African Union can be made to follow suit.

One final case deserves our attention, although its significance so far falls well short of that of South Sudan. While the Tuareg takeover of much of Malian territory in 2012 (to which we return at more length below) was forcefully overturned by a French military intervention starting in January 2013 and never led to any formal recognition of their “Azawad” republic, the subsequent attitude of the French towards the Tuareg rebels suggests some degree of recognition of their claim, and represents a departure from mainstream practice. As they pushed out Islamist insurgents from the north, the French military allied with the *Mouvement National de Libération de l’Azawad* (MNLA) separatist rebels who had taken control of the city of Kidal after the Islamists fled in February. MNLA fighters had originally allied with the Islamists but had lost political control to them by June 2012 and used the French intervention to regain the upper hand in Kidal. The unusual precedent comes from the fact that the French military, probably dependent on the MNLA for intelligence, declined to take over the town of Kidal (whereas it had reconquered Gao, Timbuktu and other northern towns), limiting its presence to the airport and de facto recognizing the separatist administration of the town, despite the opposition of the Malian government, which the MNLA declared would not be allowed into the town.¹⁹ France, the former colonial power largely responsible for the very existence of Mali, then pushed for a political settlement between the secessionist rebels and the Malian government, frustrating many Malians. Rejecting the terrorist label the Malian government was trying to put on the MNLA, French President François Hollande announced that while Malian civil administration would be welcome into town, its military would not.²⁰ Meanwhile, in Kidal, French officers held regular contact with Mohamed Ag Najim, chief of staff of the MNLA, and in Paris some influential French politicians received MNLA delegations.²¹ Eventually, France sponsored an agreement between the Malian government and the MNLA, signed in Ouagadougou, according to which government administrators would enter Kidal to organize and administer the July 28 presidential elections, while the rebels would keep their weapons.²²

The precedent of working with and at least de facto recognizing a separatist rebel group suggests a further loosening of the principle of territorial integrity in Africa. It contrasts greatly with France’s rejection of the legitimacy of Casamance or Anglophone Cameroon’s demands.

As the Tuareg chapter in this book makes clear, however, it is not totally in contradiction with France's long-standing sympathy for the Tuaregs, to whom they applied a more beneficial colonial regime (no forced labor, no required Western education) and for whom they created the *Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes* (OCRS) in 1957.

Lessons for Would-Be African Secessionists

Where does the recent evolution of doctrine, jurisprudence and practice leave potential and actual African separatists? In this section, we try to sort through the requirements for legal or legitimate secession.

Despite Somaliland's continued setback, previous existence as a separate colony remains probably the soundest ground to demand independence in postcolonial Africa. The strength of this principle is one of the reasons that Western Sahara still await a UN-sponsored referendum to exercise its self-determination, although it was for all practical purpose annexed by Morocco in the 1980s and has the population of a mid-size city. If the Zanzibari were united in their pursuit of independence, they too could probably avail themselves of this principle. It has been written before but it bears repeating, there is genuine hypocrisy and a considerable degree of alienation in the notion that recognition is function of the colonial plausibility of the claim to self-determination. Such plausibility is in turn a function of some past sovereign status from the perspective of the European state system. Hence, Ethiopia is a state, but Ashanti, Barotseland, Buganda, and Zulu cannot be (even though their leaders signed treaties with the Europeans). This is the postcolonial equivalent of the European notion, exercised in the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, that the federated units of a federal system are imbued with sovereignty, but not provinces or other administrative divisions (a principle also challenged by the recognition of Kosovo). In the African case, it is colonial rather than federal status that provides the foundation for sovereignty, even though being colonized is as far from being sovereign as one can be.

Even if a group can make the claim of past colonial existence (and it is hard to see who is left that might be able to make such a claim), there can still be no recognition without the agreement of the rump state. Such agreement seems necessary for the African Union to recognize the secession, and most non-African countries seem to condition their own recognition on such an AU endorsement. Ethiopia formally recognized Eritrea in 1993 and Sudan was the

first country to recognize South Sudan in 2011. *A contrario*, Somalia's refusal to recognize Somaliland has been used by other countries as justification for not recognizing it either. Note, in this respect, that the rules elaborated by the European Union in the context of the breakup of Yugoslavia (that secession was legitimate because Yugoslavia had ceased to exist) somehow were never deemed to apply to Somaliland.

As a third prerequisite, few secessionist groups could make a credible claim to sovereignty if they could not demonstrate massive popular support. The organization of a successful pro-independence referendum appears therefore to be a *sine qua non*. If anything, the pro-independence tsunamis obtained in the 1993 Eritrean (99.83%) and 2011 South Sudanese (98.83%) referenda raised the threshold of acceptable support and put secession further out of reach of most groups (most African separatist regions have divided populations, with large groups against secession). As mentioned earlier, the French were also careful to organize referenda in Mayotte to legitimate its break-up from Comoros and later its status as a French department (95.4% in 2009).

Even then, a successful referendum might be necessary but is not sufficient. Somaliland's constitutional referendum of 2001, which resulted in an official (and possibly inflated, according to Markus Hoehne) 97% support for secession, does not seem to have made a difference. Neither did Anjouan's in 1997 which showed 99.88% for breakup from Comoros. The Saharawi are still waiting for theirs.

The South Sudan case suggests that only the first of these three conditions (post-colonial status) can be amended in circumstances of massive and prolonged humanitarian crisis. Even then, the approval of the rump state (a condition that might be hard to obtain without international pressure) and a successful referendum are necessary. The implication is that sustained massive violence might help. With recognition coming *ex post facto*, the South Sudan precedent might bias rebel leaders towards continued warfare and reduce the political costs of civilian casualties, providing incentives for more violence in Africa. What is unclear is whether the secession must demonstrably lead to a reduction in violence and suffering. Citizens of both Eritrea and South Sudan might not be better off so far. If conflict and suffering were to continue in South Sudan where the independence government splintered in opposing and fighting factions in December 2013, should recognition be withdrawn? In other African states, post-colonial sovereignty was explicitly granted despite a lack of effective existence as a protection against

potential collapse, and thus there is no legal basis there to withdraw it in cases of prolonged conflict or collapse. But one wonders whether the R2P element in the recognition of South Sudan might imply such a conditional recognition.

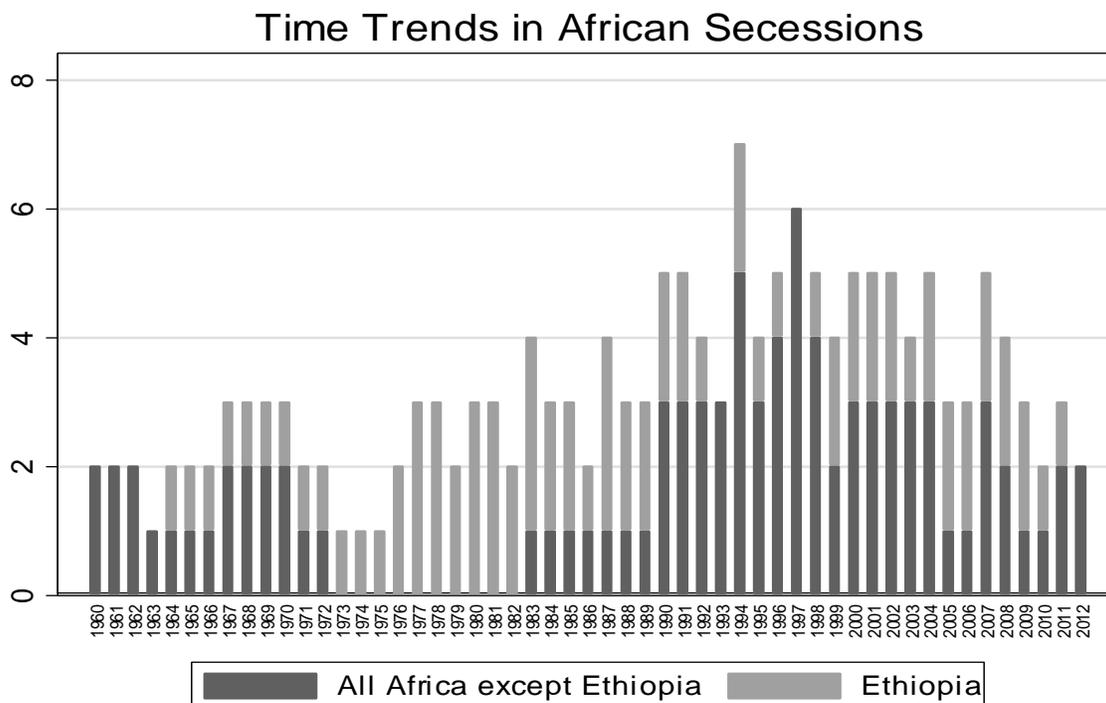
Moreover, is there a viability requirement?²³ The need for the break-up state to be able to provide for itself was never apparently made explicit in the case of South Sudan, but the availability of oil was known to all and thus the country was deemed financially viable. It could be argued that the incentive for potential break-off states to secede rather than strive for autonomy could be reduced if they lacked financial viability as a smaller, independent, and perhaps controversial state, with subsequently less donor support. In other cases one occasionally hears claims that new small African countries could not survive and therefore should not exist, but we are not aware of any country making this a prerequisite for recognition. Jeffrey Herbst has shown that there were diseconomies of scale to statehood in Africa and thus smaller states should be better off, *ceteris paribus*.²⁴ Moreover, if this were a requirement for recognition, half of the continent's countries should be derecognized as they rely on donors for much of their budgets.

Empirical Trends

Has the evolution of doctrine and state practice corresponded to any empirical trend on the continent. Have some movements seized upon the uncertainties of *uti possidetis* to seek independence? Specifically, has the South Sudan precedent led to any upsurge of secessionist activity? We seek to answer these questions in two stages, looking first at the trend among large-scale secessionist conflicts, and then investigating smaller and more ambiguous cases.

The Fading of Africa's Secessionist Moment?

The empirical record suggests that the end of the Cold War led to a resurgence of major secessionist conflicts, but that Africa's secessionist moment might be slowly fading away. As the figure below illustrates, there was a significant increase in secessionist conflicts after 1990.²⁵ However, this trend may have peaked in the late 1990s. The data does not show any measurable positive effect on large-scale secessionist violence across the continent from the CPA or the independence of South Sudan. On the contrary, while secessionist activity in the 10 years preceding the CPA averaged five cases a year, it fell to 3.125 in the 2005-2012 period.²⁶



To be fair, it is probably too soon to fully identify any long-term effect of South Sudan's independence, but there is no indication of an uptick at this point, which is consistent with our earlier discussion of the high threshold set by this precedent. By and large, South Sudan changed the rules of recognition only at the very margin and thus did not noticeably affect the calculus of would-be separatist insurgents, who remain unlikely to secede given the generally low odds of recognition. Hence Chadian president Idriss Déby's concern that "we all have a south" might have been overstated, as was Qaddafi's 2010 warning that South Sudan was a "disease" that would "spread to all of Africa."²⁷ Even in Sudan itself, the break up has not provided additional motivation to existing rebel groups. Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), for example, had announced in 2009 that if South Sudan gained independence, it too would pursue a secessionist agenda. However, it has since joined forces with other groups to create the Sudanese Revolutionary Front whose goal is to overthrow the Arab-dominated regime in Khartoum rather than to secede.²⁸

The break-up of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia in 1989-1990 and the recognition of several new states at the time in other regions, appears to have exercised a greater stimulus on African secessionists than South Sudan.²⁹ It is actually around that same period (1994) that the right to self-determination of South Sudan was first affirmed.³⁰ However, the failure of most of

secessionist movements to gain recognition, or their decision to settle for less than independence, soon tamed the continental enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it bears stressing that the average level of secessionist violence has increased compared to the period before the Cold War, which might be related to the somewhat greater ambiguity in rules of recognition brought about by the inconsistent practices of African and non-African states alike. As Table 1 shows, the mean level of secessionist conflict, which had greatly increased in the 1990s, fell back in the 2000s but to a level significantly higher than in previous decades, at 2.3 cases a year, not including Ethiopian movements (the figures for 2010-12 are based on too few observations to be reliable). Compare this with the levels of the 1970s (0.4) and 1980s (0.7). The higher average post-2000 could suggest a slight erosion in the idea that secessionist conflict is an unacceptable or impractical solution to regional grievances, thus weakening the principle of territorial integrity after the peak of the 1990s and secession of South Sudan.

Table 1. Decade Averages of African Secessionist Activity

	All Africa except Ethiopia	Ethiopia
1960s	1.6	0.6
1970s	0.4	1.6
1980s	0.7	2.3
1990s	3.6	1.2
2000s	2.3	1.9
2010-12	1.7	0.7

Source: based on adjusted PRIO data (see endnote 25).

Looking more carefully at the specific cases since 1990 can shed some light on the data. The first and most obvious trend is the large amount of secessionist conflicts that take place in Ethiopia. On average, since 1990, 35% of all large-scale African secessionist conflicts have involved regions trying to break away from Ethiopia (it was 62% from 1960 to 1989, when Eritrea was still included and the rest of the continent saw significantly fewer such conflicts). Ogaden (officially called the “Somali Regional State”) and Oromiya are the two regions responsible for this Ethiopian tilt in the data. It is only since 2010 that Oromiya is no longer registering sufficient casualties to be in the data. For the 12 previous years it had at least 25 secession-related casualties every year. For Ogaden, this has been the case for 11 of the last 12 years.

The original bump in secessionism around 1990, however, is interestingly not an Ethiopian affair. As a matter of fact, 1993, which sees the recognition of Eritrea, is one of the few years without any large-scale Ethiopian secessionist conflict. Yet, after the new regime in Addis starts reneging on its promises of federalism and local autonomy, Ogaden and Oromiya return to warfare and contribute largely to the subsequent higher continental average. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), particularly, has sustained numerous instances of heavy fighting with the Ethiopian government over the last decade, a violence possibly fueled by the discovery of oil in the region. In March 2009, for example, the ONLF claimed to have killed up to 100 Ethiopian soldiers in two days of heavy fighting that mobilized thousands of ONLF rebels in the towns of Dollo, Darar and Baadilo. In May 2010, it was the turn of the ONLF to suffer some 59 casualties in combats with government forces (*ARB* 2010:18155A, 18055B). The same year, the ONLF reported it had captured an Ethiopian army stronghold and killed 94 soldiers (*ARB* 2010: 18407A). Although a ceasefire was reportedly agreed in 2010, there were still more than 25 casualties from fighting in 2011. As of 2012 there were ongoing negotiations but they appeared stalled due to the government's insistence that the ONLF first recognize Ethiopia's constitution (*ARB* 2012: 19491C). In Oromiya, however, secessionist activity has declined since 2010, although several movements continue to demand independence. The main one, the Oromo Liberation front (OLF), which explicitly called for secession in the 1990s, has adopted a more ambiguous agenda over the last decade, demanding mainly a referendum over self-determination.³¹

One explanation for Ethiopia's exceptionalism is the fact that it was not only never colonized but also very much acted like a colonial power itself, conquering and trading new territories with European colonizers in the late 19th and early 20th century, which is how both Ogaden and Oromiya were acquired under Emperor Menelik II. Unlike the Europeans, however, Ethiopia might still have significant decolonizing to do, as political actors in these regions have sustainably demonstrated a desire to free themselves from Ethiopian control. At any rate, Ethiopia's unique historical background makes it a highly idiosyncratic case from which only limited continent-wide inference can be drawn.

The other large-scale cases are Senegal's Casamance, which shows up in the data ten different years between 1990 and 2012 (but not between 2004 and 2010); Mali's Tuaregs and their Azawad republic, with five instances between 1990 and 2012 (plus two instances among

Niger's Tuaregs); Angola's Cabinda with eight observations but none since 2008; Comoros' Anjouan with one year in 1997 (though its secession continued non violently until 2002), and Somaliland whose secession has been effective but unrecognized since 1991. Since each of these has a chapter in this book, we focus mainly here on the most recent developments among these groups, in part to trace whether South Sudan exerted any influence on their demands and strategies.

The Casamance insurgency has been going on and off since the early 1990s and has been characterized by a long list of poorly implemented peace agreements and a profound tendency towards factionalism within the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques du Sénégal*, MFDC.³² President Abdoulaye Wade was able to avoid large-scale violence after a peace agreement was signed in 2004. Yet, the Senegalese army launched an offensive in March 2010, and violence peaked in December 2011, ahead of the presidential elections, with the MFDC rebels killing an estimated 30 Senegalese soldiers. MFDC factionalism is one of the main reasons this conflict has endured as peace agreements typically result in the excommunication of the negotiators and their faction and the resumption of the fight by some splinter group until next peace accord. There is also a significant amount of banditry now in the region with some of the same actors as the secessionist conflict.

The other major recent resurgence of secessionist activity is accounted for by the Tuaregs of northern Mali in 2012. The first wave of Tuareg insurgency had taken place in 1990-1994, and had then largely been placated by promises of autonomy and government jobs. It resurfaced in 2007-08 as the Malian government started showing signs of decay in its capacity to co-opt and deliver on its commitments. In the 2006 Algiers Accords, Mali had once again pledged to devote resources toward developing the northern region but little was forthcoming, as had already been the case after the 1991 National Pact. Thus significant skirmishes took place in 2007 and 2008 but the military weakness of the rebels and the willingness of President Touré to negotiate tamed them. The overthrow of President Qaddafi of Libya in 2011 reactivated the conflict as it suddenly created a massive imbalance between the rebels, aided by hundreds of heavily armed Tuaregs returning from serving in Qaddafi's military, and the Malian army.³³ The fusion of the new fighters with existing groups engendered the *Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad* (MNLA), led by former Libyan colonel Mohamed Majim.³⁴

Clashes between the MNLA and Mali's army began in January 2012. Criticism of Bamako's handling of the crisis and a lack of efficacy against the northern insurgents culminated in a military coup in March, but this did not prevent the MNLA and other groups like the Islamist Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity of Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) to make rapid territorial progress and take, in short order, the cities of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, effectively controlling the northern half of the country. In June, the MNLA declared the unilateral independence of the Republic of Azawad, possibly as an effort to fend off the rising influence of the other groups. Its control over any territory rapidly dwindled after that as Ansar Dine, MUJAO and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) asserted their dominance and imposed Sharia law over the region, sending the MNLA on the run. In an implicit assertion that secular politics mattered more to them than independence, the MNLA then offered its services to Bamako against AQIM and its allies in the north, officially renouncing their goal of independence and offering assistance in return for autonomy. The situation then stagnated until MUJAO took the town of Douentza, 800 kilometers north of Bamako, an area not considered part of Azawad, in January 2013, which led to a 4,000-strong French military intervention which liberated much of the territory from Islamist rebels, while keeping the MNLA partly in charge of Kidal.³⁵ A partial French withdrawal was subsequently paired with the deployment of a UN peace-keeping mission.³⁶

Cabinda has not witnessed significant secessionist violence since 2007, largely because the Angolan army destroyed the military forces of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) in a 2002-2003 offensive, but the FLEC remains active. It is, however, plagued with factionalism and cease-fire agreements with one group have typically been denounced by other factions. Despite a ceasefire agreement in 2006, lack of solidarity among FLEC factions has resulted in the continuation of low-scale activity, including an attack on Togo's national football team and an Angolan military vehicle in 2010. . In April 2012, Angola offered to participate in peace talks with the remaining separatist activists.³⁷

It does not appear from this brief overview that the CPA or the actual independence of South Sudan had any particular effect on these larger insurgencies. These movements all by and large took off in the early 1990s. One reason they have been ongoing for so long seems to be the failure of peace agreements to hold, largely because of factionalism within the rebel movements

(often encouraged by government maneuvering) and because governments do not typically deliver on their commitments, whether out of bad will or incompetence.

It is worth noting, however, that the years since 2011, and particularly 2013, have seen some resurgence of Katangese secessionism, although the specific goals and motivations of the actors involved remain murky, and domestic politics seem more relevant at this point than any hypothetical link with South Sudan. In February 2011, the Katangese separatist flag was raised at a UN base by attackers who clashed with government forces for three hours. In August, gunmen displaying Katangese red and white headbands attacked Luano Airport in Lubumbashi killing three government troops.³⁸ Another attack of the airport took place in December 2012. The situation escalated in February 2013 as a militia called Bakata Katanga—“cut Katanga off”—first perpetrated exactions in the region of Lubumbashi then briefly invaded the city of Lubumbashi and raised the secessionist flag downtown, before being violently pushed back by government forces at the cost of 35 casualties.³⁹ Although these events would be the first instances of violent secessionism in the province since the 1960s (there were rebellions in the 1970s and 1980s but they were not secessionist), observers suggest that they are more likely to be warnings to the incumbent regime from some Katanga politicians opposed to further decentralization of their province.⁴⁰ *Below the Radar: Insights from Smaller and Ambiguous Cases* While there are relatively few fully fledged secessionist conflicts in Africa, there is a multitude of smaller movements that make at times secessionist demands or at least voice claims to autonomy. What has been the evolution of practice among these movements, particularly since the CPA? For one, it is worth noting that they have not become more violent. In other words, the South Sudan precedent has not so far triggered an upsurge of violence among African secessionists eager for recognition, which suggests that the threshold of humanitarian recognition might indeed have been set too high for it to become an incentive to violence elsewhere. In contrast, the CPA might have boosted a more legalistic evolution, as more and more movements call for a referendum or seem committed to holding one, in contrast to earlier continental practice when rebels did not bother to ascertain or demonstrate popular support. This trend certainly predates both the CPA and the 2011 South Sudan referendum, but the latter seems to have accelerated it and given smaller groups a lifeline of sorts to validate their claims.

Looking at cases over time, the development of a referendum norm appears clearly, although that does not mean referenda are necessarily held in each case. Eritrea had one in 1993;

the Southern Cameroons National Council has been demanding one since 1995;⁴¹ Anjouan held one in October 1997 on independence (99.88% in favor) and in 2000 on a federal solution (defeated); Somaliland held one in 2001; the French had one in Mayotte as recently as 2009 (on the status of Department for the island); South Sudan's took place in 2011; the Ogaden National Liberation Front demanded in 2012 that the Ethiopian government commit to a referendum on secession within 15 years (a right the Ethiopian constitution grants—but the request was turned down), a demand the Oromo Liberation Front has also made; the MNLA tried to organize one online on its web page in 2012 (www.mnlamov.net), although no result were published and the overall effort looked rather amateurish; the POLISARIO Front still demands and awaits its many-times promised one since the Spanish first voiced the intent to do so in 1974 (as of 2012 it remained insistent on a referendum offering the options of autonomy and independence for Western Sahara, while Morocco was only willing to offer regional autonomy—*ARB* 2012:19187BC); the Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation (UAMSHO) demanded a referendum in 2012 on the separation of Zanzibar from Tanzania (*ARB* 2012, 19321A); and, finally, a *Coordination pour le Référendum pour l'Autodétermination du Katanga* called for a referendum on Katangese independence in 2012 while the speaker of the province's parliament, Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, a member of the presidential majority, collected 300,000 signatures petitioning for greater autonomy and the application of a constitutional clause for a greater share of the province's revenue.

What would the map of Africa look like if all these smaller secessionist movements successfully held referenda and obtained recognition, in addition to the larger violent ones discussed in the previous section? Without suggesting any endorsement of their claims, we present such a map here, including some additional smaller and more ambiguous movements not discussed in this book, such as Buganda in Uganda.



Figure 2: The Secessionist's Map of Africa
(Crescents indicate movements with Islamist component.)

Islamism and Secessionism: Two Peas in the Same Pod?

A careful reading of the cases in this book and of the empirical evidence from the last few years indicates that, while South Sudan might not have had a major effect on African secessionism and the rules of postcolonial recognition might have remained by and large stable, a deeper and more radical evolution might be taking place with the increased coincidence of Islamic fundamentalist

and secessionist rebellions in several regions of the continent. This connection is first and foremost ideological. Yet, it also has considerable practical and even accidental dimensions. We try to make preliminary sense of it in this final section and assess its impact on the future of secessionism on the continent.

Islamism as a Secessionist Ideology

Ideologically, the fundamentalist Islamist project can be construed as one of legal separation from the Western state, whether through takeover, conversion or possibly territorial separation. Few Islamists entertain directly the notion of territorial secession (as was made clear for example, when Mali's MUJAO declared their intent to take over and islamicize the entire country rather than satisfy themselves with Azawad), yet their agenda at least implies legal separation from the existing political order and is thus consistent with secession. Compared to most non-religious secessionist movements, especially those that embrace the postcolonial mould, Islamic fundamentalism represents a much more radical questioning of the imported Western state and acquires credibility in part because of its potential to generate external support from international Islamist movements such as al-Qaeda or rich supporters such as Saudi Wahhabists.⁴²

In its political ramifications, Islam offers the idea of a unified state for Ummah, the supranational commonwealth of the believers. The caliphate is the embodiment of the Islamic state, functioning along the precepts of Sharia. Historically, the caliphate had a limited effective reach, but the idea of a potential unifying caliph representing the political descent of Mohammed remained powerful until its extinction at the end of the Ottoman empire in the early 20th century. The restoration of the caliphate by uniting worldwide Muslim populations has considerable appeal and the re-establishment of a united government of Muslims is allegedly one of al-Qaeda's objectives. Although such lofty goals are beyond the reach of the common variety of African and other secessionists, they provide a useful narrative that can sustain separatist conflicts and provide legitimacy to alternative political forms such as local pre-colonial Muslim states (e.g., the Sokoto caliphate in Nigeria or the Zanzibar Sultanate).

As a result, Islamist separatism is particularly radical, threatening as it does the very existence and legitimacy of the Western post-colonial state in Muslim areas, and the very political project it represents. While common secessionism aims at multiplying the number of

Western-inspired states, Islamism seeks to abolish them. Moreover, by addressing deeper issues of political order such as corruption, Islamist separatism also makes moral claims which challenge the modus operandi of the African state and can have great appeal in areas of widespread youth unemployment and alienation, such as Northern Nigeria. For sure, most secessionist groups make fundamental claims about the unfairness of the state towards them, but the Islamist one might be of a more general or abstract scope.

At a more practical level, the correlation between secessionism and Islamism is also somewhat accidental as they both thrive in similar environments and tend therefore to find themselves in proximity to each other in Muslim areas. Zones of lawlessness and trafficking that are also historically Muslim, like much of the Sahara and parts of the East Coast of Africa, lend themselves to both separatism and Islamism. The increase in such lawlessness in the wake of post-1990 state failures, the rising importance of drugs, weapons and migrant trafficking, and these regions' oil potential have contributed to raising their relative political importance and heightened the potential returns for local insurgents, irrespective of their specific goals. Groups like the Tuaregs, for example, have found multiple economic opportunities in such environment and been associated with both secular and religious political movements. By letting loose the multiple militias that existed under his patronage, the fall of Libya's Kaddafi in 2011 gave renewed vigor to groups that had existed in the region for some time and brought about new actors and resources, multiplying the region's lethal potential.

Several chapters in this volume offer considerable evidence on the rise of Islamist separatism. Reading them together gives one a sense of the scope of this new development and suggests it might be one of the furthest reaching trend in African secessionism. Unlike more benign cases of postcolonial separatism, Islamist insurgents appear like poorer candidates for dilution into networks of neopatrimonial co-optation and might thus herald a structural shift in the politics of African countries with Muslim populations.

Nigeria, with its long history of both religious and secessionist conflicts, offers one of the most salient cases. Although the Igbo and Delta regions of the South are the ones best known for separatism, together with an occasional outburst by Yoruba groups such as the Odua People's Congress, it is the North that has provided the terrain for Islamist separatism. It bears repeating that the Sokoto Caliphate, which derives from Usman Dan Fodio's Fulani Jihad against the Hausa kingdoms in the early 19th century,⁴³ was a powerful and spreading political system at the

advent of British colonialism, one which indirect rule largely preserved and which remained active in independence politics (Ahmadu Bello, the premier of the northern region from 1954 to 1966, was a high-ranking member of the Caliphate).

The adoption of Sharia by 13 northern states in 1999, after Obasanjo, a born-again Christian southerner, assumed the Nigerian presidency, represented thus a form of separatism “tantamount to an act of secession” according to a Nigerian constitutional scholar quoted by Harnischfeger in his chapter. In many ways it was an act of treason, rejecting crucial parts of the federal constitution. It is no coincidence that the governor of Zamfara state, the first to adopt Sharia, called for a “new caliphatic order”.⁴⁴ However, the lack of serious religious commitment of the corrupt northern governors led younger and more radical Muslims to create Boko Haram around 2004 (first called “Taliban”), which is opposed to all things Western and, as such, to the Nigerian state too. While Sharia adoption was an elite political move aimed at weakening the new president, Boko Haram is more of a grass-root militant effort. Although it has not historically presented itself as a secessionist movement, its goals include the dissolution of Nigeria as it exists now, and it is increasingly associated with separatist goals. According to Boko Haram, “genuine Sharia can only be practiced in an Islamic state” (Harnischfeger, 14), which implies breaking free of Nigeria or converting all Christians. *Africa Research Bulletin* notes that Boko Haram wants “to restore the Islamic state that once existed [in northern Nigeria] and was ‘destroyed’ by British colonialists’.”⁴⁵

Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya offer a similar case, albeit at much lower levels of violence. Yet, the region’s pre-colonial political history as an Islamic state carries the same type of narrative as in Northern Nigeria. Zanzibar and the strip of coastal mainland it controlled in today’s Tanzania and Kenya was part of the Sultanate of Oman until 1856, when it became its own Sultanate under British patronage. In 1890, both the islands and the coastal strip became a British protectorate. The Tanganyika part of the strip was subsequently purchased by the Germans and merged with Tanganyika, while the Kenyan part remained a distinct British protectorate (as opposed to Kenya which was a colony) until 1961.

The Sultan was quickly evinced from Tanzanian politics during the “Zanzibar revolution” of 1964, which reinforced pro-union political actors on the island for decades to come, as detailed in Greg Cameron’s chapter. Unlike several other African countries, the federal merging of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was not sidestepped by unitary politics, despite some such

tendencies in the 1970s. Thus, Zanzibar retained a considerable degree of autonomy and a preferential position in the federation given its small size, which largely prevented the rise of significant secessionism despite a continuous undercurrent of separatist discourse in island politics. The fact that Julius Nyerere's successor in 1985, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, was Muslim and Zanzibari, probably helped. Yet, there were limits to this autonomy as the island discovered when it was prevented from joining the Organization of Islamic Conference in 1993.

Here too, however, as in many other parts of the world, Islamism's influence has been rising since the outset of the 21st century. While traditional island parties have largely made peace with the union, an Islamic group called UAMSHO (Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation) has demanded a referendum to leave the union because of its secular status, and its activities have involved small riots and the burning of churches.⁴⁶ In Kenya, the grievances of coastal communities, some but not all Arab and Muslims, have found a voice since 2005 in the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), which occasionally demands secession for the strip. The Sultanate provides a convenient historical narrative, which connects loosely with Muslim rule (in 1961 religious protections were extended to the Muslim community). As Willis and Gona suggest, there have been claims that MRC is a "radical Muslim organization linked to al-Shabaab",⁴⁷ though they make it clear that it is broader than that. Kenyan officials themselves claim the MRC is infiltrated by fighters from al-Shabaab.⁴⁸ There are also concerns that the MRC might be funded by Sudan in retaliation at Kenya's support for South Sudan, as well as by some member states of the Arab League, concerned at increased collaboration between Ethiopia, South Sudan and Kenya.⁴⁹ The Kenyan government has taken the MRC threat seriously and has cracked down on its militants after cases of violence linked to the MRC increased in 2013.

The MRC partly relies on the past colonial existence argument, and as such is a very conventional African secessionist movement, reminiscent for example of Barotseland or Anglophone Cameroon in its invocation of alleged past treaties with the British (and in its appeals to the Queen). But the MRC also reawakens the pre-colonial notion of the Sultanate, its Arab and Muslim roots, and as such might represent a more radical challenge to post-colonial Africa. It is no coincidence in this respect that the movement seems to develop around 2005 (about the same time as Uamsho in Zanzibar), at a moment when Islamic counter-narratives to Western domination spread around the world. While no caliphate, the Zanzibari Sultanate offers an alternative, Muslim and pre-Western, blueprint for political order.

Although they cannot rely on an equally powerful pre-colonial narrative, the Tuaregs of Mali provide another particularly interesting case of overlapping Islamist and separatist conflicts and logics. As the chapter by Klute and LeCoq shows, when the Tuareg fighters that returned from Libya set up the MNLA, they allied with Ansar Dine, a relatively new 300-strong Islamic fundamentalist group with links to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Together, they quickly controlled the northern half of Mali's territory. The MNLA issued a unilateral declaration of independence of Azawad in April 2012 but, two months later, they lost control of much of this territory to Ansar Dine and another group, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which sought to impose Sharia in the region.

In the case of Mali, the coincidence of Islamist and separatist insurgencies does not imply that the Islamists also necessarily entertained secessionist aims. Their goal seems to have been more ambiguous. At times they claimed to seek total control of Mali, if only as a first step towards a regional Islamic state. Ansar Dine was quoted as being against Azawad independence and "rebellions not in the name of Islam" and that they were "against the division of Mali and wanted the application of Sharia law in both the north and the south."⁵⁰ It installed Sharia law in the cities and villages under its control, and openly claimed ties to AQIM. There is also some evidence that it received help from Boko Haram militants in the control of the city of Gao, suggesting broader regional collaboration among Islamist groups.⁵¹

Other reports, however, hinted at the possibility of an Islamist separatist state, even if as only a temporary stage. A merger deal was allegedly signed between MNLA and Ansar Dine in Gao with the goal of turning their territory into an Islamist state. Colonel Bouna Ag Attayoub, a MNLA commander in Timbuktu, told BBC "the Islamic Republic of Azawad is now an independent sovereign state."⁵² Illustrating the prevailing confusion among these groups (which also clashed at times), an MNLA spokesman later said the agreement with Ansar Dine would provide for a secular republic.⁵³ It is apparently the question of implementing Sharia which lead to a break up between these two factions and pushed the MNLA to eventually ally with the French in their reconquest of the territory against Ansar Dine and MUJAO.

Other cases with an Islamist dimension include Ogaden, a Somali Muslim region of Christian-dominated Ethiopia. As Sarah Vaughan's chapter makes clear, two Islamic organizations were established in the region in 1991, the Ogaden Islamic Union and the Islamic Solidarity Party-Western Somalia-Ogaden. The former professed Wahabbism and aimed at

“imposing an Islamist state over all of Somali-inhabited East Africa.”⁵⁴ It was also active in Somalia and might have been part of the Islamic Courts after 1997. The latter was led by a founder of the Ogaden separatist insurgency, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). As Vaughan notes, Sheikh Ibrahim Abdella, the ONLF leader “known for his sophisticated Islamic education [and] strong religious views” returned from exile in Saudi Arabia in 1992 and contributed to the resurgence of Ogadeni separatism.⁵⁵ In another example of the ambiguity of territorial goals of Islamist separatists, the Wahhabist group is said to want an Islamist state over the whole Somali area (which covers all or part of five countries). In this case, Ogaden would be a mere stepping stone, in another example of the more radical restructuring of state forms in Africa promoted by Islamist insurgents.

In Western Sahara too, the old Algerian-inspired republican and socialist emphasis of the POLISARIO movement has been challenged by the rising Islamist influence in the region, which was vividly illustrated by the kidnapping of foreign aid workers in a Sahrawi refugee camp in 2011. The UN envoy to the region worried in 2012 that the current stalemate on the referendum would increase the region’s vulnerability to the growing presence of Islamist extremists and militants in the Sahara.⁵⁶

In Algeria, the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie briefly resurfaced in 2010 assembling two demonstrations of thousands of people. In June, a government-in-exile was established in France.⁵⁷ Groups affiliated with AQIM have also been active in the Kabylie region since 2011 and Islamist militants have set up strongholds. A newspaper blamed the increase in Islamic radicalism on the Algerian government’s inactivity.⁵⁸

Finally, as suggested by the chapter on Eritrea, Islam played a role in the articulation of “nationalist aspirations” during the secession war (6). Islam was anti-establishment and clashed with Ethiopia’s Christianity. In the end, however, Islam was downplayed as a building block of Eritrea in favor of the postcolonial narrative, which proved a successful move.⁵⁹

At any rate, the correlation of Islamist and separatist goals among African insurgencies is a new development. A study of secessionism ten years ago would have hardly noticed the Islamist connection. It might represent an important dimension of the future of secessionism on the continent and one that will not be as easy to dissolve in the post-colonial container as previous secessionist waves.

Conclusions

In some regions of Africa, secessionism continues, more than five decades after independences, to provide a powerful and appealing narrative to marginalized political communities and their elites. By and large, however, its translation into sustained military campaign for independence and sovereignty remains rare. The early 1990s saw an increase in secessionist conflicts, but the limited avenues for recognition subsequently slowed its momentum. Only Eritrea came out of it recognized as a new state.

The later recognition of South Sudan as a sovereign state despite its lack of specific colonial status, seemed to provide a dramatic departure from previous practice and to open up renewed opportunities for African secessionists. Yet, as we showed in this paper, South Sudan neither constitutes such a dramatic shift from previous practice, nor has it apparently led *so far* to renewed secessionist activism on the continent. It has, however, possibly contributed to a new culture of the referendum which, if anything, promotes a more legalistic and democratic approach to separatism on the continent.

Possibly more compelling, and of further-reaching consequences, has been the progressive development of an apparent association between secessionism and Islamism, at least in the Sahara/Sahel and on the East Coast. This observation, highlighting a genuinely novel trend as far as we can tell, comes out as a direct contribution of the chapters in this book. Thus, while many secessionist movements calling for sovereignty based on more or less contrived readings of *uti possidetis* within the post-colonial paradigm seem to be running out of steam, Islamist separatism is both a dynamic ideology and an effective mobilizer of combatants. Whatever its own limitations and inherent dangers to individuals and communities, it addresses head-on the intrinsic failures of the African postcolonial state to bring welfare, opportunities and emancipation to its citizens, and is therefore likely to sustain considerable appeal in years to come.

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¹ Jackson and Rosberg 1982.

² Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Herbst 1990. It bears noting that, in adopting such a rule, independent African governments were at least partly reproducing a norm of 19th century European international law, which denied statehood or international legal personality to most indigenous African communities (Allott 1974:112).

³ Jackson 1990:17.

⁴ It originated with the independence of Latin American countries in the early 19th century.

⁵ Dugard 2003.

⁶ It also suffered exceptions in Latin America, as with the secession of Panama from Colombia in 1903.

⁷ Iyob 1997.

⁸ The Southern Cameroons, as UN Mandate, constitute a partial exception. Its population was given the option of joining Nigeria or Cameroon, but not of reaching independence alone. More recently, a referendum organized by the inhabitants of Abyeï at the border between North and

South Sudan to join South Sudan was explicitly deemed unofficial by both countries and condemned by North Sudan.

⁹ Similarly, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde were also recognized as separate sovereign entities after their (admittedly milder) union, adopted at independence, was abandoned in 1980.

¹⁰ Dersso 2012:7.

¹¹ Schomerus and De Vries chapter, p.5 of first draft.

¹² McNamee 2011:9.

¹³ McNamee 2011:20.

¹⁴ See *ARB* 2009:18168A.

¹⁵ This is not so different from the justification of the secession of the United States in the 1776 Declaration of Independence. It was then “self-evident” to Thomas Jefferson that “when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is [the] right [of mankind], it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security”

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html).

¹⁶ Vidmar 2011:12 (see also McNamee 2011).

¹⁷ One possible difference with Kosovo is that it was under UN administration since 1999, with the agreement of Yugoslavia, then the holder of sovereignty over it. Yet, Yugoslavia disappeared in the interim and Serbia claimed the region, which remained under UN administration until its unilateral declaration of in 2008.

¹⁸ Englebert 2013.

¹⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22783890>. By then, however, the MNLA had toned down its demands from independence to mere autonomy.

²⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/19/us-mali-crisis-idUSBRE94I06420130519>.

²¹ *Jeune Afrique*, no 2733, 26 May—1 June 2013.

²² *Le Monde*, 21 June 2013; “MNLA Cedes Kidal,” *Africa Confidential*, 54(13), 21 June 2013.

²³ McNamee 2011:12.

²⁴ Herbst 2000.

²⁵ Using data from the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) to 2008, updated to 2012 by the authors from material gathered in *ARB*, Figure 1 includes instances of secessionist conflicts with at least 25 casualties in a year. Eritrea and South Sudan were removed once they achieved independence. Although violence continued in South Sudan it was no longer secessionist. However, the SPLM, coded as non-secessionist by PRIO for the 1983-2004 period, was re-coded as secessionist. The Afar Liberation Front (Ethiopia), Bundu Dia Kongo (DRC) and the Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (Nigeria) were also removed as their claims are not secessionist (we return to some of them in the subsequent section). Somaliland is included each year since 1991 as it is still seeking recognition and effective secession, despite having remained largely free of violence over that period.

Obviously, the 25-casualty-per-year threshold is an arbitrary rule and one might legitimately wonder whether its focus on separatist warfare hides the dynamics of less violent movements. We adopt it for consistency with other works on civil conflict in and out of Africa (e.g. Collier et al. 2003; Miguel et al. 2004; and Wolfson et al. 2004), and we try to remedy its possible arbitrariness by looking subsequently at smaller cases in qualitative manner. Previous work, however, has suggested that the findings related to separatist conflicts in Africa (and in other regions) using this threshold of violence are generally consistent with the findings derived

from non-violence-based data such as the Minorities-At-Risk's "separatist sentiment" variable (see Englebert 2009:26-32).

²⁶ This reduction is, however, largely due to the fact that South Sudan itself is no longer in the data from 2005 onwards.

²⁷ Déby quoted in McNamee 2012. Qaddafi quoted in <http://www.france24.com/en/20101010-muammar-gaddafi-sudan-secession-danger-africa-libya>.

²⁸ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2009/05/20095721141953829.html>; ARB 2012:19045B.

²⁹ Englebert and Hummel 2005.

³⁰ See chapter by (Schomerus and De Vries).

³¹ ARB 2011: 18815B. On the demands of OLF, see Keller 2005, Shinn 2004, and Smith 2013.

³² See Foucher 2013.

³³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17481114>

³⁴ ARB 2012: 19130B.

³⁵ Several African states also participated in the military operations, first among which Chad, which sent 2,000 troops.

³⁶ All facts in tis paragraph are derived from *African research Bulletin*, multiple issues, 212.

³⁷ ARB 2012: 19238A.

³⁸ ARB 2011:18733A.

³⁹ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-24/congo-rebel-attack-in-katanga-province-leaves-35-dead-un-says.html>.

⁴⁰ "Militants Target Katanga," *Africa Confidential*, 1 March 2013, 54(5).

⁴¹ In 2012, some borderland Nigerian communities, including the Efiks in Bakassi, announced their support of Southern Cameroon's independence and formed an association which allegedly planned to apply to the UN for a self-determination referendum (ARB 2012, 19443A).

⁴² Some political movements based on indigenous religions, such as the largely Kimbanguist Bundu dia Kongo in the Bas-Congo province of the DR Congo also constitute a radical questioning of the post-colonial state but lack the world-wide reach and potential international support of Islamist movements.

⁴³ Loimeier 2007.

⁴⁴ Harnischfeger, p.13 in draft chapter.

⁴⁵ ARB 2012, 19318A. For other interpretations of Boko Haram as separatist, see

<http://thewillnigeria.com/opinion/11140.html>,

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/9030752/Fresh-attacks-kill-nine-in-northern-Nigeria-as-police-hunt-Boko-Haram-bombers.html>, and

<http://www.usip.org/publications/what-boko-haram>.

⁴⁶ ARB 2012:19321A, 19465C. The 1964 union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was never submitted to a referendum but resulted from an agreement among elites.

⁴⁷ Willis and Gona, p.16.

⁴⁸ ARB 2012:19458AB.

⁴⁹ ARB 2012 19351BC.

⁵⁰ ARB 2012: 19243A; 19316C.

⁵¹ ARB 2012:19244B.

⁵² ARB 2012:19277BC.

⁵³ ARB 2012 19278A.

⁵⁴ Vaughan chapter, 17.

⁵⁵ Vaughan chapter, 14.

⁵⁶ *ARB* 2012:19478C-19479AB.

⁵⁷ *ARB* 2012:18380B, 18429A.

⁵⁸ *ARB* 2011:18585A, 18994B.

⁵⁹ *Iyob* 1997.