CHAPTER 2: State Politics and Public Policy in Africa: A State Transformation Perspective

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Abstract

This chapter crafts a state transformation perspective. It conceptualises three kinds of state politics – *politics of domination*, *politics of consolidation* and *politics of participation.* While these forms of state politics may be associated with different phases during the state's political institutionalisation, they operate simultaneously in Africa's political landscape. The result is the creation of complex but functional systems of political and administrative hybridities. Thus, the public policy *as optimal means and ends* remain unclear as governments struggle to realise structures that leverage their legitimacy and popular participation at the same time. A state transformation analysis essentially puts into context the African state's colonial legacies and its journey towards optimising bureaucratic rationality, national integration and democratisation as pillars of the modern state. This chapter's discussion draws on different cases, historical analyses and secondary data to contextualise this perspective in Eastern Africa.

Keywords: National Development Plans; End of History; colonial legacies; State-formation; State-building; Nation-Building; extreme political violence; Agenda 2063; SDGs

Introduction

The scope and strength of the modern state have changed tremendously since the 19th century, and so is its politics and philosophies of ordering its role in contemporary society (Fukuyama 2004; Stepan et al. 2011). A few decades ago, Francis Fukuyama argued that western liberal democracy, having triumphed over rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and communism, remains the ultimate form of organising and governing modern society. According to him, "liberal democracy may [therefore] constitute the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government" (Fukuyama 1992, p.xi), hence *the end of history.* Even though Fukuyama's declaration may seem less contestable from the onset, many commentators find practical flaws in liberalism as a broader governance philosophy for organising state-society relations today (Huntington 1965; Lowi, [1969] 1979; Noble 2004). For our purpose, it mischaracterises the *developing-developed* continuum common in framing state performances and their political institutionalisation, especially when comparing South-South or subregional governance experiences in Africa and similar contexts. Most importantly, the subsequent imposition of the western liberal democracies' recent paths of political development as a blueprint for governing developing countries has remained deeply tendentious in the subject matter of good governance.

While partly handling this many years ago, Samuel Huntington contends that whilst this 'modernisation wave' has witnessed rapid mobilisation and participation; it has also come

with low rates of organisation and institutionalisation of the state in developing countries (Huntington 1965, p.386, also see Higgot 2005; Hyden 1980). The contention is that the optimisation mantra contained in rationalisation principles, national integration, and democratisation as pillars of institutionalising the modern African state has sought to internationalise instead of contextualising African political developments (e.g. Onyango 2022a; Hyden 2022). Despite several attempts, especially at the policy design levels, the missing link remains in identifying and matching state reforms to these countries' state politics or political development stages. In effect, efforts to analyse and realise democratisation and other aspects of political development (progressive and transformative changes) in Africa have resided primarily on deductive generalisations of the Western political conditions (e.g. Hyden 2012). To Huntington (1965), this has rarely generated sufficient generality of application to permit comparative analysis of different situations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa (p.389). They are also devoid of actual experiences of state transformation of Western liberal democracies two centuries ago.

Put differently, among others, the African state's politics and capacity to execute public policies have been "defined in parochial and immediate terms [with] relevance limited to modern nation-states or the emergence of modern nation-states" (Hungtington 1965, p.389). More broadly, and suppose global indices of international development organisations are anything to go by; little consideration has been given to how states get there (Hyden 2021). This means that despite being only born a few decades ago, the expectation has been that African states are supposed to *run* and *perform* like western democracies. However, it has become common knowledge that this frame of understanding and subsequent reform practices has been hinged more on an ahistorical understanding of political developments that generally produced the modern state in Europe. Neverthless, recently global development actors have warmed up to the role of the political and historical contexts characterising state transformation, recognising that reproducing liberal democracy in Africa may not take the same route as Western liberal democracies.

This chapter underscores this political development discourse to craft its state transformation perspective. It begins by echoing Goran Hyden's argument that *democracy* and *development* as aspirations and practices in Africa need to be realised in conditions where governance imperatives reflect African colonial legacies (e.g. Hyden 2021; also see, Mkandawire 2015). Hyden notes that, first, the modern state in Africa was artificially created to reign over multiple ethnic groups who are now politically competing for influence over public resources. The colonial way of forming the state in Africa left behind diverse social identities that are yet to be fully integrated by the state. Therefore, western democracies' political leadership or public policy tools like elections remain highly contested in Africa. In essence, political developments that eventually institutionalised electoral competition and currently inform the functioning of government in Europe have yet to stabilise or become a norm in the African state's social fabric.

Second, African society's political economies are still largely 'natural' or Agrarian (Hyden 1980;2021; Boone 2003). They are not a product of socio-economic *ruptures* like industrial revolutions in Europe that eventually phased out traditional institutions and resulted in the restructuration of economic production and governing processes. Even though some African countries experienced revolutions like Rwanda's *Muyaga*, these did not usher effectively modern state's political developments. For instance, the modern African state still lacks vibrant political parties and interest groups based on differentiated ideologies or agendas on public policy. In this way, good governance, with its somehow 'strict construction' of democracy and neoliberalism's market-oriented governing principles, has accumulated substantial criticisms for being inappropriately coupled with African contexts. In particular, the subsequent one-size-fits-all blueprints for political transformation work on a different script, hence recent efforts, especially by the mid-2000s, to replace them with fit-the-context policy frameworks (e.g. see the 2017 Human Development Report). This trend is explicit in AU's Agenda 2063 and other locally tested and functional systems that have accelerated the demand for homegrown political and policy solutions.

African leaders have become bolder in charting their own development paths, as evidenced by their Look-East foreign relations; a scenario that has witnessed infrastructural development in some states. Some of these development paths have often involved locally viable political compromises, which have led to either abandoning altogether or devising structures that complement the democratisation agenda.

In other words, the external or donor influence is relatively withering away, despite still fairly playing varied roles across policy sectors and countries in Eastern Africa. Slowly local solutions are increasingly sought after, and donors have learnt to leave more locally sensitive policies to governments (e.g. Muhumuza 2022) while designing and influencing those with spillover effects or complex policy problems like terrorism and climate change. However, relatively weaker states' governing processes are still highly influenced by international development partners more than others. As such, this chapter anchors an understanding of the African state's politics and policy structures to its levels of *development* and *democratising* characteristics (Hyden 2021). We consider the African state as still mainly dealing with political legacies or conditions of state formation and politics of state-building while at the same time leveraging nation-building policies. Understanding how policymaking works in these contexts needs to interrogate the state's colonial foundations, reform patterns and political compromises, some of which have found their way into the countries' constitutions.

This being the case, the state's transformation connotes the net effect of the state's political developments (or under-development), which draw on a complex mix of internal and external factors. Samuel Huntington views political development as dealing with all aspects of modernisation specific to institutionalising (or un-institutionalising) political organisations and procedures (Huntington 1965, p.386). He mainly narrows his analyses to aspects of rationalisation, national integration and democratisation (or participation). This chapter's

state transformation perspective shows that most developing countries, especially in Africa, are still wrestling with realising these aspects. This is mainly because they still host political institutionalisation phases that entrench particular political conditions that do not effectively leverage political and administrative aspects that characterise modern public policy, as seen in the Western world.

This manner of analysis means that a state transformation perspective underpins the inter-fertilisation or processes between the state and society's socio-cultural and political fabrics and how socio-cultural identities and the state legitimise each other. In this case, related governing activities, outcomes, and structures should consolidate the state's control and responsibility for the community's collective interests. In the process, the state takes on its public policy nature, subsequently building its legitimacy as the guarantor, the insurer and protector of the collective good of the society. Such a view would also allow us to pinpoint fallacies in the global indices of how developing countries *ought to* instead of how they perform in enhancing nation-building policies. As contends Hyden (2021), global indices put African countries that have started at a low scale at a disadvantage besides giving us the picture of the ideal or the optimal but not how Western democracies got there in the first place.

The proceeding sections explore these dimensions further. This begins by articulating the state as a concept before linking it to Stepan et al.'s (2011) *state-nation* vs *nation-state*. The state-nation is overstretched beyond its three categories: nominal state-nation and unified state-nation. This stretching considerably distinguishes Eastern African state-nations from others like Belgium and Spain that Stepan et al.'s categorisation may broadly band together. For example, Ethiopia and Belgium are under a similar category despite experiencing different state politics and belong to varying phases of political institutionalisation. Thus, the additional two models emphasise the varying degree of state institutionalisation underpinned by their unique political developments. Sections after this discuss the political conditions of each phase of state transformation or political institutionalisation. This is done with regard to aspects of bureaucratic rationalisation, national integration (nationalism, citizenship) and democratisation. The last section concludes with a general overview.

The State vs Nation: Conceptualising the African state

In many respects, the state emerged from ancient 'community-nations', which expanded their influences to neighbouring communities. Earlier definitions like that by Aristotle understood "the State [as] an organised social group that enjoys an absolute freedom to develop its own existence" (Nunez 1964, p.255). Today, however, definitions of the state broadly look into institutional or legal and sociological (or the legitimacy) aspects. The *institutional aspects of statehood* underscore the consolidation and legitimation of the central authority over other public authorities, mainly focusing on the functions of the state in a society. The *sociological aspects* delve into Durkheiminian's analysis of the evolution of the state's socio-political cohesive variables, describing the state's endogenous formations, legitimacy and political developments. Examples of institutional definitions of the state are

visible in the Weberian descriptions of the state, which have primarily informed current reform discourses on capacity-building or nation-building projects in developing countries (Fukuyama 2004; Lemay-Hébert 2009). With modernisation or the need for the state to remain relevant, other latest definitions of a state converge around institutional characteristics, mainly bordering on rationalisation, integration and democratisation. In this way, these definitions have only tended to develop new institutional models concerning state performance. However, the state transformation variables involve a complex mix of institutional and sociological aspects of the state and nation.

Conversely, nationhood interrogates further the state's degree of exclusion and inclusion of different identities or groups in society. Marx (2002) notes that a focus on nationhood pays attention to the ownership of the state by a group of people (community), a process Jean Jacques Rousseau described as a proto-nationalist. In this manner, even though the state and nation co-occur, the state comes first, and nation-building follows. The reverse can also be true, but this is rare today. In whichever order, posits Marx (2002), "the nation-state" implies, if not impels, convergence, though we know that in reality, there has rarely been such neat convergence" (p.104).

Based on this, Stepan et al. (2011) contend that "the territorial boundaries of the state [are expected to] coincide with the perceived cultural boundaries of the nation" (p.1). This way, statehood entails initial steps of structuring the community, whether diverse or homogeneous, in their social identities, and then nationhood is the process of state institutionalisation. Overall, today's political societies host socio-cultural diversities that may hardly qualify or allow them to attain nationhood status (Stepan et al., 2011). That is to say; a few countries can relatively achieve the *straight jacket* characterisation of the nation-state. States today, including those close to nation-states, have some rough edges and rugged characteristics and, in many ways, bear conditions of *limited statehood* (Risse et al., 2018). This places them somewhere in-between the continuum of political developments that distinguishes the state from the nation. Stepan et al. (2011) build on deficits underlying the Western ontologies of statehood *vs* nationhood (also see Huntington 1965) and stipulate the state-nation concept before contrasting it to the nation-state. The state-nation characterises a state with loose socio-cultural cohesion.

The difference between nation-state and state-nation is that the former develops through *organic homogenisation.* In contrast*,* the state-nation emerges from the *manufactured integration of consensus* among major political players presumed to represent major communities (Hyden 2021, p.13). Also, when it comes to citizen participation and rights, there is acceptance of a single national or political identity in the nation-state and citizens are treated as right holders. On the contrary, there are multiple identities as citizens tend to equally belong to their communal identities besides the national political identity in the state-nation. The result is that, in most cases, the state is the right holder in state-nation (Hyden 2021), depending on political development levels of democratisation which concerns citizens' rights and those of the state. The rivalry over state power is based on

identity-based groups, contrary to the nation-state. Participation as a component of democratisation primarily revolves around tribal authorities. Politics is affective and parochialised and occurs in competition between interest groups, political parties, and the assimilation of new groups (Hyden 2021, p.13). This means that, at the state-formation stages, the nation-state is more likely than state-nations to produce and consolidate democratic political culture and systems at the state-building stages. However, history has shown that institutionalising democratisation composites have no definite timelines and remain contingent on many factors.

In Joel Migdal's analysis, state-nation needs well-protracted institutionalisation of its input and output apparatuses because of the absence of organic homogenisation. Going about this has remained the subject of extensive discussions in Africa and is central to the theorisation of African public policy (e.g. Hyden 2022; Tapscott 2022). In Migdal's *State-in-Society* approach, the state should transform the society into its own image and practices. The practices, mainly rationalisation, national integration and democratisation composites, fortify the state's image of dominion and territorial perceptions internally and externally (Migdal 2004). Stepan et al. (2011) clarify this by considering some socio-cultural variations hinged on the degree of cultural uniformity to distinguish between what may look like a nation-state and a state-nation. Their analysis shows that the more the state transforms the society into its own image and practice, the more it addresses threats attendant to socio-cultural identities like secessionism and *coup d'états*. To Stepan and colleagues, categorising state-nation or nation-state, therefore, resides in the extent of their socio-cultural diversity as shown in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: *Categorisation of state-nation or nation-state*

Categories	Degree in Socio-cultural diversity	State Model
Category 1	Deep cultural diversity, Some are territorially based and politically articulated by significant groups. Potential secessionist claims of independence in the name of nationalism and self-determination	*State-nation,* e.g. Ethiopia, Spain, Canada, Belgium, India, Ghana etc
Category 2	Culturally quite diverse, Diversity is rarely organised by territorially based politically significant groups mobilising nationalist claims for independence.	*State-nation*, e.g. the USA, Switzerland, Eritrea, South Sudan, Rwanda etc
Category 3	Culturally homogeneous enough Dominates the state, and no other significant group articulates similar claims.	*Nation-State*, e.g. Japan, Norway, South Korea

Author's summary of Stepan et al. (2011, pp.1-2).

From these categories, it is evident that the political institutionalisation of state nations differs depending on contextual modalities and how these patterns their social integration processes. For example, the United States and Eritrea, Ethiopia and Canada may fall in the same categories analytically despite falling under different state transformation stages of political institutionalisation. It is also impractical to broadly categorise Somalia and Belgium or Spain in a similar category using a diversity of social identities. The former is more amorphously embedded and seems to exist in name alone. That being the case, we can add two semi-categories: One we may call *nominal state-nation* to differentiate, for example, between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Spain or Somalia and Canada. Stepan et al.'s (2011) analysis may broadly band together these as state nations due to their deep cultural diversity and claims of independence. The second category is the one we can call *unified state-nation* to distinguish between relatively advanced political developments that characterise a country like the United States, which is more politically institutionalised in its social fabrics than Rwanda, for example.

However, nominal and unified state nations also remain broad categories. They vary substantially in their degree of political institutionalisation, with some having relatively realised democratic political systems, policy regimes and national citizenship identities. In context, the Somalian state, Cyprus, Haiti, Syria, Lebanon, and DRC are nominal state-nation because they are relatively too weak to stand on their own. They have relied on foreign or regional organisations' military support to assert internal sovereignty. A nominal state nation's communal or tribal spaces of public authority are more robust than formal spaces of public authority. Hence, their socio-cultural identities are significantly deeply diverse and may be more successful in realising secession claims.

However, a nominal state nation is not equivalent to *a failed state,* although a failed state can still be part of a nominal state-nation. The difference is that the nominal state-nations have yet to undergo substantial changes in their political institutionalisation to consolidate their systems within their socio-cultural and political fabrics fully. They fall somewhere between the state-formation and early state-building phases of political institutionalisation. Therefore, a failed state refers to conditions of aborted political institutionalisation efforts, connoting Samuel Huntington's political decay or political under-developments after the state has made strides in state consolidation. Examples include Libya, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, etc. Thus, categorisation by socio-cultural diversity does not present realities undergirding state transformations or institutionalisation. Therefore, Stepan and his colleagues' categories have underlying sub-categories. *Table 2* below stretches Stepan et al.'s (2011) categories into four broad categories.

Table 2.2: S*tate-nation or nation-state models – nominal state, state nation and nation-state*

Categories	Degree in Socio-cultural diversity	State Model

Category 1	Deep cultural or social identity diversity Other groups are almost exercising complete territorial autonomy Central authority sometimes exists with the support of military support. The state's territorial boundaries only exist because of its international recognition.	***Nominal state-nation***, e.g. Somalia, Haiti, DRC, Mali, Lebanon, Syria, Burundi, Djibouti, etc.
Category 2	Deep cultural diversity, Some are territorially based and politically articulated by significant groups. Potential secessionist claims of independence in the name of nationalism and self-determination	***State-nation***, e.g. Venezuela, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Canada, India, Ghana, Uganda, etc
Category 3	Culturally quite diverse, Diversity is rarely organised by territorially based politically significant groups mobilising nationalist claims for independence.	***Unified State-nation***, e.g. Mauritius, the USA, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Eritrea, etc
Category 4	Culturally homogeneous enough Dominates the state, and no other significant group articulates similar claims.	***Nation-State***, e.g. Denmark, Japan, Norway, South Korea, etc

Source: Author

Even though some Eastern African states fall within nominal state-nation and state-nation categories, most like Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania have made tremendous efforts recently toward creating a unified state-nation. They have reduced the territorial claims or political significance of different groups' calls for independence; hence they fall between the second category of state-nation and unified state-nations. Mauritius, the only state with full democracy status, according to the 2021 democracy index, is more unified to almost the degree of the nation-state. Put differently, even though Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda are still struggling to eliminate threats to cultural identities, these countries have somewhat built their national political identity over time. State systems have effectively become institutionalised and mould a participating society (democratisation). At the same time, those like Burundi, Djibouti, Somalia, Comoros and DRC remain primarily threatened by deep cultural identities. So, they have little control over some parts of their territorial jurisdictions or identities, hence variedly falling in the stretched category of nominal state-nation.

State Transformation Phases

The cohesive socio-political forces that undergird state construction take time to fuse cultural identity claims to the state's national or political identity claims, and the reverse may be true. This transformation bears different political development characteristics in the nationhood journey, broadly divided into i) state-formation, characterised by *state politics of domination*, ii) state-building, featuring a *state politics of consolidation*; and iii) a nation-building phase where state politics feature *politics of participation*. These are illustrated in

Table 2.3 below. Notably, state transformation modalities reside in contextual and external environments, which again pattern the modes of political transformation, e.g. political settlements or transformation, transplacement and foreign intervention modes (see Haynes 2001). We may also need to register now that despite the lack of a clear relationship between the degree of statehood and effective governance (e.g. Lee et al. 2014), some components of governance are more likely to thrive in some political developments than others.

More significantly, governance as control and steering need some domestic attributes of political institutionalisation associated with consolidated stages of state-building or nation-building. These include "constitutional order and political stability, attained through the formation of a settled government framework, reliable procedures for leadership succession, and a consolidation of the territorial administrative reach of government institutions."[i] These should naturally generate rationalisation, national integration and democratisation. The proceeding sub-sections attempt to characterise different phases of state transformation and inherent state politics. This looks into rationalisation, citizenship or national integration, and democratisation as the dependent variables of the state's political institutionalisation or transformation, as summarised in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: *state's political institutionalisation phases vs rationalisation, integration and democratisation*

TRANSFORMATION PHASES	RATIONALISATION	INTEGRATION	DEMOCRATISATION	STATE POLITICS

STATE-FORMATION	State power is highly personalised Prioritising regime and political stability/control Centralised logic of administration Political action/rewards based on loyalty/patronage Development directed to sustain regime interest Administrative systems or policy venues are not well-entrenched or structured to serve the public interest	The deeply divided and hostile relationship between diverse social groups/coercion is instrumental The population is not well defined Contested state sovereignty internally and sometimes externally. Ethnic nationalism over political/national nationalism The traditional authorities are more legitimate. Representation through traditional leaders/Inter-tribal alliances as collective political bargaining platforms	Iron hand rulership political control is the paramount priority to the regime. Personalised rule/ authoritarianism Military rule. The government/state is highly contested and challenged by the majority Banditry/Secessionist claims may be common	**Politics of Domination** imposition/colonization
STATE-BUILDING	Formal representation, e.g., growing legislative processes The government is acceptable to the broader society Centralised & decentralised logic of administration Development is towards national cohesion Administrative systems or policy venues are relatively well-entrenched	Growing Constitutional rights and contractual relationships between leaders and their constituents Growing political/national nationalism The traditional authorities are more legitimate.	Neopatrimonial Hybrid/political control is the paramount priority of the regime/ growing forces of democracy. Decentralised between institutions and local elected leaders Hybrid/democratising Stabilising party systems Growing state-society relations Elections may or may not lead to political transition	**Politics of Consolidation** Elite political settlements Structural reforms Constitutional reforms Foreign intervention
NATION-BUILDING	Functional Accountability mechanisms Highly regulated	Relatively functional Social cohesion Citizenship/nationalism	Developing Universal developing political culture Functional political responsiveness Political representation Political accountability	**Politics of Participation** Citizens are rather engaged in self-organising activities Civil society/protests functional political parties

Source: Author

State-formation as Politics of domination

The term state formation has been "commonly used to describe the long-term processes that led to the genesis of modern political domination in the form of the territorial sovereign state" (de Guevara and Lottholz 2015, p.1). However, state-formation is loosely used synonymously with state-building and nation-building concepts in recent times. Therefore, they have been bundled together with different components of state institutionalisation and politics. This is evident in state construction in Africa, where strategies akin to various state transformation stages or political institutionalisation realities have been demystified as development partners push for effective politics of participation. This lack of consideration of the state's levels of political development has led to framing policy problems confronted by African states and their capacities differently. This mix-up, for example, can explain current ongoing nation-building or democratic projects in South Sudan and Eritrea that, despite only being formed recently and lacking the capacity and norms for a democratic system, are pushed to practice democratic governance effectively. Nominal state-nations like Mali, DRC and Djibouti are pressured to hold free and fair elections despite having no such capacity or culture.

Generally, the modern African state's transformative processes pick from a colonial state that amalgamated; through direct rule, indirect rule and assimilation methods, culturally diverse community-states into its own image and practices. This image and practices were predatory and meant to entrench racial domination by the colonialists; a culture that most countries are yet to shed off today. The colonial state invented and prevailed on politics of domination. Naturally, the state embedded a system of inequality, a class-based and bifurcated society that assigned citizenship and access privileges to different groups (Friedman 2021, p.90). Efforts to rectify this political situation became the major preoccupation of the independence leaders, as demonstrated by the wave of *African socialism* in the 1960s. However, whereas others like Tanzania witnessed intentional efforts, others like Kenya reinvented the colonial state's mechanisation of domination. Some like Madagascar and Rwanda (especially French colonies) underwent long-term political chaos or stalemate in finding a working political formula. And the impact of the mode of colonisation in these countries still lingers today; a scenario that partly explains the overarching convergences and trajectories.

It is worth noting that the impact of colonisation as a means of state formation may relate mostly to the design or type of colonisation. Here, the extent to which colonial systems were institutionalised is a critical differentiating factor, which leads us to two key categories: *colonisation as settlement* and *colonisation as an occupation*. In the former, the impact of colonisation on the colonised societies was more disruptive. It sought to replace and redesign the entire social, economic and political structures, ultimately aligning them to the settlers' own systems and cultures (Mamdani 2020). Most known examples under this category include Anglo-Saxon settlers in England, forming the Kingdom of England, the Boers in South Africa, the English settlers in the United States and Australia, etc.

As Mamdani (2020) argues, political identity here becomes a historical, not a natural, function. This further leads us to distinguish between state formation (state domination)

and nation formation (communal domination toward statehood). The state formation from colonial settlement entrenches institutional penetration and domination by the ruling elite while excluding the dominated groups. These were evident in the colonialists' direct rule and assimilation methods. This way, the elimination, assimilation of other groups or disenfranchisement of the 'native' and other groups from participating in state power is a feature of state politics of domination.

Colonisation by occupation primarily embeds the foreign state's systems as a force of extraction, be it natural or human resources, for the economic development of the colonising state. Despite introducing major institutional readjustments for effective political control, colonisation by occupation left social and political structures intact in most instances. Examples under this category include colonisation experiences in Asia and Europe, such as the Chinese occupation of Korea and the Napoleonic empire in Europe. In European, Asian and pre-colonial African experiences, colonisation by occupation, in most exemplary cases, expanded the borders of the colonising state and assimilated the colonised. The Sokoto caliphate and Abyssinia are good examples here. In general, state formation was externally and internally dependent on the colonisers' and local actors' capabilities (either by extreme violence or otherwise) to dominate and assert self-determination or political control.

In Africa, both types of external state domination established a state in most cases. The indirect rule describes colonisation by occupation; for example, Uganda, Tanzania, and Djibouti, among others, were largely protectorates. Ethiopia was also occupied by Italy briefly. Kenya, like Zimbabwe, experienced aborted colonisation by settlement but after successful colonisation by occupation. These imperatives are important in discerning the paths of state formation and transformation in Eastern Africa today. They created varying path dependence problems for state transformation towards rationalisation, democratisation and national integration.

Most importantly, the impact of European colonisation on Africa's state-formation bore very distant socio-cultural proximities to those of African societies; hence the limited scope of state institutionalisation. This is different from European or Asian colonisation experiences, which were largely regionally based occupations. The colonisers and colonised societies arguably had closer socio-cultural proximities that could easily be leveraged into state formation and state-building projects. For example, Chinese Confucianism or Buddhism as socio-cultural and political philosophies of organising and governing societies were not far-fetched and problematic for the Joseon or Korean dynasties and other regional colonies to adopt and use in their own state formation and building processes. Further, colonisation in Africa was short-lived, unlike in other regions like Latin America, to allow time for complete implantation and fusion of institutional processes between colonial state structures and socio-cultural structures of the colonised (Hyden 2013).

In addition, colonial systems were already being contested at home. Put differently; the colonisers established state systems in Africa that were actively undergoing reforms back home. For example, by the late 19th century, corruption had become a significant problem in

the United Kingdom, leading to the enacting the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1906. It was until recently that this act was abolished in countries like Kenya. In short, the rationalisation of state processes still deals with colonial legacies in most Eastern African states. It is worth remembering that to overcome similar oppressive images of the state in Europe two centuries ago, especially those that entrenched by the monarchy or structures of inequality like Feudalism, the European and Asian state-nations underwent substantial rupturing processes of political development. Most European states underwent a series of civil wars and revolutions during their state formation phases until the 18th and 19th centuries. We learn from this that extreme violence is a critical component of state formation, not a failure. The two world wars later consolidated these internal political development processes in states' relations regionally and internationally. Most African states strive toward this dimension of state institutionalisation through the African Union and different Regional Economic Communities (see *Part IV* of this book).

Relatedly, modern political developments in Europe and parts of Asia saw the abandonment of traditional authorities in contexts where they stood in the way of democratisation or popular participation. China's Qing dynasty, Russia's Tzars and France's Monarchies are good examples. However, the same institutions were reformed and integrated into new political dispensations in contexts where they seemingly midwifed modern state's institutionalisation toward democratisation. This was the case in the United Kingdom, Japan and most European countries today. This being the case, unlike in former colonial states like the United States, where state formation and state-building proceeded via home-grown *rupturing* processes*,* especially in the forms of large-scale civil wars and revolutions, African state-building processes hardly broke away from the state's colonial past, as still evident in former French colonies in West Africa today. In most cases, these legacies and attendant reform efforts have undermined state institutionalisation. We have witnessed an enduring exclusion of particular group(s) from participating in the exercise of state power, as was the case in Rwanda's Hutu revolution or political stalemates in South Sudan or power-sharing scenarios in Madagascar.

However, it is worth noting that the degree and model of foreign interference also matter. Over the years, largely locally driven interventions and sometimes with minimal or indirect foreign interventions have often produced positive outcomes in stopping the recurrence of extreme political violence in African countries and similar contexts. The executive's political leadership or idiosyncratic characteristics have also played a critical role under such circumstances. For instance, the non-interference by the International Community during the 1994 civil war in Rwanda could have arguably produced a home-grown resolution that set Rwanda on a path toward state consolidation. Even so, President Paul Kagame's role remains critical in Rwanda's journey toward nationhood now the country enjoys political stability and unexpected economic development record. He is presented with a unique opportunity to realise a stable foundation that would enable Rwanda to escape from reverting to civil war in the future, which essentially lies with creating solid structures for

popular participation. However, it remains to see how President Kagame's longevity in power will be different from most African leaders whose long staying in power have often betrayed their initial intentions of steering the state to the next level. Visionary statesmen like Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore demonstrate how leadership characteristics of political leaders are essential at the state-formation and state-building phases. Historically, such leaders embarked on unconventional and sometimes most unpopular methods of state formation.

In Africa's state-building story, the continent largely missed out on leaders who are 'builders,' who can visualise and realise a democratic state. Instead, they have pursued *politics of domination,* leading to stalled political developments (e.g. regular elections without political transition) anchored on negative autocratisation and consolidation of executive power while reducing other critical institutions into stooges. To Huntington (1965), this lack of institutional autonomy has seen "groups gain entry into politics without becoming identified with the established political organisations or acquiescing in the established political procedure" (p.402). Also, personalised power and consolidation structures hinder the growth of an autonomous elite group critical in steering state formation and state-building processes that would alternatively stimulate democratic political culture.

By default, the modern state thrives with a relatively autonomous elite class that should be adjacently positioned (in organised groups, e.g., political parties) to the central authority. These autonomous elite groups should provide *consciousness* to power. Pre-colonial African political structures confirm that elite groups like *abataka* in the ancient Buganda Kingdom (Musisi 19991) relatively constrained the central authority from pursuing political decisions that threatened the state. Outside Africa, we see the same in the political factions in the ancient Joseon dynasty, Feudal lords in Japan (*kazoku* – later organised within the House of Peers that has so far evolved into the modern House of Representatives) and the British (now transformed into House of Lords) empires.

Even though these elites existed in some colonial states, especially in settler colonies, subsequent post-independent political developments created a neo-patrimonial system that constrained the emergence of an autonomous elite class that could effectively moderate the central authority's high-handedness. For example, in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, elites were created or co-opted by the central authority to promote the ruling party's interests or the president's personalised power. Generally, colonialism as an instrument of state formation in Africa displaced traditional sources and authorities of elite development, creating a new breed that would mainly draw their being from and survive at the mercy of the central authority. In addition, unlike former settler colonies in North America and Australia, the model of political transition during decolonisation did not allow many African countries to navigate their democratisation paths or restructure their political and governing systems. As shown in Table 2.3 above, rationalisation, national integration, and democratisation are relatively absent at the state formation stage; hence, state

institutionalisation deficit problems. Most Eastern countries are still dealing with these problems, including banditry or cattle rustling in Uganda and between Kenyan and Ethiopian borders, secessionist claims, civil wars, etc. Most importantly, state transformation through processes of state continuity like through foreign interventions in Mali, has delayed political institutionalisation or perpetuated political underdevelopment in DRC and Djibouti.

State-building as Politics of Consolidation

The state-building phase creates new governmental institutions and strengthens existing ones (Fukuyama 2004, p.17). While state formation has historically occurred through coercive imposition, either by state or community domination, state-building occurs mainly through reforms, alliances and negotiations that underpin politics of consolidation. This means state-building involves harnessing or creating political institutionalisation processes to establish constitutional order and a more negotiated or imposed governing framework to enhance political stability and elite coherence. While in the European contexts, state-building historically preceded nation-building (Linz 1993), the same cannot be said of African countries following the complex mix of colonial structures and foreign intervention norms or reforms in state-building processes.

Somewhat, state transformation in Africa has balanced state-building and nation-building processes since independence resulting in some kinds of hybrid political systems. Like the state formation phase, state-building exists in its degree of political institutionalisation, thereby placing countries differently within it. In Eastern Africa, countries like Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea and South Sudan are conceptually still caught between state formation and state-building challenges. Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania are at relatively advanced state-building sub-stages that combine nation-building characteristics. Thus, both cases deal with colonial legacies differently. Another thing, unlike in the state formation phase, state-building has been historically embedded in sound governing philosophies to jump-start or set the state towards a path specific to its past and future aspirations as a nation-state.

The strengthening of existing state institutions at the state-building phase mainly involves merging the formal and functional informal or traditional spaces of public authority. This takes on political settlement aspects among key elite groups or communities and coercion, as already demonstrated in the case of Britain and Japan. This means that state-building leverages rationalisation processes that would effectively order and organise all public authority spaces, including modes of production. These rationalisation efforts should enhance the effective implementation of substantive policy instruments to create an elaborately controlled development system. In the absence of such a controlled development system, state-building may experience an arrested or barricaded development, especially when informal public authorities remain un-organised or are not integrated into the bureaucratised state image and practices (see, Hyden 1980; Boone 2003).

Africa's independent leaders had limited leeway in overhauling the colonial system in a political world divided between socialism and capitalist development ideologies. Instead, it was easier to re-organise state-building strategies around these ideological lines. The consequent rationalisation and national integration strategies failed to govern some ungoverned spaces effectively. Even though they may have achieved limited success, these post-independence state-building experimentations had greater consequences decades after. While President Nyerere relatively succeeded, especially on national integration fronts, Ghanaian's Nkurumah and Zambian's President Kaunda largely failed in realising their Socialist or Humanist ideologies. President Kenyatta set Kenya onto the capitalist development agenda with serious market failure regulations.

Still, the flipside of President Nyerere's *Ujamaa* structures may have resided in *Ujamaa*'s pre-modern foundations (Hyden 1980) that could not effectively endow the modern state with the capacity it needs to rationalise the needed development. Also, in the 1960s, Uganda succumbed to problems of state-formation, and the leadership contended with traditional institutions' challenge to its central authority, an issue that seems to have only settled down in the 2000s. Madagascar is yet to find its footing on popular participation and has since the 1960s been on a political violence rollercoaster until recently. Rwanda was also struggling with state-formation legacies as social diversities challenged the community domination. Ethiopia has been undergoing political decay. Somalia, Seychelles and DRC were ethnically and regionally divided, weakening the central authority and eventually overthrowing their governments. With most countries having no sound post-independent structural or national-integration foundations, external influences remain key in setting the agenda for state-building, but with a few tweaks in some countries depending on political feasibilities locally. Therefore, political developments that seemingly divorced state structures from colonial times have been primarily incremental. African states are now learning to abandon some institutional or structural setups (e.g. reducing financial dependence and improving intercontinental trade). Trials and errors have undoubtedly characterised these developments.

This trend has been evident in generations of state-building reforms across Africa and has been intended to bolster the input-output mechanisms of their political systems. While public interest or citizen rights is generally opaque in the state-building phase, citizenship consciousness emerges. In some instances, citizens begin to engage with invited policy spaces effectively. Still, the *public policy as optimal means and ends* remain unclear as governments struggle to create structures that leverage their legitimacy and popular participation. Consequently, policy outputs or subsequent policy systems arise from attempts to comply with set international standards rather than being primarily embedded in home-grown citizen pressures on the government. The result has been that citizens have not adequately learnt how to use their political muscles, hence weak citizen oversight in most political spaces. However, this does not discount the presence of an emerging citizen's invented participation spaces of action. Evidence shows that citizens are now forming and

becoming members of civil societies, political parties, trade unions, etc. These spaces, however, remain loosely hinged and may be short-lived depending on the political regime in place (see *Chapter 14* below).

Therefore, it is common to experience extreme conditions of institutional disorder during the state-building phase. Because political institutionalisation is still dealing with teething problems of state formation. For example, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the United States government structures wrestled with extreme disorganisation, dishonesty, haphazardness, amateurism, etc. (Waldo 1952; Wilson 1887). Also, corruption was prevalent in its legislative and governing practices, which Goodnow (1900) attributed to the state's colonial roots. The same has been identified in former British colonies in Africa. In other words, in state-building phases of political institutionalisation, the state deals with the *development* and *democratising* problems, whereby development tends to be delinked from democratisation concerns, as seen in most African countries today (Hyden 2021). These countries are still dealing with extreme poverty, deprivation, insecurity, inequality, and other problems that may sometimes call for more practical and immediate solutions that democracy does not seem to provide. Therefore, democracy falls at the *optimal end* of organising and ordering society, governing mechanisms and processes, which is only realisable once the state is consolidated and politically institutionalised.

Nation-building politics or Politics of Participation

Nation-building is about sustaining progress achieved in the gruelling journey of state-building and, as such, resides more in the quality of government institutions. Today's public policy orientation of the state is primarily a nation-building function. Public Policy becomes an optimisation instrument for realising nationhood at one particular occasion or period. As contained in international and regional policy frameworks, more recent nation-building strategies in Eastern Africa are found in the National Development Plans (NDPs). These NDPs align international development cooperation policy frameworks with the national governing landscape (Onyango 2022a). For example, Uganda adopted its NDP in 2013 (vision 2040); Tanzania and Burundi are currently implementing their vision 2025; Kenya's vision 2030 was adopted in 2008, and Ethiopia revised its *Growth and Transformation Plan* in 2021 to be implemented until 2030. Regionally, African Union's *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* stipulates 7 Aspirations and 20 Goals for achieving nationhood in Africa. These should be linked to the United Nations' Agenda 2030 or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Therefore, nation-building is about achieving a relatively harmonious co-existence and interoperability between the state's social, economic, and political pillars, as detailed in Agenda 2063 and SDGs. It is about creating functional social systems and the inclusiveness of political and economic systems. It involves building social capital, public trust, accountability, and inclusivity as desired in most Eastern African countries' National Social Protection, National Cohesion and Integration strategies, National Gender policies, etc. Nation-building processes are hinged on democratisation repertoires, including the accountable, responsive, representative and autonomous functioning of government,

democratic political culture, expanded civil liberties, and pluralistic electoral processes, as used in the contemporary democracy and other governance indices.

Therefore, whereas state-building is about making the state, nation-building is about making the people. The citizens should own the state and the state, on its part, should craft citizenship through enhanced national integration policies to which democratisation is central. Democratisation here does not necessarily connote the western liberal democracy model. Still, in whatever form, democracy should expand popular participation and enhance citizen-centred governing processes. Constructing citizenship also includes creating a political culture that can sustain the state's democratic philosophical foundations. Regarding this, Fukuyama (1992, p.135) re-echoes the 19th scholarship that there cannot be a democracy without a democrat because democratic institutions would need a democratic political culture, hence democratic citizens to enhance democratic policy venues or administrative systems and enhance civic spaces.

Most importantly, democratisation is mainly a context-specific affair (see Follett 1923; Levitan 1943). However, this remains a challenge in most African countries, especially those still primarily functioning under the Aid regime. In addition, most countries in Africa are yet to craft the 'public' or institutions to match democratic principles (Hyden 2022). However, African countries have pursued nation-building politics within state formation political legacies or realities and state-building politics of consolidation because of the external influence and globalisation. This has produced contextually-specific hybrid political and policy regime systems across Africa. The recent democracy index (2021) confirms this by showing that most Eastern African states fall into either hybrid or authoritarian political regimes, except for Mauritius, which is a full democracy. According to the Economist Intelligence (EIU) and Freedom House's democracy index 2021 surveys, Eastern Africans live either partly free or not free countries, with the majority falling in the latter category. The partly free countries include Tanzania, Kenya, Seychelles, and Comoros. Except for Mauritius and Madagascar, which are free, the rest fall under not free categories – Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, DRC, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Freedom House data concludes that generally, only 9 per cent of Africans live in free countries, most of which are found in Southern African countries. To further understand this within our state transformation perspective, the democracy index looks into five variables on a 0 to 10 scale:

i) *Electoral process and pluralism*, which includes the elections and the fairness of voting processes, the political party financing, campaigning opportunities, degree of political interference or transparency, access to or competition for a public office, degree of inclusion or exclusion of some groups and freedom to form political parties and civil organisations (see, Part IV below). ii) *The functioning of government* includes the extent to which elected representatives influence government policy, whether or how systems of checks and balance work, and the extent to which foreign governments or donors influence government policy. The functioning of government also includes the extent to which other groups or institutions other than democratic institutions influence government actions. The

functioning of the government further looks into the extent to which it exercises authority in its territory, the public's influence on political parties and public accountability (public confidence or trust in government).

iii) *Political participation* includes voter participation and turnout, the influence or voice of other groups such as religious groups in political processes, the degree of women's representation in the legislature, and whether public officials encourage public participation. Public participation also looks into voter apathy, the role of the media, interests in politics by the adult population, membership in political parties and non-governmental organisations and the freedom to hold political processes. iv) Political culture includes the sufficiency of the degree of societal consensus and cohesion for democracy and the nature of political leadership concerning whether the people prefer a leader who complies or does not comply with parliamentary or electoral processes. This dimension also looks into the perceptions of military rule versus the rule by technocrats or experts and democratic rule over other forms of political leadership (see *Chapter 8* below). It further looks into the degree of support for democracy and separations between the state and church. v) *Civil liberties* look into the presence of electronic media, including media freedom and the presence of free printed media. It concerns citizens' freedom to form civil organisations, the degree of conformity to opinion and self-censorship, political restrictions and censoring of the internet, and the presence of public petitions. It is also concerned with whether people are discriminated against based on their ethnicity, religious beliefs, the extent to which they threaten to limit civic space etc. *Figures 2.1* and *2.2* below summarise how Eastern African states perform in light of these democratisation dimensions. *Figure 2.1* presents the overall rankings of Eastern African countries globally. The majority rank above 80 – Madagascar at 83.5, Tanzania at 92.5, Kenya at 94, and Uganda at 100. In contrast, *Figure 2.2* illustrates how they rank in light of the five dimensions above from the best performing or full democracy or Mauritius towards the hybrid political regimes like Tanzania and Kenya and autocratic regimes like Ethiopia, Comoros and DRC.

Figure 2.1: *EIU's Overall Ranking of Eastern African States*
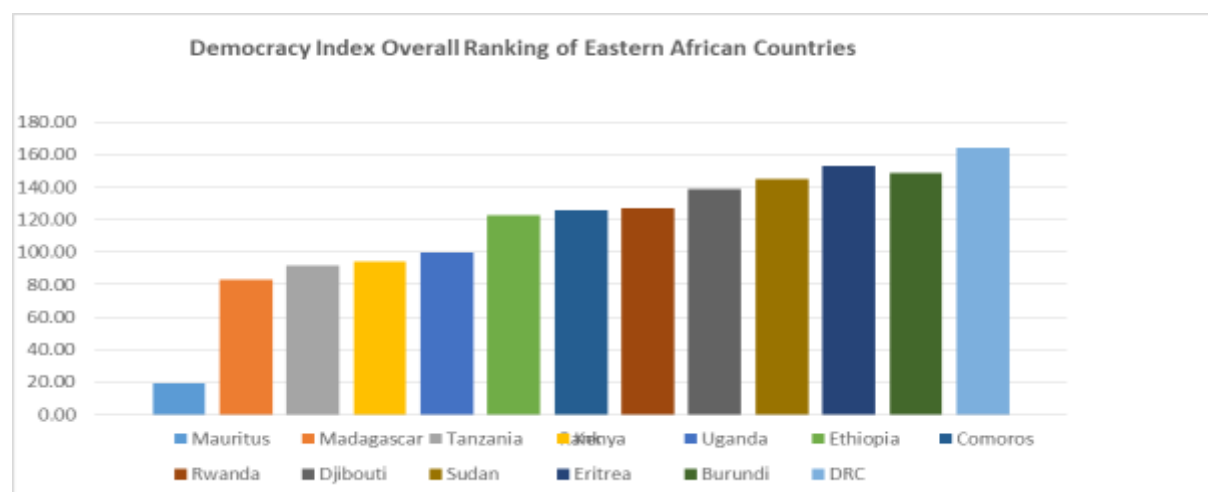
Source: Author's summary

Figure 2.2: *Summary of EIU Democracy Index of Eastern African States*
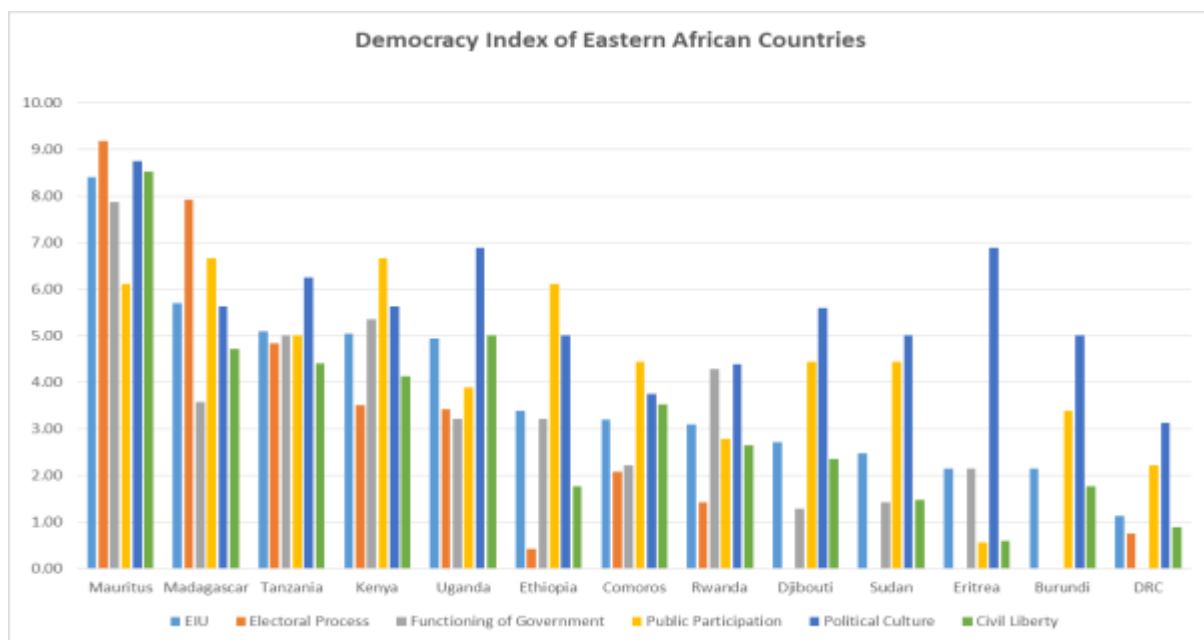
Source: *Author's summary*

From the above, we can say that nation-building is rooted in the practice of constitutionalism (see *Chapter 9*'s below). It requires political socialisation to ensure state ownership by the citizens (see Ramirez and Boli 1987). Political socialisation should be focused chiefly on endogenous institutional building processes. Even though most Eastern African countries are performing minimally in this, there is hope, given recent developments in some countries concerning electoral pluralism and processes, political culture, civic liberty and functioning of governments. The autocratic norms of governing society have been relatively diminishing in most African communities since 2000. Afrobarometer datasets surveying almost 40 African countries have continually shown that Africans prefer democratisation to any form of government. Since 2000, there has been a widespread rejection of authoritarianism despite the unstable supply of democracy. The 2019 Afrobarometer survey reported, "across 34 surveyed countries, the average African still prefers democratic rule. As in the previous survey round, more than two-thirds (68%) say that democracy is the best form of government. In addition, more than seven in 10 reject abandoning multiparty elections in favour of strongman rule (78%), a one-party state (74%), or military rule (72%)" (Afrobarometer 2019). Afrobarometer surveys have also established that most Africans identify themselves with political parties. Most Kenyans, Ethiopians, Tanzanians and Ugandans identify with their national identities as tribal identities and somehow view other tribes in the same light. This shows a growing tolerant political culture, an improving electoral pluralism, and national identities.

However, it is not surprising that challenges remain due to these states' levels of political institutionalisation. The Afrobarometer surveys have shown a declining trust in government and formal representative institutions since 2014. Most importantly, traditional leaders

remain most trusted than other government institutions or formal public authorities in Eastern Africa. Also, recently, the Kenyan Military was rated high in public trust than other democratic institutions, especially the judiciary and parliament (Afrobarometer 2022). This indicates that Eastern African states need to do more in public participation, functioning of the government or public policy and other dimensions to achieve nation-building goals like France and Britain, which underwent similar experiences (see Stepan et al. 2011). Overall, democratisation is contested in no society; however, to make it work, Eastern African states need to find their own models for creating vibrant participating state politics, considering indicators discussed herein.

Conclusion

Building on political development analysis, this chapter addresses the need to understand the African state's politics, development, and capacity within the imperatives of its colonial legacies and external influences. In doing so, the chapter crafted a historical analysis or state transformation perspective to delineate the common characterisation of state politics based on the levels of the state's political institutionalisation. It has also demonstrated how political conditions for rationalisation, democratisation, and national integration that underpin the modern state sit with each stage of state transformation. A state transformation perspective deviates from the optimal neoliberal evaluation of how the state in Africa *ought* to perform to indicate these countries' performance depending on their *democratising* and *developing* challenges. Whereas in some ways, political developments like democratisation efforts have catalysed African state-nations towards nation-states characteristics, concerns still linger that they are founded more on the sand, that is, on state structures than the social fabrics or norms of the communities. These challenges point to the state's nature and the political realities it currently confronts due to its level or stage of political institutionalisation and the kind of state politics this endows on it. This process is not linear, as indicated in the hybrid nature of state politics in Eastern African states and the rationale upon which political action tends to be hinged. This chapter made a moderate effort to capture conceptual trajectories and convergences of state evolution or transformation in Eastern Africa and similar contexts while setting an analytical agenda for the rest of the chapters in this volume.

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